

EDA's "Some Suggestions for Recovery"

(Take what you can use and leave the rest!)

- To live happily (and be a valuable member of any society):
 - Show up
 - Do the work
 - Tell the truth
 - Let go of the outcomes
- Show up for life no matter what.
- Treat yourself well. We are selfish until we get our own needs met.
- Be an adult. Ask yourself, "What would a rational adult do in this situation?" If you are not sure what to do, pray and/or call others and talk about it. That's what a rational adult would do!
- We all need training and practice to be effective adults. Get some!
- Eat when hungry and stop when moderately full. This sometimes requires enormous persistence and faith to learn and practice, but self-trust and wholeness depend upon it.
- Eat "real" food. Deprivation never helps. Many (if not most) people in recovery say they eat protein at breakfast.
- Safety is job one: make a daily plan to get adequate sleep, nutrition, emotional support and financial stability, do the best you can, and adapt to what is. Recovery is flexible.
- Make a self-soothing or self-care plan and stick to it. ☺
- Feelings are neither right nor wrong. They just are.
- We have a right to our feelings. Handling them in a safe and responsible manner makes the world a safe place. This usually takes much training, practice and patience. It is important to understand which situations cause "problematic" emotions and to make a plan to handle ourselves in those situations. Addressing issues head-on really works.
- Get involved. Helping others is a great way to build recovery. "The meaning of life is to give life meaning."
- Find positive things to say to yourself and others every day but do not say anything you do not really mean.
- Try to maintain a sense of humor.
- Act, don't react.

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- Reach out to newcomers.
- Keep a recovery focus.
- Make use of daily meditation literature. Even five minutes in the morning or evening can set the tone for the day and help us keep focused on recovery and working solutions.
- Keep a gratitude journal. Write in it each night and focus on what's working.
- When anxious, do something to "get inside your body." Do something to notice the power of your body. Moving into a different room or going outside can have the desired effect.
- Do not try to be an authority on anything but yourself.
- Focus on the solutions to your issues. Don't worry about other people's issues.
- Talk about your own issues rather than just providing feedback to others.
- Don't blame others. It does not help to let ourselves continue as victims.
- Do trust and rely on yourself. A Higher Power is "an unsuspected *inner* resource" for most, according to Alcoholics Anonymous, Third Edition, pages 569-570.
- "Lean on God and walk with people." That is, do not lean too heavily on people. We all let people down sometimes. It doesn't work to expect others to sustain us emotionally or financially. Dependence on a higher power means independence from unhealthy emotional and financial attachments to other people.
- A failed internal protector becomes an internal prosecutor. What can I say to myself to rebuild my internal protector? We are what we practice!
- There is no one thing, no magic bullet, that will make you better. But you will get better if you keep being honest, keep an open mind, and keep being willing to change your mind and behavior.
- Work the steps with a sponsor or a buddy. Others' experience, strength and hope can transform and strengthen our recovery.
- Working the steps should not take forever. A step a week is fine for many. People often get bogged down if they take more than a month per step. Working the steps is a process, not an event. You keep doing them.
- Aim for progress, not perfection.

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- Be gentle with yourself. Treat and talk to yourself as you would to your best friend or a loved one. Practice compassion and you will be compassionate.
- First things first. That is, focus on what is important and address those issues first.
- Live and let live. Don't worry too much about the wrongs of others. Make sure you are living as happily as you can.
- Easy does it. Don't make a bigger deal out of things than they have to be. Get a sustainable perspective.
- Trust God as you understand God, take responsibility for yourself, and serve others.
- Recovery is a process, not an event.
- Get on the phone list.
- Call people.
- Don't talk about other people.
- Don't be late
- Confront ill attitudes and behaviors in yourself.
 - "When I focus on the problem, the problem seems to get bigger. When I focus on solutions, they get more power. What might be a solution I am willing to try right now?"
 - "I am not making much sense. Is it possible I am malnourished or overtired? Am I hungry, angry, lonely, tired or in shame? I ought to deal with those first."
 - "Hmm, I'm pretty stuck. What is this pattern doing for me? If I understand what I am getting out of this, I may be able to make other choices."
 - "I know that focusing on what *others* do wrong does not help. What helps me is to focus on *what I can do right*."
 - "My serenity is inversely proportional to my expectations. How have my expectations set me up for disappointment and frustration? Am I willing to change my expectations?"
- Make a list of what your eating disorder does for you (i.e. comfort, catharsis, escape, adrenaline rush, sense of power or mastery) and come up with alternatives that deliver the same result (remove self from situation, identify discomfort, validate feelings, write/call/scream/music/walk etc, act from a safe plan).
- When feeling "crappy" or uncomfortable, ask yourself, "What would I be doing if I were feeling better?" then *do* one of those things.
- Help others. Ask somebody to the movies or coffee. Listen as you want others to listen to you.

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- When scared, notice the power of your body, mind and spirit and then ask, "What risk-taking behaviors build self-trust?" and *do* one. (Examples: Talk to someone about what is scaring you, drop "more important" things to get perspective.)
- When angry, ask yourself, "What would help me feel heard and validated?" and *do* it. (Examples: angry journaling, writing an angry letter (don't send), smacking wet towel on bathtub, drumming, painting, talking about what is making you angry to someone who won't be threatened, saying "I am angry. It is okay to be angry. I will not hurt anyone. I will learn how to handle being angry safely.")
- Feeling stuck? Make deliberate, careful changes. Doing the same things and expecting different outcomes doesn't work. What am I willing to change *right now*?
- Afraid of rejection? Plan how to comfort yourself when you get it: "It's effort, not results that count." "I took a risk and did the right thing." "It's not about me." "I just did something hard and I can be proud of that" "I am worthy, and it is all right if not everyone thinks so." "I will try again with someone else." "I can talk to others about this."
- Feeling victimized? What would restore a sense of self-possession?
- Find safe ways to vent emotions. The point of meetings is to vent emotions and practice recovery tools so we can do life outside of meetings. If we don't have alternatives to eating disordered behavior, we will get stuck. If we don't vent emotions safely our eating disorders get worse.
- Fear of being real is why we have an eating disorder. The solution is to be real and accept the consequences. Not "being real" does not mean we escape consequences! Am I sick and tired of getting the same old results? What am I willing to do differently *right now*?
- Validate your feelings, challenge your old thinking and change old behaviors.
- Remember that the process of recovery really feels raw and miserable a good bit of the time, but it is worth it: in the end there is real recovery (peace, freedom and usefulness) and hard work to be proud of. We grow up, and that feels good, right and happy.
- Making a mistake does *not* mean "going back to square one." Acknowledge mistakes, try to understand what went wrong and why, plan for how to handle things differently to get a better outcome, then let go and move forward.
- Talk about your mistakes and what you want to do differently the next time.
- Get willing to do whatever it takes not to engage in the eating disorder. Practically no one can stop the cycle and develop alternatives without that commitment. Be persistent. Commitment, like anything else, must be practiced to be effective.