

KICK SUGAR

Success Stories

— S U M M I T —

A DAY IN THE LIFE OF OUR SUGAR SUCCESS SPEAKERS



FLORENCE CHRISTOPHERS

SUGAR ADDICTION & EMOTIONAL EATING RECOVERY COACH

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FLORENCE WELCOME



This one-of-a-kind eBook is here to help you discover the *wide variety* of ways sugar-free men and women walk the path of recovery from addiction and compulsive eating.

It provides an up-close and personal glimpse into their day-to-day lives. They share what they eat, how they structure their days, create support, and engage in daily self-care. They also share their Top 10 Insights and Strategies that helped them get sugar-free and stay sugar-free.

This book highlights the diversity of ‘right ways’ to eat, live and thrive sugar free!

We hope you are inspired to find your own version of recovery and to do the hard work of learning and implementing recovery tools, experimenting with foods that work best with your body (within the context of whatever program is supporting you), and how much and what kind of daily self-care and external support you need.

— “ —————

“There is no perfect diet. There is no quick fix. There is no one size fits all. In fact, there are lots of right ways to walk the path of sugar addiction recovery. There are lots of right ways to eat. There are lots of wonderful daily self-care activities that can help you stay strong, grounded and grateful. What matters most is what works for you. Honesty, hard work and a genuine desire to find your freedom will get you to **your promised land**. Never stop believing! Florence

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FLORENCE CHRISTOPHERS

KICK SUGAR SUMMIT HOST & FOUNDER, SUGAR ADDICTION & EMOTIONAL EATING RECOVERY COACH



My Story

I have had an obsessive-compulsive relationship with food since early childhood. It has expressed itself in many forms including sugar addiction, compulsive overeating, dieting, binge eating, food obsession, weight obsession, orthorexia, and emotional eating.

A pivot point in my quest for freedom from disordered eating began when I read the book “Sugar Blues.” It was a moment of profound awakening. I was 19 years old and I was forever changed. It made me stop asking the question “What is wrong with me?!” and ask the question “What is wrong with the food I am eating?” It took my self-blaming focus off of my character defects and life challenges and expanded it to include the psychoactive and health destroying properties of refined carbohydrates.

While I did not stop pursuing psychotherapeutic solutions to my eating issues, I KNEW after reading *Sugar Blues* that breaking up with sugar was essential to my recovery in body and mind. (My awareness of how it would support my growth spiritually came many years later.) For now, in my early 20’s I began to burn with an unrelenting desire to unhook from sugar (which I ate all day long!) and to reverse its long list of negative consequences which, for me, included weight gain, depression, acne, rosacea, bladder infections, cravings, and nearly daily migraines.

Despite the fire in my belly to be a sugar-free woman, I had NO idea how *hard* parting ways with sugar would be. At some point, fairly early on in my efforts to stop consuming it, I realized something wasn’t quite right. I knew it shouldn’t be this hard.

FLORENCE CHRISTOPHERS

No one was force-feeding me. I was willingly choosing to go back to processed foods. This baffled me. I recall being stumped and confused and frustrated by my relapses. One day, at the age of roughly 21, I had this epiphany. Perhaps I was addicted!!?? I didn't really know what that meant. But intuitively I suspected that sugar and I were engaged in a power struggle that was unusual and shameful and possibly hopeless. It was 1989 and there were few if any, books or articles in the library about sugar addiction. This was pre-internet, so I was radically on my own to sort this mess out. I tried to talk to my friends and family. They laughed and then mocked and then blocked my conversations. Secretly, I am sure they were hoping my crazy sugar-free food fanaticism would blow over.

It didn't.

I read the Sugar Blues over 30 years ago, and every day since then I have been obsessed with the topic of sugar. I continue to spend hours researching the history of sugar, the science of what it does to our brains and bodies, its addictive properties, its role in my disordered eating, depression, and migraines, and above all how to get unhooked from sugar once and for all. Sugar has been my academic obsession and personal juggernaut.

When I look back, I can see that my initial hope was that I would give it up long enough to lose weight, improve my migraines, and then find a way to be a 'normal eater.' I thought that if I could fix myself--my willpower issues--that I could be relieved of the affliction of addiction. This I hoped would enable me to have a nibble here and there and not obsessively, compulsively crave more. Once I stopped lying to myself that I could moderate sugar, and stopped seeing moderation as a desirable goal, I have been committed to abstinence. It is, for me, the express route to true freedom.

My journey of recovery from sugar addiction unfolds to this day. I was making progress year over year and had long stretches of abstinence during my 30's but I didn't have a mindset shift that eased my struggle until I learned about Rational Recovery in 2016. That was another turning point in my recovery journey.

Today, abstinence feels like the 'joy of the answered prayer,' and no longer seems like a 'life sentence of deprivation.' If I had a fairy godmother who could grant me a wish, I would choose abstinence. The peace of mind it brings is worth every ounce of effort.

FLORENCE CHRISTOPHERS

I no longer want to be a 'normal eater' who can and does eat processed foods. My super sensitive and sugar damaged body has had enough. Not only are processed foods toxic, addictive, acidic to me but they stress out my body by depriving it of the nutrients it needs to thrive. In short, it is traumatic to my body. And I, for one, am looking to heal my trauma, not add to the mix.

When I look back at the many different ways I attempted to break up with sugar and have it stick, it is gob smacking. I tried therapy, hypnotherapy and rebirthing. I worked with a shaman, tried pharmaceuticals, supplements, and counselling. I tried various diets hopeful that if I could find just the right blend of macros and superfoods, I would be relieved of my cravings and obsession. (Certainly, a whole food meal plan that meets our essential needs helps, but dialing in my diet was not a cure. Drats!) I tried 3 different 12 step programs for food addiction, burned through 6+ sponsors, and that didn't stick either. While working with a sponsor in one particular program, I was abstinent for long glorious stretches, but I felt oppressed. I even attended an 11-day silent meditation retreat and completed a 10 day water fast. Those didn't cure me either. The truth is nothing cured me.

In fact, the search for a cure is a distraction. There is no pill. Only a daily journey of learning to let go of sugar (our security net) and let God/Universe/Higher Power be there for us instead. It is a process of learning to not let a trigger activate an uncontrollable cascade of events (in body, mind and emotion) that ends in addictive substance use. How? We learn to move beyond self-medication as the solution to life's problems, and instead shine a light on possibilities and resources we could not see before. Sugar is no longer my crutch, my band-aid. The one that numbs my pain. The pain of not knowing that I am worthy of what I need and want. Recovery heals this pain, and that takes time.

Today, I have found the right kind and combination of outside support, spiritual understanding, and internal resourcefulness that enables me to wake up each day and choose abstinence with a grateful heart.

Thank goodness, after 30+ years of working hard at this, I have found solid ground. And I hope to stay here. I eat only whole foods. I have no cravings. I feel peaceful around food. Will I stay in this happy place? There are no guarantees when it comes to addiction, but the odds are good when I choose to walk the path of recovery with abstinence at the center.

FLORENCE CHRISTOPHERS

What do I abstain from? Well, of course sugar and flour, all forms of sweeteners, processed oils and junk food of all kind. But equally importantly, I abstain from falling for the delusion that my issue was simply sugar. My body was addicted to sugar, absolutely. One bite of sugar and it is only a matter of days or weeks, before I am compulsively overeating it. But my real problem is the compulsion. This is when my body has been triggered and my addict brain starts seeking something (narcotic-like) to manage its internal experience of life because it doesn't trust it will be or can be soothed or supported.

Today I watch the 'urge', knowing that what I want most in life is in the dead opposite direction of where that compulsion will lead me. Today, I choose to work with my intellect, intuition, inspiration, higher power, friends and recovery buddies to make decisions, including and foundationally, what foods go into my body, in what amounts and when.

As I look back, I can see that my recovery from sugar addiction started with the awareness that sugar itself was a problem. And that until I dealt with that head on, through the tool of abstinence, I was never going to find my freedom. And now my understanding is evolving (and coming full circle) into the recognition that my sugar problem was an innocent, misguided (and ultimately self-harming) solution to other problems. My root problem is the compulsion (the need for immediate gratification) to self-soothe with substances, to obliterate feeling, to retain control. The solution is multi-faceted but absolutely includes learning how to shift out of states of fear and into the consciousness of faith. Faith in what? That the dreams and desires of our heart can be achieved and that a higher power is there to help.

If there is only one thing I know to be true it is this... the pain and suffering of addiction can be replaced by the joy of recovery. There are lots of right ways to walk the path of recovery, I hope you find one that works for you. You deserve to learn new, better and self-loving ways of surviving and thriving in life. They exist. May you find them .

FLORENCE CHRISTOPHERS



My Sugar-Free Meals

I eat one of three breakfasts. I rotate. I have gone through waves of weighing and measuring my food. Currently I weigh and measure all my food. I find it peaceful and stabilizing.

MY ABSTINENT MEAL PLAN

BREAKFAST

- 1 Protein (4 oz Meat or 8 oz Beans or 8 oz Yoghurt)
- 1 Vegetable (8 oz raw or cooked or both)
- 1 Fruit (8 oz)
- 1 Fat (1 Tbsp Oil, Ghee, or 1 oz Nuts/Seeds)

LUNCH & DINNER

- 1 Protein (4 oz Meat/Tofu or 8 oz Beans)
- 2 Vegetable (16 oz raw or cooked or both)
- 1 Fat (1 Tbsp Oil, Ghee, ½ Avocado or 1 oz Nuts/Seeds)

MY 3 DAY BREAKFAST MENU

GREEN SMOOTHIE

- 8 oz Leafy Greens, Fresh Herbs
- 8 oz Frozen Berries
- Fresh Lime Juice
- ½ Avocado
- 2 Tbsp Pumpkin Seed Protein Powder or 4 oz Tofu

YOGHURT, NUTS, & BERRIES

- 8 oz Goat Yoghurt
- 8 oz Berries
- 1 oz Sunflower Seeds

(When I don't eat veggies at breakfast I add 8 oz to my dinner)

PROTEIN & VEGGIES

- 4 oz Tilapia
- 8 oz Steamed Broccoli
- 8 oz Berries
- 1 Tbsp Olive Oil

FLORENCE CHRISTOPHERS

MY 3 DAY LUNCH MENU

DAY 1

- 4 oz Chicken
- 8 oz Salad
- 8 oz Steamed Brussel Sprouts
- 1 Tbsp Grass Fed Ghee

DAY 2

- 4 oz Salmon
- 8 oz Salad
- 8 oz Asparagus
- ½ Avocado + lime juice

DAY 3

- 4 oz Turkey
- 8 oz Salad
- 8 oz Steamed Spinach
- ½ Avocado + lime juice

MY 3 DAY DINNER MENU

DAY 1

- 8 oz Black Beans
- 8 oz Salad
- 8 oz Green Beans
- 1½ Avocado + lime juice

DAY 2

- 4 oz Tofu
- 8 oz Salad
- 8 oz Steamed Bok Choy
- 1 Tbsp Olive Oil

DAY 3

- 8 oz Red Lentils
- 16 oz butternut squash, onion, kale, garlic, ginger, tumeric, fresh cilantro
- 1 Tbsp Olive Oil
- Fresh lime juice



My Daily Routine

MORNING ROUTINE

I don't have a set morning routine. But generally speaking, my husband's alarm goes off around 6 AM, he hits snooze and we cuddle until it goes off again (this is the best way to start a day ever!!) While he showers, I listen to some uplifting spiritual literature and then I go to my Zen Den to meditate, pray or say gratitude affirmations for 20-30 minutes. Then, I either make breakfast and call my sponsor or vice versa. Finally, I hop in the shower and get my day launched. I almost always regret not fitting in some outdoor exercise in the morning. This is something I am working on.

EVENING ROUTINE

Again, I have no set routine. Generally, I like to wind down my day by tidying up the house, spending time with my husband connecting and chatting about our day, writing down my food for the next day, filling in my daily planner, and then heading to bed to pray, stretch and read a book. If I could change one thing, I would add meditation as a part of my daily evening routine. And another walk in nature. Sometimes I fit these in, often they get skipped. Hopefully, I can add this to the mix in a more consistent way soon.



THINGS I LEARNED ABOUT GETTING & STAYING SUGAR-FREE

- **Relapse happens in the early days of recovery.** It is demoralizing, of course, but it is also precious research. Slips and relapses give you first hand personal understanding about how dangerous and destructive “just one bite can be.” It teaches us what foods trigger us, how we feel on and off processed carbs, and overrides social messaging about how ‘everything in moderation is a good thing’ by proving to ourselves that moderation is not a good thing for us. It is not a path to freedom. Relapse brings us closer to that beautiful moment when we are ‘done’ and no longer think we are depriving ourselves of anything valuable when we say “No thanks” to quickie carbs. Relapse is our own personal hard-earned wisdom. While in the midst of a relapse, just eat as healthy as you can, around your slips, and relax. Wait for the moment when you are ready to go all in with abstinence again. It will come.
- **Abstinence is not the end goal of recovery; it is the beginning.** Abstinence is a tool to end the obsessive-compulsive problem we have with refined carbs and stops the damage being inflicted on our bodies. Abstinence enables, empowers and necessitates that we learn how to overcome negative thinking and limiting beliefs, how to manage stress and difficult emotions, how to visualize and manifest a future we are excited about, how to ask for and receive help including from a higher power of our own understanding, how to prioritize our self-care (daily!) and more. In other words, abstinence opens the door to healing and possibilities that would otherwise stay shut. I like to say that every year of abstinence is worth 10 years of therapy or 100 self help books. Bang for buck, it moves your life forward in quantum leaps.
- **Abstinence is a trade-off. And a trade up.** What we are giving up is so much less valuable than what we are getting. What do you want to get? Remind yourself daily about the wonderful things coming your way because you choose abstinence. For example, we trade sugar for health, peace of mind, sustained weight loss, freedom from cravings, freedom from food obsessions, etc. We gain self-respect and release self loathing, shame, guilt, regret, and more. When I think ‘I am missing out on the pleasure of some food’, I think instead about where I am headed with my life and my dopamine flows. My brain wants to know good things are here and more are coming. Remind it daily of the many blessings of recovery/abstinence. Expect good things to happen, and express gratitude as they arrive.



THINGS I LEARNED ABOUT GETTING & STAYING SUGAR-FREE — STRATEGIES THAT HELPED ME GET SUGAR-FREE AND STAY SUGAR-FREE

- **Don't do it alone.** Trying to heal addiction alone is the hard, if not impossible way. Gather multi-streams of support, and lean into your support daily.
- **Get junk food out of your home**, or at least out of sight, if at all possible.
- **Find a meal plan that is adequate and stick with it.** Our addiction wants us to try new diets and fuss with our food, and be obsessed with macros and calories, etc. Don't let it.
- **Keep your meals simple.** Super crazy, easy, brainless simple. Such as salmon, broccoli and 1 tablespoon of oil for dinner. Or a bowl of black beans, salad, and avocado with fresh lime juice mixed in for a dressing. Unless you love cooking, and being gourmet, get fast and efficient with your meal prep.
- **Ask for help** with meal prep, batch cooking, and kitchen cleaning. Especially in the first 90 days of recovery. Hire help if you can afford it. A teenager in the neighborhood is a great place to start.
- **Make your own meals from scratch.** Eat out as infrequently as possible. Always call/plan ahead and bring your own food to social events. Don't leave yourself at risk of relapse – you never know how long that relapse might last. It could be years!!!
- **Do daily consistent self-care** like your life depends upon it, because it does.
- **Reframe the fear you feel about giving up sugar, as excitement** about where abstinence will take you. They are almost the same feeling in the body. Do a brain flip.
- **Remember, YOU are NOT a sugar addict.** Your body might be on the addiction spectrum but the true self (the observer self) is the one seeking freedom, and that self is not addicted. Say to yourself, "I am not addicted to sugar. My body is. I will help it find peace and freedom by working a strong program of recovery."
- BONUS – Find ways to be encouraging and helpful to others also walking the path of sugar addiction recovery. **Service to others helps you stay abstinent and others too.**



AIMEE ANDERSON

KICK SUGAR SUMMIT CO-HOST, HEALTH AND
LIFE COACH, CERTIFIED SUGAR INTERVIEWER



My Story

I was raised a “Twinkie Kid” with sugar fed to me as an infant and all throughout my childhood into adulthood. My parents and 3 sisters consumed massive amounts of sugar. So did both sets of grandparents and even my great-grandparents.

We were never limited in our sugar consumption.

My grandmother was a terrific baker, and this is where I developed my love for baking.

I was bulimic in high school. My bulimia lasted about one year and quitting that behavior and smoking were the two hardest things, but I did it.

As an adult, I started baking a lot more. I married at age 22 and was a pastor’s wife at age 24. I baked for church functions. Alcohol, smoking, and drugs were taboo, but everything sugary-sweet was totally acceptable. I was the biggest fan of my baked goods. Dieting was my thing. I could lose weight for a bit, but then I’d gain again. I can’t even count how many diets I’ve been on during my lifetime.

AIMEE ANDERSON

Cake decorating was on my bucket list. I finally checked that box when I was in my 40s, and I absolutely loved it! My artistic side emerged pairing that with my baking skills.

For some crazy reason, I was selected to be on TLC's The Next Great Baker with Buddy Valastro, The Cake Boss. My baking buddy, Jose Barajas, and I didn't win the show, but we appeared in 8 out of 10 episodes. It was a blast! When the show aired, my baking business soared. I was making wedding cakes, birthday cakes, cookies, etc. And I was gaining weight eating all of it.

I joked about being a sugar addict. However, the 40+ extra pounds on my body wasn't funny. I was an expert at body bashing. I said things to myself that I would never say to another human. I hated myself for not being able to stop eating sugar. I didn't think it was possible to ever kick my sugar habit. I felt like a moral failure.

I heard about this program called 30 Days Sugar-Free by Barry Friedman. I joined but couldn't get 30 days of abstinence because I couldn't give up the sweetened creamer in my coffee. So I never had 30 days of abstinence. Until my daughter got engaged. Then I knew it was time to get serious.

I rejoined Barry's group, and on Saturday, January 21, 2017, I stopped eating sugar and flour. Barry was featured on Florence's 2nd Annual Kick Sugar Summit, and he promoted this free summit to all of his participants. I started listening during my first week of sugar detox. That was immensely helpful!

It was astounding to hear what these experts were talking about! These beautiful sugar-free people such as Bitten Jonsson, Dr. Vera Tarman, Dr. Joan Ifland, and Barry Friedman were all talking about sugar addiction as if it was equivalent to alcohol or drug addiction. This blew my mind! *Was it really this serious* I asked myself? Heck yes!

AIMEE ANDERSON

Even though I was elbow-deep in flour, sugar and powdered sugar making wedding cakes my first month of getting off sugar, I was successful in not putting one drop of sugar or flour in my system. And I felt terrific after my first 30 days! My mind was clearer, I had lost about 15 pounds, I had a skip in my step, and I wanted to continue to go longer. I had heard about these 90-day tokens they give out at AA, and I wanted a sugar-free 90-day token. So that was my next goal.

Until I hopped on my first group coaching call with Florence Christophers in her 7 Weeks to Sugar Freedom Course. I was about 50 days sugar-free at that time, and this is what I heard her say: "If you know that you know that you know you're a sugar addict, then the only way to true freedom is complete abstinence." Epiphany. Light-bulb moment. Cue the angelic choir.

This was my moment of clarity. For the first time, this beautiful, soothing voice on the other end of the phone actually gave me permission to never eat sugar again for the rest of my life. And I took this advice and ran with it.

I mean, I thought "everything in moderation" was the key to success, right? Except I just couldn't moderate my sugar consumption no matter how hard I tried. And boy did I ever try... And try... And try... My personality is an all-or-nothing type. So when Florence said "abstinence is the key to success," I felt a 10-pound weight lift from my shoulders. I felt like I was born again, born again. I quickly learned her gremlin technique, and it worked like a charm! As I write this today, I am 5+ years sugar-free.

A few months later, as I was continuing to bake as a side business and remain sugar-free, Florence ever so gently made a comment, "I can see you giving up your baking business and becoming a sugar coach."

What?! What are you talking about, Florence? (is what I thought in my head) I was living sugar-free, making my stunning and delicious cakes, getting paid for it, and she's suggesting I give it all up to coach others to live like I did. Are you insane, woman?! I mean, baking sweets is my identity. It's my claim to fame. I rubbed shoulders with the big wigs in the sugar space—Buddy Valastro, Bobby Floyd, "Mr. Chocolate" Jacques Torres.

AIMEE ANDERSON

I was good at what I did, and people were willing to pay me for my creations.

I settled down a few days later and decided to take a 3-month sabbatical from my baking business during the summer. I consumed massive amounts of YouTube videos, books, and podcasts about the negative effects of sugar.

In the fall I fulfilled my cake orders, but my passion for cake making/decorating was waning. My last cake order was the day after Thanksgiving for my best friend's daughter's wedding. I actually was miserable making these desserts, because God had changed my heart in such a dramatic way. I was ready to make the switch, but I didn't know how I was going to be a "sugar coach."

Well, one thing led to another, and I began to work for Barry Friedman as his head coach for one year. Then I became a certified Health and Life Coach and began to work with Florence in the 4th Annual Kick Sugar Summit. After this summit, we began to coach together.

I am now a licensed Metabolic Health Professional, a Certified Personal Trainer, a certified SUGAR Interviewer, and working on my license as a Holistic Addiction Medicine Counselor.

My life has changed dramatically in 5 years. I am so grateful for Barry and Florence and all the speakers from the Kick Sugar Summits willing to speak up about the addiction to sugar and how to unhook from its deadly grip. It is my heart's desire to see others who are addicted and suffering from lifestyle diseases break free, embrace whole foods, and live a healthy and happy life.

AIMEE ANDERSON



My Daily Routine

6:00 AM	Awake, snuggle with hubby, shower with hubby (we have two shower heads) using my steam unit and essential oils, 2x a week outdoor walks with hubby, read/listen to the Bible, do hair and makeup
7:45 AM	Eat meal #1 that consists of 1 protein, 1 vegetable, 1 fat, berries, decaf coffee. My favorite breakfast is 2 eggs with salsa, avocado, mixed berries, and blended vegetable soup
8:00 AM	Call my sponsor in a 12-Step Program
8:15 AM	Work on my computer, Zoom coaching calls, household chores, walks outdoors, 30-minute workouts with weights and resistance bands, phone calls.
12:00 PM	Eat meal #2 - 1 protein, 2 veggies, 1 fat. My favorite lunch is a large salad with grilled chicken, olive oil and vinegar.
12:30 PM	Work, errands, Zoom coaching calls, appointments, phone calls.
6:00 PM	Eat meal #3 - 1 protein, 2 veggies, 1 fat. My favorite dinner is salmon, chicken, or beef, 2 cooked veggies such as broccoli and green beans, 1 fat such as butter, ghee, or olive oil.
6:30 PM	Some work if needed, time with hubby talking, reading, visiting with friends, family, and our adult kids.
9:00 PM	Relaxing with hubby watching reality TV, (I always fall asleep watching TV - lol), decaf coffee
10:00 PM	Bedtime - I fall asleep quickly; I seldom have insomnia

AIMEE ANDERSON

THINGS I DO DAILY TO SUPPORT MY RECOVERY

- I have a soaking tub, so a few times a week I soak in my tub with Epsom salts, bubbles, and essential oils. I mask my face, listen to soothing music, read a magazine, soak my troubles away (that's a sign I have above my tub :-)
- When I'm in the car, I listen to Christian music loudly, singing along and worshipping my God. It's a private, spiritual time with my Savior and me. Oftentimes it brings me to tears.
- I'm trying out cold therapy, but I enjoy hot showers and bathtubs more. I'm learning to be uncomfortable in cold water. It's stretching me.
- Daily reading or listening to the Bible is vital to me. I have been a Christian since I was 14 years old.
- I don't have a set prayer time—I pray throughout the day when God puts people and situations on my heart.
- Food prep as much as possible—making protein and cooked veggies for 3 or 4 days, washing and storing lettuce in Tupperware with paper towels to keep it crisp.
- I take food with me if I think there will not be compliant foods to eat.
- I ask my hubby to pick up fresh berries and produce throughout the week when he's at the store. I don't like shopping for food. My freezer and fridge are full of food.
- I'm a social butterfly, so I eat out often. In my 5 years of sugar and flour abstinence, I can maneuver my way around a restaurant with ease. I usually get to choose the restaurant, because my hubby isn't a foodie, so he lets me pick.
- I always order first in a restaurant and will always order water with lemon as my beverage. I found that by ordering first, others follow in my footsteps and order healthy options; not always but many times this works in my favor. I will look up a new restaurant ahead of time and choose my meal before I get there.
- I'm not embarrassed to ask for substitutes when I'm at a restaurant. They are there to serve me, and they always oblige.
- I don't panic when I go out of town or on vacation. I make the best choices I can.
- Most of my friends and family know I don't eat sugar, flour, and junk food, and they will help me with my meal plan. I don't have any food pushers. If I did, I would say politely but firmly "no thank you, I don't eat that," and they back off.
- I check in with my sponsor daily and work out any kinks in my schedule or potential challenges/obstacles.

AIMEE ANDERSON

- I follow a meal plan and write out my food for the day. I commit my food to my sponsor. I have had to start back on Day 1 a few times since starting my 12-Step program. I'm learning and growing and not condemning myself. My sponsor has a lot of grace toward me.
- My mantras over the last 5 years are:
 - I awake with determination; I rest with satisfaction
 - I can do all things through Christ who gives me strength
 - He who began a good work in me will be faithful to complete it
 - I am sugar-free and deeply grateful
 - I am SFFL - Sugar Free For Life (these letters are tattooed on my thigh)
 - It's not my food/I don't eat that
 - I am a whole food woman
- I listen to a book, podcast, YouTube video, or interview almost daily about health and sugar-free living.
- I live with others who eat foods/beverages I choose not to eat. If it bothers me to see it, I ask that they place it out of my view.
- I share my food struggles with people that understand like Florence and my sponsor. I don't share my food struggles with my hubby, because he is not an addict, and he doesn't understand the addicted brain. However, he is extremely compassionate toward me with my food struggles. We have been married for 35 years.
- I am compassionate with myself in my health journey.



THINGS I LEARNED ABOUT GETTING & STAYING SUGAR-FREE — STRATEGIES THAT HELPED ME GET SUGAR-FREE AND STAY SUGAR-FREE

- Start tomorrow! Don't wait for a Monday, the 1st of the month, etc. Just start with 30 days sugar-free.
- Join a support group to help you through the detox phase.
- Follow a meal plan—2 or 3 meals a day with whole foods. Weigh and measure your meals so you know how much you are eating.
- Write down your Big Why. Discover why you want to be sugar-free. Dig deep until you really know why you are doing this. Keep asking yourself “Why is that important?”
- Find a mantra that resonates with you. This can change, but write it where you see it, add it to your reminders on your phone, recite it several times a day. Keep this in the forefront of your mind.
- Ask God/Higher Power to help you accomplish this desire/goal of yours.
- When you have the urge to give up, phone a friend who will talk you off the ledge.
- Think about the foods you get to eat rather than feel sorry for yourself with the foods you don't get to eat. Have a grateful heart.
- Food prep/be prepared. Always have healthy food on hand.
- Set small goals, then once you accomplish them, set another one.
- Bonus Tip: educate yourself on the addictive nature of sugar.



ANNA FRUEHLING

SUGAR ADDICTION SPECIALIST, CERTIFIED PRIMAL HEALTH COACH, SUGAR CERTIFIED, AUTHOR, CO-FOUNDER OF SUGARX GLOBAL, HAS BEEN CLEAN FOR 32 YEARS



My Story

I am a recovering addict with close to 33 years clean. About 5 years ago, I listened to Bitten Jonsson speak about addiction...for the first time, I understood it as one disease, with many outlets. She said sugar was the gateway drug! Mind-Blown! I knew she was right. I remembered climbing up on the kitchen counter to sneak baby aspirin...I was three years old. I remembered eating a bag of powdered sugar mixed with water when I was pregnant with my oldest; the shame was unbearable!

Once I reached out to Bitten, everything changed. I am now Licensed and Certified to use her diagnostic tool called SUGAR which stands for Sugar Use General Assessment Recording. I am on staff with Bitten Jonsson to help train future sugar addiction specialists in her HMA (Holistic Medicine for Addiction) and use my skills as a Primal Health Coach, Keto/Carnivore Coach, and my High Performance Coaching to help teach others to get out of the sugar, and into living... That's our motto at SUGARx Global because we believe it's not about the food, it's never been about the food, and it never will be...it's about the brain. I teach and assist others in finding a craving-free food plan that works for them, and help them heal in new, fun, and creative ways that make recovery a pleasure.

Thanks to summits like this, I never have to live the life of guilt, shame, and confusion I once did! There is a way out, and it starts with stopping the drug foods and learning to stay stopped. You can hear a bit more of my story [here](#). Today, it is my purpose and privilege to help others recover from this serious illness along with two of my favorite people, Judy Wolfe, and her wonderful son David Wolfe.

ANNA FRUEHLING



My Sugar-Free Meals

I eat 2-3 craving-free meals that do not include sugars in any form, unnatural fats, or grains of any kind. I also do not eat anything that triggers cravings for me or gives me issues with my health as I have 5 autoimmune diseases. Some may find my way of eating too restrictive, I feel it gives me freedom from cravings and health issues. We always say at SUGARx Global My Plate, My Plan, My Business... My food plan works for me, that's what really matters. If weather permits, I take walks lasting 30-90 minutes as often as humanly possible. I walk through a beautiful old cemetery when I do and am always reminded that life is right now. The dash between the dates on a tombstone gives me perspective. It reminds me to imbue my life with gratitude and meaning. To make the ordinary, extraordinary.



My Daily Routine

4:45 AM	When I wake up, the first thing I say is, "Good Morning, Disease!" This helps me be prepared to do whatever it takes to make it to bed without harming myself by eating drug foods or engaging in behaviors that don't serve me.
5:00 AM	Workout on my rebounder
5:30 AM	Hot tea and my High Performance Planner/pray/meditate and read spiritual literature
6:00 AM	Two mornings a week I run a recovery group for SUGARx Global. On other mornings, I "eat my frog." meaning I try to take care of 3 things that I would rather avoid doing first thing...this helps me feel much more relaxed as they are 'off my plate' for the day.
7:00 AM	I may get in the sauna and go out to watch the sunrise afterwards. Sometimes I shower then watch the sunrise.



THINGS I LEARNED ABOUT GETTING & STAYING SUGAR-FREE — STRATEGIES THAT HELPED ME GET SUGAR-FREE AND STAY SUGAR-FREE

One of my top tips is to learn as quickly as you can to make all the ordinary moments, as extraordinary as possible. Tomorrow isn't promised, and I feel I have wasted enough time worrying about the small stuff. Addiction robs us of joy. I won't let another moment be wasted. It's tempting to put off happiness...to defer to an "I'll be happy if...I'll be happy when..." mentality. As a recovering addict, I have learned the hard way, that if and when are fantasies. I often remind myself to 'be here now'...it is, in fact, the only place I have ever been. The 12-steps are a part of my daily practice. The principles of the steps are transforming when undertaken with true humility. To me, humility is understanding that I need help to live my best life. I wrote a book about the 12-Steps, *An Altered Spirit, Ebenezer Scrooge, and the Twelve Steps* because I believe them to be so transformative. I think Charles Dickens' book *A Christmas Carol* illustrates the best and worst of human nature in Scrooge beautifully, which is why I chose to use it to describe the awakening of spirit one can attain through a spiritual practice like the Steps.

I connect with my family in the evenings. I like to play cribbage with my husband of 30 years, Erich. He is an Interventional Cardiologist who supports my recovery 100%. I practice breathwork daily. I use *The Relaxator* while I work or do household chores. I practice box breathing and wim-hof breathing as well throughout the day. I view the sunset almost religiously. I practice gratitude while enjoying the day's end. Bedtime is usually around 9 pm. I wear blue blocker glasses after dark to help me prepare for better sleep. I keep my bedroom cool and use a Manta sleep mask and sleep tape at night. I don't even get up to pee! Sleep is king after finding a craving-free food plan in my book! A good night's sleep prepares me to make the best choices I can the next day. I have great energy without caffeine or any other stimulants from morning until night because of the way I live today.

A few other daily habits that help me are getting enough sodium, potassium, and magnesium, so I can stay properly hydrated. Most importantly, I practice living in today, living in the moment. I have a mantra I have repeated to myself daily for over thirty years... Be Here Now. It's the only place I've ever been anyway! I choose to make the most of it.



ANNE BORIES

FOOD ADDICTION PROFESSIONAL, TRAINED WITH
INFACIT, SUGAR & PROCESSED FOOD ABSTINENT



My Story

I was born in Aveyron in the south of France in a small village. My parents had a small farm. I was lucky enough to have always had good products directly from the farm (eggs, poultry, pig, fruits, vegetables). There was a baker and a butcher nearby. Moreover, my mother cooked extremely well and in a balanced way. We ate at regular times. There were no food addiction problems in my family. However, from the age of 7, I loved to eat, and I was already chubby. But eating was just a pleasure, a good time. It is especially from adolescence that I felt bad in my skin, uncomfortable with my femininity and with my body which was changing. I gained a lot of weight by eating a lot but also by having binge eating episodes that were completely beyond me. I started dieting with varying degrees of success, taking so-called miracle cures, fasting, reading psychological books, exploring diet programs.

I have always been a good student and this has helped me enormously in my research and search for a solution. I was able to complete my studies in Paris where I discovered the 12-step groups. Around the age of 30, I finally found the missing piece: I was "addicted" to sugar. If I started... in the long run, a crisis would follow. And crisis means unpredictable and uncontrollable behavior. Weight gain would destroy all my efforts. I was able to find the 12-step group that suited me and that suggested a well-framed eating plan. I followed the recommendations. I lost about 20 kg and never gained it back. I never relapsed. I had ups and downs that I was able to get through without taking one too many bites that would have had destructive consequences.

In 2019, I passed the certification to become a food addiction specialist.

ANNE BORRIES

I have a lot of experience from my recovery and participation in 12-step groups for over 35 years. I have also acquired a lot of knowledge in the field of food addiction, a field that is still very little known in France. I am fortunate to be able to speak English well enough to keep up with the latest research in the field of food addiction.

Recovery is possible. It is not always easy but if I can give hope, help, share my experience, my knowledge and my availability, it is with pleasure that I do it, like participating in this summit.



Mon Histoire

Je suis née dans l'Aveyron dans le sud de la France dans un petit village. Mes parents avaient une petite ferme. J'ai eu la chance d'avoir toujours eu de bons produits issus directement de la ferme (les œufs, la volaille, le cochon, les fruits, les légumes). Il y avait à proximité le boulanger et le boucher. De plus ma mère cuisinait extrêmement bien et de façon équilibrée. Nous mangions à des heures régulières. Il n'y avait pas de problèmes d'addiction à la nourriture dans ma famille.

Pourtant, dès 7 ans j'ai aimé manger et j'étais déjà boulotte. Mais manger était juste un plaisir, un bon moment. C'est surtout à partir de l'adolescence que je me suis sentie mal dans ma peau, mal à l'aise avec ma féminité et avec mon corps qui se transformait. J'ai pris beaucoup de kilos en mangeant beaucoup mais aussi en faisant des crises de boulimie qui me dépassaient complètement. J'ai commencé à faire des régimes avec plus ou moins de succès, à prendre des « remèdes » dits miracles, à jeûner, à lire des livres psychologiques, à explorer des programmes de régime. J'ai toujours été une bonne élève et cela m'a énormément aidé pour me documenter et chercher une solution. J'ai ainsi pu terminer mes études à Paris où j'ai découvert les groupes de 12 étapes.

Vers l'âge de 30 ans, j'ai enfin trouvé la pièce manquante : j'étais « addict » au sucre. Si je commençais... à plus ou moins long terme s'en suivrait une crise. Et qui dit « crise » dit imprévisible et incontrôlable. Et prise de poids qui détruisait tout les efforts mis en place.

ANNE BORIES

J'ai pu trouver le groupe de 12 étapes qui me convenait et qui suggérait un plan alimentaire bien encadré. J'en ai suivi les recommandations. J'ai perdu environ 20 kg que je n'ai jamais repris. Je n'ai jamais fait de rechutes. J'ai eu des hauts et des bas que j'ai pu traverser sans prendre la bouchée de trop qui aurait eu des conséquences destructrices.

En 2019, j'ai passé la certification pour devenir spécialiste des addictions alimentaires. J'ai beaucoup d'expérience de par mon rétablissement et de ma participation dans les groupes de 12 étapes depuis plus de 35 ans. J'ai aussi acquis beaucoup de connaissances dans le domaine de l'addiction alimentaire, domaine qui est encore très peu connue en France. J'ai la chance de pouvoir maîtriser suffisamment l'anglais pour me tenir à jour des résultats des dernières recherches dans le domaine des addictions alimentaires. Le rétablissement est possible. Il n'est pas toujours facile mais si je peux donner de l'espoir, de l'aide, partager mon expérience, mes connaissances et ma disponibilité, c'est avec plaisir que je le fais, comme de participer à ce sommet.

ANNE BORRIES



My Sugar-Free Meals

Every day I eat three meals a day which is always weighed. I don't eat high carbohydrate foods because they could trigger binges. I belong to a 12-step program. When I am hungry, I call someone to support me to get me to the next meal. Don't hesitate to contact me to discuss your questions. I am always available to share with you.

MEAL SCHEDULE

BREAKFAST	6am - 8am
LUNCH	12pm - 1pm
DINNER	7pm - 8pm

MY SUGAR-FREE MEALS

<u>BREAKFAST</u>	<u>LUNCH</u>	<u>DINNER</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 2 oz cheese• 1 apple or 4 oz fruit• Coffee	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 4 oz fish or meat or dairy products or eggs• 8 oz cooked vegetables• 8 oz raw vegetables• 0.5 oz fat• 1 fruit or 4 oz fruit• Coffee	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 4 oz fish or meat or dairy products or eggs• 8 oz cooked vegetables• 12 oz raw vegetables• 1 oz fat

NO SNACKS — NO SUGAR — NO STARCHES — NO SWEETENERS

ANNE BORIES



My Daily Routine

MORNING	EVENING
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 5-10-minute meditation• Make my bed• Write down my meals	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 12-step zoom meeting, or theater workshop or TV or rest
WEEKDAY	WEEKEND
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 3 Zoom meetings of my 12-step program• An average of 15 calls per week to 12-step program members• Reflection with someone doing the program as me to explore how I can improve my personality.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Working for my association in Dreux Individual and collective sessions



THINGS I LEARNED ABOUT GETTING & STAYING SUGAR-FREE — STRATEGIES THAT HELPED ME GET SUGAR-FREE AND STAY SUGAR-FREE

TO STOP BELIEVING ONCE AND FOR ALL THAT I CAN DO IT ALONE

Every day I eat three meals a day which is always weighed. I don't eat high carbohydrate foods because they could trigger binges. I belong to a 12-step program. When I am hungry, I call someone to support me to get me to the next meal. Don't hesitate to contact me to discuss your questions. I am always available to share with you.

TO GET INFORMATION ABOUT SUGAR ADDICTION

About its effects and consequences on the brain, the mind and the quality of life.

YOU CAN ALWAYS SURVIVE BETWEEN MEALS IF THEY ARE BALANCED

No, I won't starve, faint, not last ... if I don't eat between the three meals. It's amazing what our disease can make us believe. Hence, the importance of discussion groups to be able to talk about it. A balanced meal is also a meal that is thought out in terms of variety and reality (eating real, natural, unadulterated food: one product for one ingredient and low glycemic.)

TO KNOW THAT IT IS ALWAYS POSSIBLE TO LOSE WEIGHT AT ANY AGE AND FOREVER

What a pleasure it is to regain one's female or male body; to be able to choose one's clothes, to not be stigmatized in the street, to not be ashamed of one's physique. (Endless list) The pleasure of regaining the use of all of one's limbs and performing more and more of the functions of everyday life is a path that is within the reach of everyone, regardless of age, weight and build. There are very few medical contraindications.

TO DISCOVER THAT THE PLEASURE OF SUGAR IS ONLY AN ILLUSION AND A SOURCE OF INFINITE SUFFERING

Once the detoxification period is over, we don't want to go back. But beware of the disease that will tell us that we are cured. We must not fall into the trap and continue not to stay alone. We will progressively find the pleasure of eating real food, eating at regular hours, not skipping meals, making copious and balanced meals, taking the time to eat sitting down, eating healthily and enjoying doing sports to celebrate our living body.



THINGS I LEARNED ABOUT GETTING & STAYING SUGAR-FREE — STRATEGIES THAT HELPED ME GET SUGAR-FREE AND STAY SUGAR-FREE

PHOTOS

Take pictures of yourself as you lose weight and then continue to take pictures of yourself and you will be surprised to see yourself as thin and beautiful. You will be able to choose your clothes and the salespeople will regularly tell you that with the size you have, you have a lot of choices and that everything will fit. This is very nice to hear.

IN THIS PERIOD OF COVID YOU WILL BE LESS AFRAID OF CATCHING IT

You will not have this comorbidity because you will not be overweight and therefore a person at risk.

EVERYTHING WORKS IN THE SHORT TERM

Diets, miracle products, exercise, fasts, operations, psychological follow-ups. So, if you are aiming for a long-term recovery, get closer to those who have succeeded in this challenge. I would suggest joining the practices of those who have a total abstinence without a relapse of at least 3 years.

REDISCOVER MANY OTHER PLEASURES & WELLBEING THAT ARE MUCH MORE COMFORTING THAN FOOD

Experiment with dance, board games, creative arts, sports. Enjoy meeting new people, being able to carry your groceries with less breathlessness...And above all being able to plan a day without it being sabotaged by more or less unpredictable crises.

A LEARNING EXPERIENCE

A new food plan, a new way of behaviors, a new way of living without ever doing that food overflow again. It's true, food is everywhere, so it's a real learning curve to deal with food on a daily basis. And it is possible, it is realistic. It is a new language. For me, it has been effective for almost 30 years! Give it a try.



BARB KEHL

FORMER SUGAR ADDICT IN RECOVERY,
WORKED IN THE ADDICTIONS FIELD, CANCER
SURVIVOR, DIABETIC FOR 25 YEARS

My Daily Routine

MORNING

- Sit in front of Full Spectrum Light Lamp while checking my fasting blood sugar and drinking my first 8 oz. bottle of water. (I drink 64 oz. of water each day which is a little more than half of my weight in ounces of water)
- Meditate 20 minutes
- Jump on Mini Trampoline for 5 minutes. This has many health benefits, but I do it to move lymph. This replaces dry brushing.
- Walk laps around the house to get a start on walking a minimum of 5,000 steps each day. I open the curtains as I walk. I make this into a game too.
- Read My Mantra. I have it printed on my To Do List. This way I see it several times each day and it is more private

BEFORE SUPPER

- Walk the rest of the steps I need to reach 5,000 steps. I close blinds while I walk. A lot of times I've already gotten my 5,000 steps in earlier.

AFTER SUPPER

- Plan meals for next day
- Fill my 8 bottles with filtered water for the next day
- Write in my Diary
- Contact my 2 Buddies. One I text and the other I send FB Messages
- Wear Amber glasses to help me relax before bed
- Do 15 minutes on my Chi machine to help me relax before bed



THINGS I LEARNED ABOUT GETTING & STAYING SUGAR-FREE — STRATEGIES THAT HELPED ME GET SUGAR-FREE AND STAY SUGAR-FREE

- Make it FUN! I made up a game called "Walking to Freedom" (No Sugar, No Flour, & Walk a minimum of 5,000 steps each day). These 3 things are my most important daily goals. I give myself 2 "stickers" each day on my calendar if I achieve these goals. One big one if I did not eat any sugar or flour that day. And a star sticker if I get my 5,000 steps in that day. My calendar sits on my desk where I can see the page filling up with stickers, and that motivates me to keep doing it. Corny and juvenile? Yes, but hey, it works for me! What can you do that is fun and motivating for you?
- At my darkest hour, I reached out to a classmate and asked for help. We didn't know each other very well, but it was what saved me. Her help and support were exactly what I needed. Now each evening we check in with each other to report whether we were sugar and flour free or not. So, this is about asking for help and then being accountable to another person.
- Plan meals for the next day.
- Have food available at all times. I keep plenty of back-ups in case things don't work out. I keep canned Tuna, fresh eggs, hardboiled eggs, a variety of frozen vegetables, and frozen fruits. You never know when your organic boxed salad is going to go bad in the refrigerator overnight. So, act like a boy scout and be prepared!
- If you find you have given in to a craving or you have somehow fallen in the ditch, GET BACK TO YOUR EATING PLAN ASAP. Every day you spend in the ditch, the ditch gets bigger and harder to get out of. Soon you will find that the ditch has turned into a ravine. Maybe even a deep canyon.
- Be very careful not to be perfect. If I get sucked into trying to do this perfectly, then I get sucked into the ditch. Nobody is perfect with this, so don't put too much pressure on yourself.
- Be kind and forgiving to yourself just as you would be toward a child or a best friend.
- If you get a craving or overwhelming temptation, STOP and ask yourself, "Where is this coming from?" "What do I need?" Your brain likes questions, but it does not like being told what to do. So, it will look for the answers to your questions, but get rebellious and stubborn if you tell it what to do.



CHARLOTTE SCHÖN POULSEN & FRIDA SANDIN

HEALTH COACHES &
FOUNDERS OF LEVASOCKERFRI.SE



My Story

[Frida's Story] Eight years ago, my life completely turned around. I was 37 years old and employed at a large company with several years of inhuman stress in the work environment. On the upside, I had a good salary and wonderful colleagues. I was often tired at work and often went for a walk to the coffee machine to have a cup of tea with milk and loads of sugar. The more tired I got the more turns to the kitchen. At my office desk, I often felt like I was looking through a tunnel, tired and dizzy with blurred vision.

My standard breakfast before going to work was a sandwich and sour milk, as many people do in Sweden. A snack before lunch in the form of fruit and my prepared lunch box for lunch. The lunchbox could be varied and not unhealthy according to the knowledge I had at the time. It was simply home-cooked food like lasagna or potatoes/rice with meat (apart from the years when I was a vegetarian and ate loads of pasta, bread, potatoes, and rice, no meat and very little vegetables). In the afternoon, I always had severe cravings for something sweet. I had nuts at the office but when the craving took over nuts were not interesting and I usually went for a small walk to buy something sweeter, usually candy, to increase my energy. Sometimes, when I knew I wouldn't be able to get away for my afternoon snack, I made sure to buy it preemptively.

Going further back – to 2009, I got married. Before our wedding, my husband and I went on a diet with Weight Watchers, and both lost 10 kg. The dieting part went well on pure willpower, but at the expense of being hungry/having cravings basically all the time. After weighing in on the WW meetings I bought WW candy as a treat to myself. That was a big driver for me to go to the meetings, to be able to celebrate my success with their "sugar-free" products.

With WW I was taught that it was perfectly ok to eat pasta, at that time it was free amount of points. The day I weighed in for my gold key, I wore a light summer dress, and before weighing in I went to the toilet and took off both my bra and panties, all to secure that I finally met my goal. This happened a week before the wedding. Complete happiness!! The next step was then to also keep the weight off.

We got married, had a great party and went on our honeymoon! And what a honeymoon, a magical cruise with FOOD in all forms and available at all times. We met new, interesting people, ate and drank and danced a lot. We read books to each other, sunbathed, swam and enjoyed new life as a newly married couple. The trip also resulted in a 4 kg (8.5 lbs.) weight gain - in one week. A not-so-nice setback after 6 months of constant hunger and craving. A pregnancy later and that had increased and added a total of 10 kg (22 lbs.) to my start weight before dieting - basically back to zero.

A few years passed and the situation at home was mixed. In rear-view I've read my diaries from that time, and I was not in a good place. We had a lot of conflicts in the family, not only amongst the adults but also with the children, especially with the oldest (from his previous marriage). I don't think a day went by without at least one angry argument. For many, that may be common, but I grew up without open conflicts (at least on the surface) and all I can remember from then is one small argument I had with my mother. And of course that was related to me wanting to buy candy. I truly hate harsh words and fights. I am not afraid of conflict, but I prefer to sort it out through dialogue instead of arguing and saying things that you don't mean.

The demands at work remained stressful and inhumane, they were simply not possible to implement. Then suddenly it was decided that half of my department would be closed, and my services were no longer required. I was lucky, after all, I got to go home with a years salary (not unusual I large swedish companies). My first thought going home was, "Geez, I will probably add 10 pounds the first month alone". Going home with full payment also meant free access 24/7 to all food at home in the cupboards. Just before going home a good friend of mine suggested that I attend a course with Bitten Jonsson. "intensive detox for sugar addiction", 4 days in Gothenburg. Sure, why not? I thought. A little kick in the butt was exactly what I needed. However, my kick in the butt became a huge punch in the face once I came to Gothenburg.

Of course, I ate a bag of candy on the way there "the very last one". Entered the detox venue with my head full of "cotton". Once there, I realized the full extent of my behavior. Apart from being addicted to sugar, which came as no surprise, I realized I was actually also an alcoholic. My husband and I always had alcohol on Fridays and Saturdays. In recent years, I had slowly added a behavior of having a drink after work on weekdays as well, just to relax and wind down. I always remembered to dish the glass before anyone came home. I didn't see the behavior of sneaking, lying and hiding that I was doing – classic to an unhealthy relationship with something, which I didn't see or understand that at the time.

At Bittens Detox it became very clear what I was doing and with the insight I quit it all there and then. It has only been 8 years, but it feels like a lifetime has passed since then. I didn't really feel unhealthy in my previous life but looking back from what I know now it wasn't really a worthy life. And if I had to choose today between going back to my old life or hand in the keys, I'd rather choose the latter. This insight is one of the drivers that makes me continue on this path, because I know there is no alternative, any other alternative and I would eat myself to death.

Today, our family abstain from sugar, flour and alcohol (well, the kids aren't quite there). We don't argue about small things, and if we have a conflict, it is with good reason. Another benefit is that false emotions and false feelings is now history. Something I was dragging around with earlier. I am talking about the feeling of not being good enough, of being uncomfortable among people (because, what if they see right through me), being suspicious and expecting betrayal beyond every corner for no real reason, etc.

Not even in my wildest dreams did I at that time understand that life could be this good. As a bonus, I haven't been on a diet for eight years. I established my natural weight and never have to think about weight again as long as I stick to meat, vegetables and fat (and work on my stress). I am so grateful that I chose this life instead of staying in the old one. I chose to educate myself about Sugar addiction and now I understand what actually happened, sitting there at work with cravings coming as a supernatural force, impossible (I thought) to resist. My intake during a standard day would be some bread/porridge as base for breakfast, fruit as morning snacks, bread/pasta base for lunch. I always had my tea with sugar, and a lot of that during a day.

My blood sugar went up and down like a roller coaster, and when I got home from work it was to more high-carb food, sad faces and arguments instead of dialogue. More than one time I went straight to the cupboard and poured myself a whiskey. I was on a carousel that seemed to never end.

But that was then, I am glad to say. Since then, lots have happened. Change required that I got clean. Without an employer I instead started my own salon, and had at most 10 employees. This I sold off, to focus on my new passion in life. In parallel with managing my salon I also became a nutritional advisor and Sugar addiction therapist educated at Bittens addiction.. And now I work with my colleague Charlotte att LevaSockerfri (sugarfree living in Swedish), dedicated to helping others embark their personal journey to recovery. The energy that a life without drugs gives me seems endless and I am so grateful for that. I also feel happiness and trust in life. I am my own boss, and daily I meet people who have been in my situation and who I now, based on my own experience and new knowledge, have the opportunity to help. It's magical to be able to give back!

Daily, I share my story with an open heart. I share what it's like to live with a sugar addiction and the way forward to a better life. Having that opportunity to help others with the same problem is magically fun, and I really see that I'm making a difference! When I was younger, I often thought about how little difference I made in the world. I wanted to make a difference but didn't know how. And now I do <3. I spread knowledge and share my motivation, to help those in the same situation as I was, that want to become free.

My husband joined me in my new direction in life – as a bonus he also changed and I got "a new man". Conflicts are now rare and we are able to resolve things in dialogue instead of arguments. Our previous unbalanced biochemistry made us unstable, irrational, that we couldn't quite sort out our problems. Looking behind now, the real conflicts were as few then as now, but we created a lot with "false" emotions, which are very common in a tired brain running constantly high on sugar. In my work with clients I can often reflect "Wow, I haven't felt that way in a long time." I found that many emotions were created in the sugar rush or coming down. Feeling Isolated in a merry crowd, feeling ignored and unrecognized, disrespected. I have realized that those emotions were made up in my brain, and nothing that I was really exposed to.

If you recognize yourself in my story, I recommend you rethink what life you really want. Do you want to be your own boss (perhaps in more than one way) or do you want to let your intake control your thoughts and behaviors?

To become sober you have to find meaning outside yourself and the drug. You need to find something that gives more than it takes. I did that – and got myself a life that I don't need to take vacation from, I just love to live every moment with all its challenges and rewards.

If I can fix it - so can you! Addiction is a disease of isolation, so do not be afraid to ask for help if you need to.



My Daily Routine

DAY 1 — TUESDAY, JANUARY 4, 2022

7:00 AM	Waking up and taking a shower
7:30 AM	Go for a 1 hour walk with my dog and my colleague Charlotte. Great to start the day discussing the days schedule and get some fresh air.
8:30 AM	Eating breakfast, usually some kind of omelet. Today with onion and spinach. And tea of course, love tea.
9:00 AM	My calendar is open for clients and often I have my first at 9 AM. This day have in store 2 new clients that need inspiration and a long-term clients working on her way to a sober life for good.
12:30 PM	Lunch from yesterday's dinner. Homemade meatballs with cabbage roasted in butter. Starts to prepare for dinner and take out the chicken from the freezer.
2:30 PM	Answer some emails
3:00 PM	A new client want to know if he is addicted to sugar so I am doing a SUGAR-consultation with him.
4:30 PM	Take the dog out for a walk with my daughter.
5:00 PM	Help my daughter with homework and cooking dinner
6:00 PM	Eating dinner, mashed broccoli, grilled chicken and chili-spiced mayonnaise
7:00 PM	Karate class
9:00 PM	A soft evening with the family and the TV, having a cup of tea and an avocado
10:00 PM	Putting daughter to bed and go to sleep listening to a recorded mindfulness

DAY 2 — WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 5, 2022

7:00 AM	Waking up and taking a shower
7:30 AM	Go for a 1 hour walk with my dog and my colleague Charlotte. Discussing the work around some clients
8:30 AM	Eating breakfast, eggs, and mayonnaise, a cup of tea
9:00 AM	Doing some mindfulness and setting my intention of the day. I want to be strong, happy and feeling relaxed today
9:40 AM	Take a cup of tea with me to the office (in my home) and starting up my workday. Read email and we have some orders from our webshop. I do the packing and send the orders. Making the analysis for the SUGAR-client from yesterday
12:00 PM	Lunch from yesterday's dinner. Starts to prepare for dinner and take out the salmon from the freezer
1:00 PM	Writing a newsletters for our readers, emails
3:00 PM	Booked calls with new clients and recovering clients
4:30 PM	Take the dog out for a walk with my daughter
5:00 PM	Cooking dinner
6:00 PM	Eating dinner, Salmon with cauliflower and salad, melted butter on the top
7:00 PM	Family time
8:00 PM	Charlotte is having a relapse prevention online for our clients. I am listening to that.
9:30 PM	Putting daughter to bed and go to sleep listening to a book that does not need my full attention. Just because its nice.

DAY 3 — THURSDAY, JANUARY 6, 2022

7:00 AM	Waking up and taking a shower
7:30 AM	Go for a 1 hour walk with my dog and my colleague Charlotte. Discussing a course we are having soon about shame and emotions.
8:30 AM	Eating breakfast, omelet with onion, tomatoes and cheese, a cup of tea
9:00 AM	Doing some mindfulness and setting my intention of the day. I want to feel balanced today
9:30 AM	Take a cup of tea with me to the office and starting up my workday. Have some orders today so I handle them and checking some email. Writing treatment plans for some of the new clients I talked to earlier this week.
12:00 PM	Lunch. Nothing left from yesterday so I'm making some soup with vegetables and bacon. Preparing for dinner, short of time today. Eating lunch in front of TV watching Mindspace for a while.
1:00 PM	Some payments and economic stuff
2:00 PM	New meeting with the person who did SUGAR this week. He is addicted to sugar and has a lot of consequences. Making a recovery plan for him and helping him to start the treatment.
4:00 PM	Starting dinner preparations
4:30 PM	Take the dog out for a walk with my daughter
5:00 PM	Eating quick dinner, smoked salmon with salad and mayonnaise
5:15 PM	Leaving home for riding class
8:30 PM	Family time and a snack with olives and cheese
9:30 PM	Putting daughter to bed and go to sleep doing mindfulness - listening focused after 5 sounds



THINGS I LEARNED ABOUT GETTING & STAYING SUGAR-FREE — STRATEGIES THAT HELPED ME GET SUGAR-FREE AND STAY SUGAR-FREE

- Start by realizing that recovery is a process, a process for life. Realize that and things get easier.
- I have reached my D-day - the day I came to my senses and KNEW once and for all! Straight to the bone - NOW IS ENOUGH! If this has already happened - Maybe you can look back and find that day and see the difference before and after?
- I have insight to my problem. I know and understand that I have a problem with food substances, and where the problem lies!
- I am motivated - I have a clear understanding of which actions / feelings that will drive me to live a life without the drug!
- I am compassionate with myself. I treat myself as I treat my best friend, compassionate without punishing or shaming myself!
- In the beginning i make sure to have external boundaries that prevent me from abuse! As an example, that you cleared the cupboards from drugs at home, have someone else to buy food at the grocery store, etc.
- I have the opportunity to remove harmful elements in my environment and surroundings! (both situations and people)
- I make sure to do things that I know are incompatible with maintaining my food addiction! For example, support group / sugar-free friends/knowledge about addiction
- I have found other "suitable" outlets instead! What do you do instead of eating to give you the meaning in life that you need, For example, walking, painting, dancing, community activities.
- I have broken my eating patterns and have stopped trying to find compensation for the drug through replacements and processed food!
- My loved ones support me and believe in me

You can embark your process of recovery by using our FREE workbook to work with these different aspects. This you sign up for here to get access to the download:

<https://levasockerfri.newzenler.com/courses/download-workbook-and-other-documents>

You can read more about how to get support here:

<https://levasockerfri.se/en/home/>



CLARISSA KENNEDY

FOUNDER OF REINVENT YOUR BLISS POINT,
REGISTERED SOCIAL WORKER, WORKED IN THE
ADDICTION AND MENTAL HEALTH FIELDS



My Story

Hi my name is Clarissa Kennedy and I'm a food addict. The problem is that for 38 years of my life I didn't know it. I grew up in a normal 80's home, you know the processed food generation. Carnation chocolate breakfast drink to start the day and kraft dinner to end it. Our Kennedy Candy Cupboard was legendary in our neighbourhood. Friends still ask me about the magical cupboard of passion flakies, twinkies, joe louis, and "fruit" gummies for dessert. Mom was a nurse and dad was a family doctor. You had to assume they knew what they were doing right?

I just always thought that something was wrong with me, that I didn't have enough will power. I fought daily to control my weight and my obsessive and compulsive thinking about eating and food. In first year university, my food addiction spiralled out of control and took a new grip on me. After receiving a "fat shaming comment" by my new roommate who I was desperate to please I developed an eating disorder in the form of anorexia. It seemed that even at the early age of 18 I knew that moderation would never work for me so I abstained from all food as much possible. Anyone with eating disorder knows that's when the voice gets really loud in your head, the one that shames you 24 hours a day, I believed it would never fully go away. I was right. Now my disease had progressed and I could no longer NOT eat so I discovered bulimia. Restriction, binge, purge, repeat. Sometimes all day long for several days in a row. It's just as bad as a hangover. I tried chewing food and spitting it out, looked online to see how could I make this stop but there were no answers. I eventually moved to laxatives as my esophagus was taking a beating. Now I had to always be close to a washroom. I loathed myself, food and what I was doing to try to control my consumption of the food.

CLARISSA KENNEDY

My mind constantly raced with self-hate and I found a way to drown out that voice with alcohol. Alcohol became my solution to the problem of eating. If I drank, I didn't feel hungry. Then I didn't have to eat because whenever I did, I couldn't stop. In fact, the less I ate, the less alcohol it took to take effect. Until the culmination of restricting food, taking laxatives and drinking resulted in a major car accident which should have taken my life. By some miracle I survived. I don't remember waking up feeling relieved though. All my problems were still here.

Due to breaking my right arm in ten places I was put on prescription pills, Percocet, for pain. I had found my new solution. Percocet removed all hunger....my enemy. I could finally go about my day without all the noise in my head, the guilt/shame and behaviours I had used in the past to rid myself of anything I consumed. This was in 2005 and the opioid epidemic had not begun. Doctors were pushing these medications and my medical family had no concerns even when I was on these pills for two years due to additional surgeries. However, I now knew that I was addicted. I now knew that I wouldn't be able to get more so I began secret drinking to cut down on the pills I needed to take. This worked for a while until it didn't. I developed a dependence on alcohol and still wasn't off my medication. I had a business trip to California coming up and I knew there was no way I would be able to sustain this level of self-medication around my business partners so I went off both substances, on my own, cold turkey, 5 days before the conference. As a result, I ended up having severe hallucinations which landed me in the Emergency Psychiatry Department of my Dad's hospital. They finally knew the extent of what was going on. There was no more hiding my disease.

I was able to be free of narcotics for the rest of my life but alcohol would still sneak into my life every 6 - 8 months. I just couldn't stay sober and didn't have any insight into why this kept happening. Meanwhile the voice was back. I wasn't drinking anymore so I began restricting and excessively exercising again. From 18 - 38 the only condiments I ever consumed were mustard and light Italian dressing. I did not consume ANYTHING with fat and I was exhausted all day every day.

At times I wished that I could be anorexic again but now I couldn't even seem to muster up the will power to do that. So, every day I ate and every day I felt like a failure.

CLARISSA KENNEDY

More importantly, I never told anyone that my disease was still active and so I felt tortured knowing that it would never go away. I felt like a fraud because people saw me as someone living this “healthy lifestyle.” I was always eating salad and I did fitness every day. However, at night, when all my will power resources were tapped out, I would find myself bingeing on sugary foods right before bed. Thinking they were low fat wine gums and it was the better choice than something really harmful like fatty foods. So, every day I would wake up and punish myself with exercise. I would vow to never let it happen again and then repeat the pattern day in and day out for 8 years. It was exhausting, frustrating and so defeating. I still hadn't figured out the alcohol relapsing either and I was an addictions counsellor for goodness sake. What an imposter I was.

I checked myself into treatment again for alcohol for a 3rd time. Sober and desperate for a solution. This time would finally be my time. This time the Medical Director of the treatment facility I was at was Dr. Vera Tarman. When I gave her my history in our brief intake meeting, she rapidly swung around in the spring of 2016 and asked if I had ever heard of the concept of “food addiction.” I had not. I knew of several clients who had developed “addictions” to sugary foods when they cut out alcohol or drugs from their life so I became fascinated in learning more about it. But predominantly because I thought THIS MIGHT BE MY ANSWER. It was.

I read Dr. Tarman's book and it was like a light bulb in my head went off. I learned about the dangers of sugar, how it affects the brain, and how it is in EVERYTHING we consume today. Still, I don't think that I was aware of the proper resources out there to truly be supported with this change in diet and how critical abstinence from sugar was important to my own recovery. It was not until I signed up for the International Food Addiction Counsellor Training course and was required to go to Iceland to participate in a true sugar detox in February of 2018 that my life truly changed. I never seem to be able to pick the easier, softer, OR inexpensive way.

It was an incredibly life changing and transforming experience. For the first time in 20 years, I was in a Food Addiction Treatment setting. I HAD to eat fat and 16ozs of vegetables and 4ozs of protein at a table full of strangers who didn't even speak English as their first language. They wouldn't let me leave the dining room table until I did.

CLARISSA KENNEDY

Prior to that my life consisted of boneless skinless chicken breasts, tuna, apples and salad. Now I trapped on an island in a crazy ice storm that shut down all the roads to and from the treatment centre and there was nowhere to run anymore. So, I did it. I struggled immensely the first night, I didn't sleep at all fighting the urge and demons in my head telling me to go throw up in the bathrooms. Unfortunately, they were right across the hall from someone's room in an echoey old building and since I was supposed to be the "well" person there my shame kept me paralyzed in bed. I did however wake up at 5am, 2 hours before we had to be at breakfast, and convinced some others in treatment to come to the gym to do a Crossfit workout with me before we had to eat again. The disease was still alive and well but in the next few days it would FINALLY begin to have less power over me. I surrendered. I did what they said, ate what I was given and truly examined my emotional relationship with food. By day three I was not only convinced that I was a sugar addict but I started to feel like I was finally experiencing life in reality. I didn't know that I wasn't before but the mental change was undeniable. It seemed like I was no longer looking at life through this plexiglass film.

I started sleeping better, I could focus, and for the first time in my life I didn't feel hungry. What was even better was that I was told that I HAD to finish everything on my plate. I don't think that I had been able to be mentally or emotionally be present at a meal with others my whole life because I was so focused on what or how much food I was going to leave on my plate. My journey to recovery had begun.

I knew I had to tell others about this miracle I had discovered. Just Eat Real Food! Who knew it could be so simple and yet have such a profound impact on your mental, emotional and physical health. I completed the INFACT course and then did SUGAR assessment training. I launched my business, Reinvent Your Bliss Point, in 2018 where I work with individuals based on a holistic approach to healing and maintaining Food Addiction recovery. I have a passion for empowering and supporting individuals, coupled with a commitment to education and best practice. I provide my clients with a strong, supportive foundation to assist in navigating challenging times for them and loved ones. My personal recovery story allows me to empathise with each individual's unique challenges and I help them to recognize their strengths.

CLARISSA KENNEDY

My clients are my hero's. They do an incredible amount of work and show up to fight for their recovery every single day. They fuel my commitment to helping people and teaching others that healing from food and the behavioural and emotional health issues that are attached to it IS POSSIBLE. My hope is to create REAL change in the awareness of the disease of Food Addiction. In 2020 I launched the podcast Food Junkies: Recovery from Food Addiction with Dr. Vera Tarman and Molly Painschab. The purpose of our show is to educate the listener and increase overall awareness about Food Addiction as a disease and abstinence as the solution. Show them how to THRIVE rather just SURVIVE.

This recovery life has brought me on an amazing journey full of new opportunities and blessings. I'm currently enrolled in Bitten Jonsson's Holistic Medicine for Addiction Course, I'm on the Board of the Food Addiction Institute and I was part of the team responsible for the submission of Food Addiction to the International Classification of Diseases published by the World Health Organization this past year. It was an honour and a pleasure to present Food Addiction at the Ontario Association of Mental Health Professionals last September and to get the opportunity to co-host the world's first ever Food Addiction Summit with the Food Junkies Podcast team.

Molly Painschab and I are launching Sweet Sobriety this fall. It will be a recovery community for Connecting, Educating, and Empowering you in your recovery. Our lives are a dream now and we know what it took to get here. We know the level of support you need. We know that yours can be too. You deserve recovery. You deserve Food Freedom. The only thing you need to do is the hardest thing. Ask for help. We are here to help lift you up!

CLARISSA KENNEDY



My Sugar-Free Meals

DAY ONE

BREAKFAST

- Protein: 8oz Greek Yogurt
- Fruit: 1 apple with cinnamon
- Fat: nuts & seeds

LUNCH

- Protein: 6oz ground turkey
- Vegetable: 8oz mix veg and salad
- Fat: 1 Tbsp dressing Primal Kitchen Dressing

DINNER

- Protein: 8oz Steak
- Vegetable: 8oz brocolli & roasted cauliflower
- Fat: 1 Tbsp Spicy Thai Olive Oil

DAY TWO

BREAKFAST

- Coffee with MCT Oil

LUNCH

- Protein: 3 Eggs, dairy free cheese
- Vegetable: Kimchi, spinach
- Fat: 1 Tbsp spicy chipotle Primal Kitchen Mayo

DINNER

- Protein: 6oz Chicken with G Hughes sugar free BBQ sauce
- Vegetable: 8oz steamed brocolli, zuchinni noodles with peppers & mushrooms
- Fat: 1 Tbsp olive oil drizzle

DAY THREE

BREAKFAST

- Protein: 8oz Greek Yogurt
- Fruit: 1 apple with cinnamon
- Fat: nuts & seeds

LUNCH

- Protein: 6oz roasted chicken
- Vegetable: 8oz mix brocolli, salad
- Fat: 1 Tbsp dressing Primal Kitchen Dressing

DINNER

- Protein: 8oz Fish
- Vegetable: 8oz asparagus, salad, cauliflower mash
- Fat: 1Tbsp Primal Kitchen Tartar sauce

CLARISSA KENNEDY



My Daily Routine

THINGS I DO DAILY TO SUPPORT MY RECOVERY

- I wake up at the same time every morning. Around 6am so that I can have quiet ME time.
- I make my bed every day and say a prayer for patience, tolerance & guidance throughout my day.
- I do 20 minutes of high intensity exercise, 30 minutes outside walk 5 days a week. On weekends I get outside for an hour of activity: hiking, biking, skiing, snowshoeing, walking.
- I read a daily self-esteem meditation and share it with someone who I think might also need to hear it.
- I cold shower every day. It's amazing for energy and our mitochondrial health. I also do sauna's followed by cold plunges. The hot/cold experience elevates heart rate, adrenaline, and the release of endorphins.
- During the fall/winter I use my Seasonal Affective Disorder Lamp for 20 minutes in the morning.
- I prep my lunch and my dinner while I have my morning coffee with MCT oil. I limit my coffee intake to one a day most days. Always before 3pm.
- I drink 6 - 8 glasses of water every day, 1 full glass of water before every meal.
- I schedule breathing check in's 4 times a day: morning, mid-day, afternoon, evening where I take 10 breaths (4 sec inhale, hold for 2 secs and out for 6 secs).
- Listen to recovery podcasts in the car. Food Junkies!
- I spend a lot of time with my dogs, cuddling, walking them and getting that oxytocin from them.
- I connect with my partner and find ways to let him know that I appreciate him and am grateful for him.
- I volunteer once a week at a Food Bank to give back to my local community.
- Eat my meals mindfully. Sitting down, at a table, without distractions like tv or phone.
- I stay connected to friends in recovery through text messages and peer support groups.
- I support clients daily and help give back what recovery has given me.
- I limit the amount of time I spend on screens, especially social media. I find it a waste of time and it disconnects me from my soul.
- I shut off all screens and dim the lights in my immediate surround two hours before bed.
- I go to sleep at the same time most nights. In a cold, dark room. I do breathing exercises to fall asleep.



THINGS I LEARNED ABOUT GETTING & STAYING SUGAR-FREE — STRATEGIES THAT HELPED ME GET SUGAR-FREE AND STAY SUGAR-FREE

- **Incorporate Mindful Eating Practices to your Meals**
- **Develop Your Own Recovery Routine** — Routines and patterns strengthen and enhance your recovery, as it helps you prioritize recovery, shore up healthier habits, reduce unpredictability, boredom and provides you with a healthier, more balanced life. Start with a morning routine to get your headspace right for the day. Put on your RECOVERY ARMOR! Unstructured time can also be precarious in early recovery and can cause restlessness and boredom: two emotions that are notoriously difficult to navigate in early recovery. Routine and structure are the antidotes to restlessness, boredom, and anxiety around how to fill your time as you adjust to your new life in recovery.
- **Weekly Food Prep Schedule** so the fridge is always stalked with what you need for Abstinent Meals
- **Practice Boundaries, Coping Skills & Asking for Help**
- **Get in touch with your WHY you are doing this**
- **Speak to yourself with Self Compassion rather than Shame** — Acknowledging mistakes, then let them go. Remembering you are exactly where you need to be right now, don't rush through life. Focus on self-growth rather than self-improvement. Speaking to and treating yourself as you would a dear friend. Cutting yourself some slack, giving yourself permission to move on to better things.
- **Find a way to get in touch with ALL Aspects of YOU**
 - Mental: Therapy, self-reflection, journaling, find ways to get creative, quiet time
 - Emotional: Feelings Wheel, Learn Ways to Soothe without Food, Where you feel emotions in your body, Cry, Laugh, Love
 - Spiritual: meditation, prayer, nature, yoga, volunteer, join any community
 - Physical: movement, stretching, sleep, abstinent food, breathing, decluttered space, rest
- **Put in the Recovery Work** — Sometimes we try to THINK our way into recovery. This does not work. We must ACT our way into recovery by DOING recovery things. We can't cut corners or look for loopholes.



THINGS I LEARNED ABOUT GETTING & STAYING SUGAR-FREE — STRATEGIES THAT HELPED ME GET SUGAR-FREE AND STAY SUGAR-FREE

- **Create a Personal Self Care Plan** — Self-care is an important aspect of stress management. Having a well-cared-for body can make you feel good about yourself and your life, and conveys to others that you value yourself. This can contribute to long-term feelings of wellbeing. Self-care is not an indulgence – it is the core of our wellbeing. By self-care, I mean purposely and actively taking time for yourself to do something that rejuvenates and energizes you. A holistic self-care plan looks at how we treat our body, mind and our spirit. We can take small steps to reduce stress and improve the quality of our lives.
- **Spend some time thinking about what YOU value:**
 - What is important to you?
 - What do you love to do?
 - Is there a hobby or interest you used to do that you have neglected?
 - Or is there something you would love to try that you have never done before?
 - Is it reducing something or adding something in?
- **Put your recovery FIRST in order to get the life you want**
- **Get Recovery Support** — This is vital in early recovery. By staying close to your recovery support network, in whatever form that takes: whether it is recovery meetings, Food junkies podcast, socializing with online or a daily chat with a person in recovery, nurturing sober relationships does help. You need to be around people who understand and can offer empathy, advice, and support. You need the reminder that you are not alone. Facebook Groups: Sugar Free for Life
- **Have FUN in Recovery** — Having fun regularly can help get the brain back on the right track, reducing negative feelings and reducing the urge to self-medicate. Re-learning how to have a fun recovery is a critical component of building long-term, sustainable sobriety. Consider that the more fun you have in sugar sobriety, the easier and more enjoyable your sugar free will become. Prioritize and schedule fun for fun's sake in your life. Explore new ways to have fun without food and investigate if old ways of having fun from childhood still work for you. Laugh at yourself. Give yourself permission to get silly. Sober doesn't mean somber! Shake off some of that seriousness. The reason we get into recovery is so that we can enjoy life again. This includes fun and games.



COLETTE BRANUM HARRIS

FORMER SUGAR ADDICT, SUFFERED FROM
LIPDEMA, EMPOWERED WELL-BEING COACH



My Story

I started out like every other child. A normal size, running around, playing, doing all the normal things. And then some changes started. You never know where you'll end up in life – geographically speaking. My name is Colette, and I am living in a beautiful part of Scotland, in Lochwinnoch in the greater Glasgow area. Lochwinnoch is thousands of miles from where I grew up in the middle of America, but beautifully centrally located for travel destinations yet to be determined! My love of travel and seeing the world was cemented in me back in 1970 when our family loaded up the station wagon and drove from Kansas City to San Francisco and back via the Southwest. Exploring new places has always excited me and being in the U.S. Navy Reserves took me to parts of the world a civilian wouldn't have the opportunity to see. Ultimately, I landed in Lochwinnoch. I am blessed to live in a beautiful place that inspires me so much! My journey to better health has been a long one. I started out a normal-sized kid, then the weight started coming on around age 7-8. Growing up, I just thought I could magically be slim somehow.

I had no clue what a calorie was. Food was always a form of comfort, the focus of holidays and family gatherings, and my best friend. Especially sugary treats. My hand was always in the cookie jar, or taking hits off the Hershey's Syrup, even indulging in orange juice concentrate straight from the can! Halloween was the night of the year for me. I hated coming home as I wanted to keep going to more and more houses to get a bigger stash. Then once home, I'd set about organizing my "loot" and prioritizing what to eat. The love affair with sugar was there from my earliest days.

I did my first diet right after high school graduation. That's where my yo-yo history began.

COLETTE BRANUM HARRIS

Over the years I've been up and down so many times, I can't keep track of it. I went through basic training for the Navy and thought this will fix my shape for sure. I came out the strongest I'd ever been, no jiggles, cranking out the push-ups, a runner. But... butt more like it. I was still disproportionately bigger on my bottom half with my saddlebags that first appeared at age 9. For years I would battle my lower half, trying to force it to match my upper half, and it wasn't having it. It wasn't until years later, living in Scotland, that I learned I had Lipoedema, a condition I had never heard of but suddenly my whole life made sense. I have a great amount of discipline (when I choose to apply it!) but nothing ever slimmed down my legs or got rid of the saddlebags, at least not the way I wanted to look.

On my first trip to Spain in 2012, my legs literally popped out, like I was wearing an extra-thick pair of leggings. It stopped right at my ankles with my feet remaining normal size, they were fine, no swelling. To try to "fix" my legs, I took water pills, went for a massage, elevated my legs up the hotel room wall, was in the pool, but nothing helped. I went to the doctor when we got home to Scotland and was referred to the lymph clinic. The nurse there changed my life. She was taking measurements, asking me questions, and said, "You have Lipoedema." I had never heard of it. Went straight home and got online. Bingo! That's me!

Anyone with chronic pain knows you get to a point where you will try anything to get relief. I was given different pain medications, but nothing helped without serious side effects. So, I went back to basics. Cleaned up my eating, made better choices, but still indulged in the sugar and processed foods here and there. I added CBD oil in, too, and wow! Relief!

I watched an online summit about sugar addiction and joined a 90-day program to kick my own habit. I had attended a couple of OA (Overeaters Anonymous) meetings back in San Francisco in the mid-1990s but didn't stick with it. I knew I had food issues, but I didn't make the connection that sugar was at the root. The pull of sugar was just too strong. I had been eating low carb, often going months without sugar, but it always crept back in.

And so began my journey to learn as much as I can about Lipoedema, the Lymphatic System, the Vagus Nerve and how to eat and live an anti-inflammatory lifestyle.

COLETTE BRANUM HARRIS

I knew how much these changes helped me, and in 2020 I decided it was time to train to be able to help others overcome and thrive, too. I asked my sugar coaches, Florence and Aimee, where they trained and learned about Health Coach Institute. Two months later I was starting the training.

I have altered my lifestyle and that has dramatically changed all areas of my life. Mentally, physically, emotionally, spiritually. Who would have thought so much difference can be made simply by what goes in and on the body?

I feel healthier today than I have in decades. It's knowing the healthy feeling that brings me here to help you. Changing one aspect of your life has knock-on effects on everything else. Small habit changes every day lead to living your most authentic self!

BEFORE VS. NOW



Summer 2017



Summer 2021



July 1, 2019



July 1, 2020



My Sugar-Free Meals

FOODS I MAKE FROM SCRATCH

- **Nut milk** – pecan, almond, walnut or a combo of those, saving the pulp for baking so the whole nut is used
- **Mayonnaise**
- **Pesto** – I use walnuts as less expensive than pine nuts, I also keep a basil plant to use the fresh leaves
- **Bone broth** – I will buy a boiling beef bone or keep chicken and turkey bones to make broth, no need to buy store-bought when you can make it in the pressure cooker
- **Granola** – this is easy to customize to suit your taste, no artificial sweeteners needed either, add cinnamon as it naturally lends a sweetness
- **Coleslaw** – I like to use different colours of cabbage and add in some shredded carrot
- **Berry chia jam** – cook down whatever berries you like, you can add the juice of orange if you like, and thicken it up with chia seeds
- **100% dark chocolate** that I can add to my coffee

MY FAVOURITE AND TYPICAL MEALS

I don't have breakfast foods for breakfast often. And I batch cook so there's always something ready to eat in the fridge. Also, I add cinnamon wherever I can for its health benefits. Here's what rotates through my meals regularly:

- Brussel sprouts with pancetta and diced pear
- Pesto Shrimp with zoodles
- Steak or chicken with bacon-wrapped asparagus
- Low carb Olive Garden sausage soup - made with zucchini instead of potatoes, coconut cream to thicken instead of dairy, leeks instead of onion (I'm not tolerating onions at the moment), I will add mushrooms sometimes.
- Pulled pork with homemade coleslaw (made with homemade mayo)
- Lemon artichoke chicken made in the pressure cooker
- Buffalo (pulled) chicken - this is really good stuffed in peppers and baked
- Low carb biscuits and gravy
- Ribs with a dry rub cooked in the pressure cooker. I've found a recipe I like that doesn't need any sugar or sugar substitute for the rub or sauce
- Veggie stir fry with chicken, beef, pork added in
- Sauteed cabbage with bacon or pancetta
- low carb green bean casserole
- Egg casserole or crustless quiche filled with veggies
- Overnight oats/groats with nut milk and almond butter, cinnamon, cacao powder, frozen berries or banana
- Smoothies made with my nut milk, spinach, avocado, frozen berries, cinnamon, cacao powder, hemp protein, chia seeds, water
- Salads made with whatever veg is in the fridge. Chicken can be added in, walnuts, some cheese if I'm having the occasional dairy

COLETTE BRANUM HARRIS

- It is super easy to cook some chicken breasts in the pressure cooker with some bone broth to make a sauce. This is a basic recipe to use whatever veg you have on hand to add in, along with fresh and dried herbs for flavour.
- I like to roast vegetables with a bit of avocado oil, salt, and pepper, maybe some dried oregano and Italian herbs. This can be an easy way to fill the plate with delicious veg.
- Chili without beans, I sub zucchini in
- Roast turkey crown, super easy to do in the instant pot and then you can make low carb gravy in the cooker, too, with bone broth.
- Spinach and artichoke dip beefed up with pancetta and chicken and extra veg added in
- Asparagus and bacon soup made with bone broth

PHOTOS OF MY DAILY MEALS



CHICKEN THIGHS AND BUFFALO
CHICKEN STUFFED PEPPERS



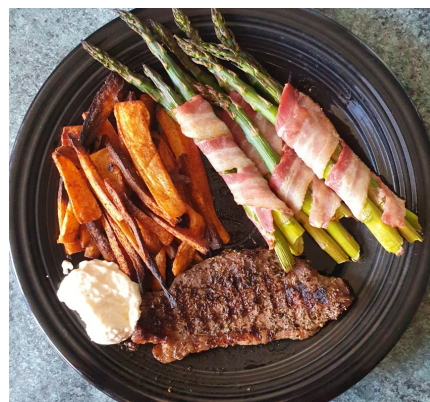
COLESLAW AND PULLED PORK



RIBS PULLED PORK COLESLAW



ROASTED BRUSSEL SPROUTS
PANCETTA AND PEARS



BACON WRAPPED ASPARAGUS
ROASTED PARSNIPS AND MAYO



My Daily Routine

MORNING ROUTINE

- Get out of bed and make it
- Read my Verse of the Day from Bible Gateway
- Shower - I drink my water bottle while waiting for the water to heat up and dry brushing several times per week. I can also set intentions for the day and talk through my gratitude list in the shower. I'm not very coherent first thing in the morning, so a shower is where I wake up and can start thinking.
- I fold up my jammies and put them on the bed ready to go for the evening
- I use essential oil and CBD massage oil combination on the bottoms of my feet and behind my ears.
- Get dressed (easy to do as I lay out my clothes the night before)
- Make a coffee or hot drink and water the plants while the kettle boils
- Morning visualization (Jon Gabriel library)
- Morning reading such as The Upper Room devotional
- Vibration plate - I can do planking and dumbbell and kettlebell exercises while on it for 30 minutes
- Learning Spanish and Greek on Duolingo each day - it's free, use it!

EVENING ROUTINE

- I get in my jammies, wash my face, brush my teeth, those things as early as possible as these tend to wake me up when I leave them right before getting in bed.
- Make sure the bedroom window is open to keep the room cool, and the black-out blinds are in place. I like to sleep with a fan on as I'm a light sleeper. It's my white noise.
- Layout what I'll wear the next day: undergarments, socks, compression stockings, compression leggings. It's kind of a "uniform" I wear every day. Less to think about! The only thing I need to think about is a top. Again, I'm not a morning person so this makes the morning easier.
- Jon Gabriel evening visualization – there are a couple of different ones I listen to, with different lengths of time. Part of the visualization is setting my intentions for the next day and set my mind to what time I want to wake up
- A new habit of leaving phone and tablet out of the bedroom. I'm using my very first smartphone from 2014 which has no social media apps on it for my alarm and to listen to evening visualizations.
- I use essential oils and CBD massage oil combination on the bottoms of my feet and behind my ears

SELF-CARE ACTIVITIES

- Visualizations, morning and night, and if needed during the day. Most of the ones I use average 10 minutes in length.
- Time on the vibration plate, I usually do 30 minutes a day. The plate is set to 10-minute sessions. I like to do three back-to-back sessions, but I will break that up throughout the day if I don't have time for 30 minutes first thing in the morning.
- Walking and hiking! I can't say enough how much getting outside and going for a walk, however brief, benefits my mood and my outlook. Besides getting in movement and steps, getting outdoors gives me fresh air and a chance to unplug. I'm particularly fond of walking near sources of water. In our village, we have a river and creeks, a couple of lochs, and a lovely waterfall. Taking time by the water, to be still and listen to it is very calming.
- I use essential oils every day, applied morning and night along with CBD oil. I learned about using lime and clove oil on the mastoids (bone behind the ear) to stimulate the parasympathetic. And for me, it works. I can feel it if I miss it for some reason. I like to use oils like vetiver, frankincense, rosemary, bergamot on the soles of my feet. I really rub it on well, right up in between my toes, too.
- I'm a podcast and YouTube junkie. I love to listen and watch them to learn more about health and nutrition and life hacks. It's easy to google a topic and find something relevant to any current issues I'm facing.
- I love music so when I'm home alone I like to crank up the tunes and sing, especially when I'm cooking. There's something about music and cooking that goes together. If I'm down, I have a couple of playlists that will bring me back up and help me refocus.
- I love to read or listen to books on Audible. I mostly read non-fiction, but if I need to "escape" then fiction it is.
- I have a couple of friends that I can message any time. They know and share the struggle with sugar and food. They get me and I can count on them to talk me through difficult situations. They will speak the truth to me in love.



THINGS I LEARNED ABOUT GETTING & STAYING SUGAR-FREE — STRATEGIES THAT HELPED ME GET SUGAR-FREE AND STAY SUGAR-FREE

- Don't have it in the house!! If it's not there, you can't eat it.
- Meal prep, meal prep, meal prep! Have things ready to be able to grab and go. When you cook, make at least a double portion so you have leftovers for the fridge or freezer.
- Be in the community. We need the support of like-minded people to be successful in a sugar-free life. No one can do it for us, but through accountability, we develop the habits and mindset to have sugar-free integrity. Listen to podcasts, join groups on social media, read books about health and nutrition.
- Understand the science behind what sugar does to your body, what is metabolic disease and insulin resistance. Understand the history of how we got to this point with sugar (slavery) and processed foods (ex. Kellogg's), the switch to the formula from breastfeeding, TV dinners, the low-fat/no-fat craze, blaming fat for heart disease instead of sugar back in the 1950s.
- Have a vision of my sugar-free self, in all its glory! I visualize what life looks like without the sugar and all the mayhem it brings.
- Knowing what the pain is like from the sugar and processed foods and how it feels to live without that pain is motivation to stay sugar-free. When you get free of the sugar, you can listen to your body and know better what it's asking for, i.e., more veg, less meat, certain foods.
- I don't hesitate to take my own food to family gatherings. They have learned I don't eat sugar and are respectful of that.
- Get to know your local farmers, a farm shop, local butcher, farmer's markets, a community garden. Shop as local and as seasonal as possible.
- Invest in your kitchen. You're going to be preparing most of your own food. Get a good high-speed blender/food processor combo. Get a pressure cooker. Get a couple of good pans that also work in the oven like cast iron. And the transition to glass storage containers. I keep glass jars and bottles and use them for my bone broth and nut milk.
- Belief in myself that I deserve to be healthy and to honor my body by feeding it food that is good for it and will encourage good health.



CYNTHIA MYERS-MORRISON

FOOD ADDICTION COUNSELOR, AUTHOR OF
THE FIX FOR CRAVINGS, 22 YEARS ABSTINENT
FROM GRAINS AND SUGARS



My Story

I'm Cynthia Myers-Morrison, and my journey to sugar freedom has been circuitous and lengthy. If yours has been the same, it may be helpful to know that there is freedom available. No matter how long the trip nor how bumpy the road! I'm grateful now to be abstinent and to be free from the sugar/grain cravings that bedeviled my entire life up until I was past 50 years of age.

So, let's start at the "beginning."

I went to a swingers' party in 1971 and ended up with the host of that party in two recovery rooms. One of them was for food and one was for alcohol and drugs. I knew I needed the one for food, even though I looked then much the same as I do today. However, the one for alcohol and drugs was the one that convinced me I needed to stay. Or that I would die?! I had been dissolving my life in my solution, which at that point was alcohol (in addition to the "food.")

So, I stayed for 27 years free from alcohol and drugs; however, I continued to engage in other behaviors that now I look back on as addictive: nicotine, sex, and love, workaholism, underearning, as well as sugar in all its many forms. I had taken a 100-pound bite which took me slowly from 124 to 224 on my 5'4" body.

At the end of 27 years of striving to accomplish goals I was able to accomplish with sheer grit and will while turning some things over, I came to the day when I was going to kill myself because it was just too hard. I couldn't manage, manipulate, mother, or multiply myself any longer. That was the day I stopped eating grain and sugar.

CYNTHIA MYERS-MORRISON

Everything began to change. Instead of the foggy brain and the bone weariness and cluttered mind I had had up until then, I could see and hear and feel changes coming into reality.

At the end of 27 years of striving to accomplish goals I was able to accomplish with sheer grit and will while turning some things over, I came to the day when I was going to kill myself because it was just too hard. I couldn't manage, manipulate, mother, or multiply myself any longer. That was the day I stopped eating grain and sugar. Everything began to change. Instead of the foggy brain and the bone weariness and cluttered mind I had had up until then, I could see and hear and feel changes coming into reality.

So, what has happened in between? That's the real story because I had let go of sugar or grain, or even occasionally some other substances previously. That helped. I had held onto particular items I wanted to eat, and they were approved by whatever eating plan I was trying to use, and whatever group in which I was trying to find recovery.

Identifying food and behavior triggers that are mine were essential to begin my recovery. Once I had identified and accepted grains as a problem that I had never wanted to recognize, I could begin on the path of recovery in earnest.

As I said, I lost the weight, the external manifestation of my disease of food addiction. I did not accept the appellation of food addiction for years into my abstinence. I wanted to be a compulsive overeater. (And sometimes recognize that I had been also an under-eater and had intermittently starved myself, probably as much, if not more than the overeating; however, the manifestation on my body, looked like overeating.) When I abstained from grains, sugar, and alcohol, I found recovery from cravings almost immediately. I was relieved. This is not everyone's story, but I'm grateful that it was mine.

I had returned "by accident" 27 years after my first encounter with the same program in which I engage today. Now it is 23 years later and 50 years from my first encounters. I have accepted I cannot eat grains and sugar. I look at those combinations as "art." They are not edibles for me. Freedom!

Well, the physical freedom from cravings is sustaining. Learning to live with freedom from codependency is a story that takes some practice. Trauma history and the desire to be normal and to fit in easily in social situations, and to deal with my own idiosyncratic issues with my own body, unique to me: these took more time.

CYNTHIA MYERS-MORRISON

I have used 12 step strategies, therapy, supplements, vitamins, exercise, breathing, communication skills, support systems, service, prayer, meditation, mindfulness, genealogy, genograms, cleaning up the wreckage of my past, making amends, learning to live in the present moment, music, dance, mentors, studying, churches, religious practices, lifelong learning, creativity, and the skill sets offered in books, podcasts, webinars, and training for professional certifications. More than one.

I am grateful to have engaged in relationships that have offered me the support and kindness that I needed to learn how to support and be kind to myself and to forgive myself when I make mistakes. I choose to stay within the flow of integration that lies between chaos and rigidity according to Dr. Dan Siegel. I have used his awareness wheel repeatedly to find that center within me that is spacious, peaceful, and connected to the universe. That experience grounds me and frees me to fly at the same time.

I have friends that lift me up. I have relationships with others I support and encourage. I have today a family of birth and of creation.

I have made amends for past behaviors and even some closer to the present than I would like to admit. I can breathe easier today. I can sleep peacefully tonight. I can enjoy a life of service with foodaddictioninstitute.org and a life filled with travel and genealogy and photography and extraordinary experiences like skiing for a couple of weeks this January.

I had a total hip replacement and three weeks later was dancing and exercising again! I am grateful.

Now 75 years of age, I love my husband of 22 years, 23 years of abstinence, and sober friends of 50 years as well. I have family members I cherish today.

My cravings are gone. One day at a time.

My desire to have well-being and to share it with others who want recovery is deep and provides a flow of energy, hope, and light. Llewellyn is one of my family names and means “the one who carries the light.” I want to carry and share the light and to be a starfish thrower making a difference one starfish at a time.

CYNTHIA MYERS-MORRISON

You too can have and do and be in these ways too. One day at a time. Freedom from sugar and grain awaits each of us to choose for this moment FREEDOM with abstinence.

BEFORE VS. NOW



CYNTHIA MYERS-MORRISON



My Daily Routine

5:00 AM	Awaken, pray, meditate, shower, dress, make bed, clear trash in the bedroom, baths, offices and tutoring, and Social Media committee work for Food Addiction Institute
6:00 AM	Breakfast including 8 ounces of fruit and protein (eggs, salmon, turkey, goat cheese, edamame mixes) Clear kitchen some groceries she needed
6:45 am	12-step meeting of one flavor almost daily AM 1-hour meeting and clean up and sharing plus 1-2 cups coffee 20-minute transit
8:15 AM	Home noodles, 2 ounces goat yogurt, 1-ounce ghee 1-ounce ground turkey
8:30 AM	Daily except Thursday at a different time LoveMinders with Coach Constance
9:00 AM	Tasks... today 2.5 hours volunteering for Food Addiction Institute.org working group to get the APA to include food addiction and abstinence from trigger foods and behaviors as treatment (instead of moderation) in the Diagnostic Statistical Manual.
10:00 AM	Continuing with a Canadian dietitian, a Brit librarian.
10:30 AM	E-mails to Chair of FAI Social Media Committee and a Dr who is assisting in our efforts to enhance our DSM proposal.
11:00 AM	Lunch includes a cup of artichokes, 4 ounces of protein (chicken, turkey, kipper snacks...) 1 cup of spinach and 1/2-ounce ghee 64 ounces of water sometime in the day.
11:30 AM	clear dishes and kitchen garbage out, did a project for Aimee and Florence and their VA. Call to 98-year-old mother... a phone visit.
12:00 PM	Hair appointment today for cut and color.
12:30 PM	Hair continued with napping and reading about inflammation and methods to avoid it! Notes and slides from a class taken this winter.
1:00 PM	Hair continued and arrangements for the donation of household furniture and excess goods to a non-profit with which the hairdresser and her husband are associated.

CYNTHIA MYERS-MORRISON

1:30 PM	To the first market to get supplies for a ski trip and listen to Mike Dooley TUT.com re uplifting messages to do the best I can and then allow the Universe to do what it does to support endeavors.
2:00 PM	To second market to get goat milk for my sister to make goat yogurt
2:30 PM	To my sister to drop off some groceries she needed.
3:00 PM	Numbers in my tax and register of expenses.
3:30 PM	Preparation for dinner for Peter and me and putting away groceries.
4:00 PM	Dinner 2 ounces edamame noodles, 2 ounces goat yogurt, 1 ounce ghee 1-ounce ground turkey 1 cup greens, 1 1/2 cup tomato basil sauce and broccoli.
4:30 PM	Watching a space program on Netflix.
5:00 PM	Walking Briskly with my sister and her chihuahua and dachshund mix.
5:30 PM	Visiting with a friend on phone and resolving FAI Social Media
6:00 PM	Reading on zoom to a friend a portion of Nicole Avena's book on pregnancy (The books sent flew from the west coast but have and tech extraordinaire in FL and two of us in ABQ NM not yet arrived after the typhoon!) (one pro writer and myself) plus a CA woman involved in new protein sources: Such a team!
6:30 PM	Talked with sister re my inability to get my mother on the phone suggesting replacement phones.
7:00 PM	Gratitude sent to the two who accomplished the facilitation of that support. Lunch includes a cup of artichokes, 4 ounces of protein (chicken, turkey, kipper snacks...) 1 cup of spinach, and 1/2 ounce ghee 64 ounces of water sometime in the day.
7:30 PM	Completion of this project for Aimee and Florence and their VA, Call to 98-year-old mother... a phone visit.
9:00 PM	Snuggling with my husband and doing our 6 questions Bitten Jonsson suggested nightly for 90 days: the best thing that happened to me today; the worst thing that happened to me today; what I like and appreciate about you; how I feel right now; what I need from you; my wishes, hopes, and dreams. Then I write for a few minutes briefly inventorying the day and assets/ changes or amends needed on the morrow kiss my husband (I forgot to put in all the kisses and pats and smile through the day!!!) good night and put on my quiet CPAP machine, mouth guard, breathing tape and turn off the light to pray and think gratefully about a day well lived and then to sleep peacefully with my Fitbit recording it!



THINGS I LEARNED ABOUT GETTING & STAYING SUGAR-FREE — STRATEGIES THAT HELPED ME GET SUGAR-FREE AND STAY SUGAR-FREE

- Elimination of trigger substances and behaviors (alcohol, drugs, marijuana, cigarettes, grains, sugar, sexual acting out, workaholism, codependency, trauma triggers...)
- Abstinence one day/ moment at a time from trigger substances and behaviors: Practice, practice... PRACTICE each day and EAT delicious rainbows of food
- Sleep (7-8 hours per night)
- Fun dancing/exercise/ walking by lakes and rivers and oceans.
- Prayer, meditation, mindfulness (ala DrDanSiegel Awareness hub or Jon Kabat Zinn or 10 percent More or Tai Chi or walking.)
- 12 steps or some other service/active participation in a community.
- Writing/ journaling/ inventorying and then clearing away the wreckage of the past to allow us to live in this present moment...as a lifelong learner.
- Sharing with others and ending the isolation of addiction.
- Delighting in the sunshine and beauty of the planet and honoring it with photography, painting, creative endeavors.
- Allowing the spiral of life to lift each of us UP as we grow and change individually, as couples, groups, and communities to serve the greater good with JOY! Acknowledging we are all one species and all living on this planet, we begin to express gratitude for everyone we encounter and all the experiences we have (to share).

"Sometimes I stay up until midnight to complete an unfinished task. Then I take a nap the next day!☺ For years I slept only 4 hours per night. The gift of sleep is still a commitment I sometimes slight. Not often though."

My book *The Fix for Cravings* is available at

<https://myersmorrison.com/book>



DANIELLE DAEM

HOLISTIC NUTRITION COACH & SPEAKER,
MOTIVATIONAL SPEAKER, NUTRITIONIST, HOST
OF THE BREAK FREE FROM SUGAR PROGRAM



My Story

My story and journey through sugar addiction started the moment I was born. Immediately connecting the sweet taste of my mother's milk to love, comfort, nourishment. Being raised on the tail end of the "low fat" movement, my parents did their best to keep me nourished. As an incredibly picky child, I remember only eating mostly white things growing up (even though my parents tried their best to get vegetables and meat into me) - the white bread, white rice, white pasta with cheese... and the unlimited amount of candy and sweets whenever I was "a good girl".

Sugar was everywhere in my house growing up, as I know it was for so many. It was how I was rewarded for a job well done or picked up when I was having a sad day. It was always there after dinner or when I'd sneak into the kitchen to raid my dad's sugar cube stash. As I grew up and headed off to University, I thought I was healthy. I was doing all the right things - eating salads, going to the gym... But little did I notice, the ongoing prevalence of simple carbs and sugar in my daily life. The pasta, the pizza, the ice cream and candy multiple times a week. Somehow my body dealt with this way of eating for years. It wasn't until I went off to work "in the real world" that things started to shift for me. Working in an office job that sucked the joy out of me on a daily basis. I'd come home from work every day exhausted, stressed, and on a major sugar crash. This disconnection and depression lead me to numb out on anything I could get my hands on - wine, Netflix, pizza... Then I'd head to bed and repeat. This went on for 2 years before my husband and I both woke up to the truth that there was MORE TO LIFE than how we were living. In the first of many leaps of faith, we quit our jobs and headed to travel South America for a full year to discover our true passions and learn from different cultures.

DANIELLE DAEM

It was on this year's long trip that I had my eyes opened to how I was treating my body and what the long term effects would be. Seeing how different cultures, and people with little to nothing, connected with their food and cooked their own meals without rush - was a powerful message. During this trip we survived on anything that could last on a 30 hour bus ride (bread and avocado, cakes, cookies, fruit...). This went on for almost 9 months until finally my body and mind started SCREAMING at me for vegetables and real food. We started to make some shifts and cook our own foods when we could. Then, at the very end of our trip while we were living at a Yoga Center in the middle of the Colombian jungle, I went through my "accidental sugar detox".

We were living completely off the land and off grid. Disconnected from the corner stores where I could load up on cookies and sweets. Eating whole real foods from the land quickly caused me to start feeling "off". I remember having headaches for days, not sleeping, feeling tired even though I was resting lots, having digestive issues and more! At the time, I didn't know what was happening. After 10 days at this retreat and as we made the trip back home to Canada, I noticed my taste buds had changed. I no longer had the cravings for sugar that I used to. Things I used to enjoy no longer had any flavour. THIS was the turning point to help me dive deeper into my relationship with sugar and the food I was putting in my body.

I then went on a quest to clean up my health and my diet. I struggled (on my own) for over 2 years to get a handle on the cravings and drive I had to binge on sugar. I'd be good for a few weeks then have a major slip up, then get back on... and it went on and on. Luckily at the same time, I was diving into my inner healing with support from my coaches, therapists, and new friends. I had started my business as a Holistic Nutrition Coach and was working with clients in helping them build healthy habits and eat more whole real foods. During this time I was also diving deep into my spirituality and building more things like meditation and mindfulness into my days.

Finally, I came out the other side. I was able to reach a place in my body and my mind where I felt truly FREE from the control that sugar used to have over me. I was able to choose to have sugar when I wanted and have just a little bit without it driving me over the edge to another binge. The best part? I was able to remove all guilt and shame from these moments and approach my choices around food from a deep place of self-love and compassion. This is sugar freedom.

DANIELLE DAEM

5 years later, I'm sharing my unique process and helping thousands of women step fully into their power, find their voice, and learn to heal the inner wounds that lay at the root of our unhealthy patterns with food once and for all :)

If you'd like to know more about how I support my clients and talk about working with me, please email me at dani@danielledaem.com. You can also find a whole collection of free resources and videos over on my website: www.danielledaem.com

You are loved. You are enough. You are worthy.

DANIELLE DAEM



My Sugar-Free Meals

BREAKFAST

TIME: 10:00-11:00 AM

- Small half caf coffee + eggs, sauteed greens, sauerkraut, homemade organic sourdough, avocado, sprouts

(On days when I don't Intermittent Fast - breakfast will be around 9, lunch around 1 and dinner around 5)

LUNCH / DINNER

TIME: 3:00-4:00 PM

- In the Winter → Venison stir fry with brown rice, Chicken curry, Taco soup + occasional glass of red wine.
- In the Summer → Buddha bowl with egg or chicken, Black bean veggie burgers, BBQ chicken and veggies

SNACKS

- (rarely - 1-3x/week): green smoothie, popcorn, cucumbers and hummus/ guacamole, apple with peanut butter, hard boiled egg

DANIELLE DAEM



My Daily Routine

6:30 AM	Wake, 1 Liter warm lemon water, bathroom
7:00 AM	Meditate + Yoga or Run
8:30 AM	Shower and get ready for the day
9:00 AM	Start work day
10:30 AM	Breakfast
11:00 AM	Work
3:00 PM	Lunch/Dinner
5:00 PM	Shut off the computer for the evening (go for a walk, sauna, hot bath, meal prep, watch Netflix, House chores, visit friends...)
9:00 PM	Bedtime

MORNING ROUTINE	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Wake• Drink 1 L warm water with lemon• Meditate• Review my vision board• Yoga or Run (sometimes both)
EVENING ROUTINE	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Turn off technology/phones by 7 each night (not always perfect at this!)• Evening sauna + cold plunge• Read in bed

THINGS I DO DAILY TO SUPPORT MY RECOVERY

- Spend the first hour of every day for ME without turning on my phone
- Hydrate
- Move my body - even if it's a dance party at my standing desk on busy work days
- Mediate
- Get out in nature
- Use my wood burning sauna PLUS cold plunge
- Prioritize my sleep (9 hours/night)
- Spend ample time with friends and having FUN
- Going slow, being more in the moment and less rushing/being busy all the time
- Meal planning and prep. Cooking my own food



Things I Learned About Getting & staying Sugar-Free — Strategies that helped me get sugar-free and stay sugar-free

- Finding my community of like-minded people
- Being open and willing to dive deep into my inner wounds and healing that were at the root of my unhealthy eating habits - fears, traumas, limiting beliefs etc..
- Finding guides and mentors to support me through the tough stuff (working with my coaches, therapists and healers)
- Building a meal planning habit so I could stay on track with eating healthy every day
- Learning where sugar was hiding and becoming a sugar investigator at the grocery store
- Prioritizing my sleep and hydration
- Learning to say NO when I needed to rest or didn't want to do something (healthy boundaries)
- Learning to slow down and discover my true worth outside of checking things off my to-do list each day
- Building new friendships with people who wanted to see me succeed
- Connecting with source on a daily basis (meditation, walks in nature, yoga, chanting etc..)



FRANCINE MONTELEON

FORMER BAKER, SUGAR & FLOUR-FREE SINCE 2020



My Story

I quit sugar in April, 2020. With the help of Florence Christopher and Aimee Anderson's Kick Sugar Coaching I was able to steer myself away from sugar and flour. (I used to joke and tell them they put a spell on me) But the truth is quitting sugar is not a diet. There are no draconian rules and restrictive weight loss stunts. When you steer yourself away from sugar, it - by necessity - cuts out pretty much everything that comes in a packet or a box from the middle isles of the grocery store. I simply don't eat garbage anymore. Also known as processed food.

So, I quit sugar and how do I feel? My answer is this: Great. So great that I just keep going and going. While I'd like to say that my wrinkles disappeared, (they did not) I do feel that my skin has improved, and my arthritic knees are not inflamed anymore and I LOST WEIGHT! 30 pounds and have kept it off! I eat better now and never feel deprived. I eat abundantly and freely. I replace sugar with fat to satiate, fuel and provide me with good whole foods to eat and I don't ever feel as though I'm missing out. I have read where the ultimate aim of quitting sugar is to return to our natural appetite, like when we were young kids. Now that I have quit, I let my body choose what it wants, confident that now that it's not addicted to sugar, it will naturally chose what's best. I also don't have those sugar highs and lows anymore and for the most part I feel more energetic, which is saying a whole lot for a woman of "a certain age."

The social pressure to eat sugar is enormous. I don't have to tell you, you know it's everywhere and in everything. In the beginning I didn't tell too many people that I was giving up sugar because frankly, I was afraid it would sound preachy and hypocritical.

FRANCINE MONTELEON

You see, I was a baker. I co-owned a “Macaron” (French cookie) business with my friend, (who has since become sugar free with me!) I would be the one asked to bring dessert to every social gathering. But as time went on, and my motivation became stronger I felt I was “worth it”. So I proudly proclaimed with reckless abandonment that “I don’t eat sugar or flour or pasta or cookies or fill in the blank. What?? The cat’s out of the bag, so to speak, all my friends and family know. For the most part they seemed to go along with it. Now that I am approaching the two year mark of being a sugar and flour free woman, I get tested to “just eat this one little bite of whatever”, but that’s’ when I grind my heels in. Stubbornness can be a good thing. The longer I go sugar free, the more convinced I am that it’s worth it. I’m sure that it matters, that I matter. And there you have it! Believe me, I wouldn’t have continued down this sugar-free path for two whole years if I thought it was all a fad, and I certainly don’t see myself biting into a doughnut anytime soon.

FRANCINE MONTELEON



My Sugar-Free Meals

I categorize myself as a Keto-Carnivore. I don't weigh or measure anymore. I eat until I am satisfied/ full. This helps me to not snack in between meals (a rule I stick to!). I have become an avid "faster" incorporating 24, 48, and 72 hours fast into my health journey.

BREAKFAST

During the work week, I don't eat breakfast. I usually break my fast at noon or 1PM with lunch. On the weekend, I do have bacon and eggs for breakfast.

LUNCH / DINNER

Usually one of the following:

- 80/ 20 beef burger patty, slice of cheese, avocado
- Chic-Fil-A Southwest chicken salad (no corn chips)
- Egg white strawberry protein shake with coconut milk and 1/3 avocado

SNACKS

- Any type of protein:
 - beef
 - pork
 - fish
 - shrimp
 - etc.
- Cauliflower rice
- Veggies like green beans, broccoli, etc.

FRANCINE MONTELEON



My Daily Routine

MORNING ROUTINE

- Alarm is set for 7:00 AM

EVENING ROUTINE

- I try very hard to get 8 hours of sleep per night

THINGS I DO DAILY TO SUPPORT MY RECOVERY

- I make sure to have the right food in the house all the time
- I don't have food in the house that would be considered "bad"
- I take the stairs 4 flights up to my office every day
- I work with a personal trainer every week



HEIDE CORSE

FORMER BAKER, REGISTERED DIETITIAN,
6 MONTHS SUGAR AND FLOUR-FREE



My Story

I can't remember a time in my life that I didn't love food. Even as a young child I loved food, especially sweets. I grew up in a home that cooked the majority of their meals from scratch and we seldom had processed foods in the house. I was a normal weight. In kindergarten, a neighborhood girl told me I was fat (she was one of those very lean kids). And that started my obsession with being overweight and distorted body image.

Throughout my childhood, I just ate normal food, but around the 3rd grade I talked my parents into being a latch key kid and I could walk home alone after school and be home alone. (This was many years ago when things like this were OK!). It was at this age that I learned how to bake. We didn't keep sweets around the house, but I could learn how to bake them. I learned how to bake caramel/cinnamon rolls from scratch, cookies, brownies, cakes, pies, candies. You name it, I learned out how to make it. And I loved to eat it. I'm not really sure how I managed to keep my weight under control all of that time, but fortunately, I did.

Then in high school, I became even more body/diet conscious and started to restrict. I was obsessed with various diets and diet books. It was the 80s and everything was going fat-free and the thought was all about calories in/calories out. I also got interested in aerobic exercise and weight lifting. So despite the fact that the majority of my calories came from sugar/carb (fat-free!) I was active (or restricted) enough to maintain normal body weight. I went to college and got my degree in dietetics. Yes, I became a registered dietitian. That's all I knew. I knew diets and calories. (Granted, dietitians do a lot more than just put people on diets).

HEIDE CORSE

It wasn't until I moved far away from home for my first real job as a dietitian in a hospital that I started to gain weight. I was living alone, homesick, lonely and food had always been a comfort to me. So there I was baking again, and eating it. I was still active, but my weight escalated. I met a guy and "fell in love" and that took me away from eating alone at night and losing weight. But that was the start of my up and down rollercoaster of weight. For my entire life, I had soothed myself with sweets, but it was worse now. And thus started the roller coaster. And the inability to moderate anything. If I was on a diet, I was ON a diet (which would last a day or two). But when I fell off, I was OFF. (Which would last weeks, months...). I have a very black or white, right or wrong, on or off, personality. Moderation has never been my forte, in anything, but especially food. And although as a dietitian I would teach moderation it was beyond me how to practice it. I always marveled at people who could just eat a "normal" portion of anything or not clean their plate. I definitely belonged to the clean plate club. And I could never eat a normal portion of anything, much less sweets. So for most of my adult life, I just yo-yo up and down maybe 20-30 pounds. I would restrict and exercise to keep my weight under control (when it was under control). But that never lasted long. Then I would binge on sweets and my weight would go up. Over and over. I was the queen of "starting tomorrow, starting Monday, starting the first of the month" but then would eat everything in sight (everything that I was "never going to be able to eat again on my diet") until the next day/Monday/first would roll around. Needless to say, that never worked. And as I got older it got harder and I would gain more weight each time. And around and around we go.

Then, a few years ago Keto became popular. I tried that, as I always loved fatty food and I actually lost weight. For a while. But what I found was that I was completely obsessed with recreating the foods that I used to eat (that made me fat) with keto versions. So I would make keto cookies, keto brownies, etc. and eat them (never in moderation), but they wouldn't really satisfy me, and they really didn't taste that great, so then I would wind up making the "real" version instead just to get it out of my head! I do think keto can be great for many people, but not if you are trying to replace all of your problem foods with keto versions. It was during that time that I was watching a youtube video on the carnivore diet and Florence was being interviewed because the interviewer had gone through Florence's program to eliminate sugar from her diet. My curiosity was piqued. But I wasn't quite ready yet.

HEIDE CORSE

Then over another year or two, I continued to listen to a lot of podcasts/youtube videos on keto/carnivore/whole foods way of eating. At some point, I heard Vera Taman and Joan Iland being interviewed and it was the Ah-ha moment for me! THIS WAS AN ADDICTION FOR ME! No wonder I could never moderate and eat like a “normal” person (or drink alcohol like a normal person either). It was this huge light bulb moment for me. It made complete and total sense. When I eat sugar, flour, alcohol, and even artificial sweetener, it signals the dopamine in my brain and my brain lights up like a Christmas tree. This does not happen to everyone, not to this extreme at least. I am an addict! (I hate that word, but it’s true).

So I finally realized what the answer was. I needed to abstain from sugar, flour, alcohol, and artificial sweetener. But I knew I couldn’t do it alone. By this time, I had heard Florence being interviewed on other podcasts and knew she was the one to be able to help me. There are a lot of coaches out there these days. Find the person who clicks with you. Florence was right for me. I signed up with her and she held my hand every step of the way. Her resources are phenomenal. Professional and easy to understand. She is so kind and genuine and truly cares for her clients. I’m not going to lie; I feel like I did eat everything under the sun up until I started with her. But by that time, I was READY. I knew it was time, and I have never looked back. I simply love my whole food diet. I look forward to every meal and am sad when I’m done eating (because I’m a food addict) but it’s not because I didn’t have enough to eat. I have PLENTY to eat! I am nearly stuffed when I’m done with my big salads and meat, and completely satisfied. And the best part is I know I have another delicious meal to look forward to. I never would have thought I could do this. But if I can, anyone can. Truly.

HEIDE CORSE



My Sugar-Free Meals

Typical day: I am VERY BORING. I practically eat the exact same thing every single day. But I NEVER get bored! If I ever do get bored, I know I can change it up, but so far this is what I am absolutely loving to eat.

BREAKFAST

I have never been a breakfast eater, so I don't eat breakfast.

LUNCH

- 4 oz salmon or chicken
- 12 oz veggies (plus the strawberries and the balsamic to make a huge salad) Some combination of:
 - Roasted green beans
 - Roasted zucchini squash
 - Roasted yellow summer squash
 - Roasted bell peppers (red, yellow, orange, green)
 - Grape tomatoes
 - Spinach
 - Spring Mix
- 1 Tablespoon balsamic vinegar
- 3 oz strawberries

DINNER

- 8oz salmon or rib eye
- 12 oz veggies (plus the beets, avocado, balsamic and strawberries to make a HUGE salad). Some combination of:
 - Roasted green beans
 - Roasted zucchini squash
 - Roasted yellow summer squash
 - Roasted bell peppers (red, yellow, orange, green)
 - Grape tomatoes
 - Spinach
 - Spring Mix
- 4 oz roasted beets
- ½ avocado
- 1-2 Tablespoon balsamic vinegar
- 3 oz strawberries



THINGS I LEARNED ABOUT GETTING & STAYING SUGAR-FREE — STRATEGIES THAT HELPED ME GET SUGAR-FREE AND STAY SUGAR-FREE

- I needed to understand and embrace that this is how I am WIRED. It has nothing to do with willpower. There is nothing “wrong” with me. My body has a unique ability to turn sugar into an opiate. I am not capable of moderation.
- “None” is a million times easier than “some”. Complete abstinence has given me the freedom that I never had over decades of miserably trying to moderate.
- I eat food I thoroughly enjoy. There is not one thing that I eat that I don’t look forward to eating and I enjoy every single bite.
- I know exactly what I am going to eat and exactly how much. There is no question or room for negotiation. Period. There is no longer this war going on in my brain about whether or not I should/can eat something and then the self-loathing afterward.
- My food scale is my friend. It keeps me honest. My bathroom scale is NOT my friend. It made me miserable. There are a million different ways to gauge success, and the weight on the scale is not one of them.
- Keep trigger foods out of the house. If family members want certain things around the house try to buy things that don’t necessarily appeal to you as much. This is the real world, there will always be temptations and excuses to eat. We just need to be put our sugar dragon in the corner where it belongs.
- Shop in bulk. I buy large portions of meat/fish/veggies at Sam’s and portion them based on how I will need them. I always have 6 oz portions of salmon, steak, chicken, etc. portioned out and frozen and ready to be used when I need them. I usually take out what I need the day before to thaw, but if I forget they can be thawed quickly in a sink full of water.
- Prep veggies in bulk. I prefer steamed or roasted veggies in a lot of my salads. I simply roast green beans, zucchini, yellow squash, bell peppers, beets, etc on large sheet pans. I store in air-tight containers and always have veggies on hand for when I put many salads together.
- Realize that your sugar dragon may also like whole foods. Mine also likes foods like nuts and potatoes. Therefore, I seldom include them on my meal plan. My sugar dragon will try to talk me into portions larger than what I need.
- Listen to motivating podcasts, watch motivating youtube videos or read motivating books.



JUDY WOLFE

CERTIFIED FOOD ADDICTION COUNSELOR, SUGAR
CERTIFIED/LICENSED, AND HMA CERTIFIED,
CO-FOUNDER OF SUGARXGLOBAL.COM



My Story

Growing up I don't ever remember being in a normal sized body. I always remember being the heaviest one in my class. My mom had to take me to the Chubbys section in stores in order to buy clothing. We didn't have much money, so I didn't ever have very much to wear. I remember I was in junior high school when I first went to a formal paid weight loss program, Weight Watchers (WW). To be honest, I don't ever remember not being on a diet and not being concerned about my weight, my body, and my appearance.

I was one of five children. I had three older brothers and one younger. Growing up, I was the only one who was fat and had a weight problem. I remember my favorite aunt, Aunt Ida, would always say to me, "What a pretty face you have, if only you would lose weight." At the same time, she would always take me out for lunch at Embers, a fried chicken joint, and top it off with a sundae at Brighams, an ice cream parlor. What a mixed message I got!

I don't believe I came from an extremely dysfunctional family. My mom and dad loved one another and loved the five of us equally. I never felt abused or misused or taunted about my weight or anything else. My parents and my brothers rarely brought the issue up except to be supportive when I was on a diet. In high school, I was one of three white kids in my homeroom. I was the only Jew and the only one who was fat. I was also an overachiever and made good grades. I had lots of strikes against me. I remember lifting up my desktop one day and finding a paper bag in it with a note. The note said, "Maybe you should use this." Inside the bag was a large can of Arid extra dry deodorant. Talk about feeling like two cents!

JUDY WOLFE

Thinking about it, I am not surprised because I never showered or bathed or did laundry and wore my brothers' sweaters which were the only items that fit me. I attended college in Boston and lived on campus. Meals were part of the deal. I can remember eating whatever I wanted and as much as I wanted. I can also remember ordering take-out with my friends late at night. During the summers, I would lose weight and then gain it all back when I went back to school. The semesters that I was on co-op, working in my field of study, I would lose weight and then gain it all back once again. I can remember especially using the Stillman Diet which was lots of protein and water. I can remember my boss being concerned for my health because I didn't eat anything else.

After graduating college, I moved to Chicago for my first professional work experience. I know today this was an attempt at what is known as a "geographic cure." I was afraid to stay in Boston because I thought I would not be successful in my career. Actually, it turned out to be a blessing in disguise but did not realize it until many years later. While at work, eating lunch, I heard what would become the gateway to the solution of my weight problem. A colleague, who was a little bitty bit of a thing, told me she was only a phone call away from help. She told me she was a compulsive overeater and she went to Overeaters Anonymous (OA). I didn't respond to her comment and had no idea what she was talking about; however, it stuck in my mind and I never forgot her words. Although I don't remember her name, I will never forget her and the gift she ultimately gave me.

When I moved back home, I lived with my parents for a while and worked nearby. Yet once again, I so wanted to lose weight. I decided to join Weight Loss Clinic (WLC), which was a 500 calorie/day program consisting of protein and vegetables. I remember that it cost a great deal of money. I had to go every day and weigh in and speak to a counselor. At the time, I didn't drive or have a car, so my mom drove me. Looking back, that must have been quite a burden to her. I am not sure I ever expressed my appreciation but would if I could today. I believe I lost over 70 pounds following the program and dieted my way into a normal size body. In fact, WLC used a before and after picture of me in an ad, they ran in Canada and the United States. The ad stated, "...using the skills she's learned Judy knows she won't gain back the weight she's so proud of having lost." Guess what? Eventually, I gained it all back and more.

JUDY WOLFE

Prior to gaining my weight back, I met my husband and got married. On my wedding day, I believe I weighed 149 pounds for a split second of my life. However, it was very short-lived for I ate my way through my honeymoon and back. My weight continued to be a challenge. I was always on some kind of diet, whether it was WW, WLC, Stillman's, Atkin's, Diet Work Shop, Protein Sparing, or any other fad diet that came out in a book or a magazine. If I lost weight, then I always gained it back and more. I was what one would call a Yo-Yo dieter. However, I can't imagine what I would have weighed without dieting! Today, I often say, "I would have been 1000 pounds or dead!" I believe that would have been my truth.

My husband and I were blessed with two children. My life revolved around taking care of them, working, managing the house, and of course the never-ending saga of dieting. In early 1990, I started New Direction, a liquid food plan located at a nearby hospital. I had to show up twice a week and get weighed in, have blood work drawn weekly, and attend a group run by a psychologist. I remember them taking a picture of me in front of a grid hung on the wall. At my initial weigh-in, the scale read 288 pounds, the highest weight I can ever remember. It was at least 20 pounds more than I had weighed at the height of my pregnancies. Initially, I did well; however, eventually, I faltered. The nurse, who weighed me in, said, "Your weight is not a moral issue. It does not mean that you are a good or a bad person. Maybe you are a compulsive overeater. Maybe OA would help you. Maybe you should check it out." Again, I didn't understand exactly what she had said; however, her remarks triggered me to remember the conversation I had with my colleague 15 years before in a Chicago cafeteria.

A few weeks later (still on the liquid plan), under the pretense of buying winter hats and gloves for my children, I went to a department store. I proceeded to buy bags and boxes of food items and then headed off to Friendly's for some ice cream. At home, I proceeded to eat it all. I was beside myself with shame and remorse. I had no idea what was wrong with me and how to stop eating. I found the telephone directory looked up OA and found a number for their hotline. I made the call, found a beginners' meeting to attend, and have never turned back.

Has my road of recovery been straightforward without faltering? Absolutely not! I got a sponsor, called my food into her daily, and followed her directions.

JUDY WOLFE

I was blessed with abstinence right away, free from sugar and white flour. At least three times a week, I attended meetings; daily read OA and AA literature; making phone calls; and performed service by sponsoring, leading meetings, and booking speakers. Physically, I lost over 100 pounds, got into a normal size body, and kept my weight off for a couple of years. By working the steps from the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions of Alcoholics Anonymous as well as from The Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions of Overeaters Anonymous, I began to change emotionally and spiritually. I lived with far less fear, I began to like and trust in myself, and I was more present for my spouse and my children. Overall, I was a much happier human being.

One fateful day, I ate a cheese curl that was not on my food plan, and it had not been committed. One led to two, and two led to three, and then all bets were off. I took an 80-pound bite. I could not stop eating. I continued going to meetings and continued to call a sponsor.

I never left OA, even when I ate before a meeting and after a meeting. I knew I needed the support of a group of like-minded people and a 12 Step program. Nothing else had ever worked for me before. I tried OA-HOW (Honesty Open-Mindedness and Willingness), 90 Day OA, as well as OA groups in Medford and Chelsea in the Boston area. I just could not stop eating. I did not know what I did not know, and little did I know what was in store for me next.

At an OA meeting, I met an old friend, with whom I had previously stepped up in HOW. She was radiant, looked absolutely beautiful, and had lost a lot of weight. She told me she was doing a different 12 Step program separate from OA, GreySheeters Anonymous (GSA), weighing and measuring her food without exception, and not eating any sugar, grains, flour, or starches. I told her I couldn't imagine weighing and measuring my food without exception. She said she understood. I hemmed, and I hawed. However, I could not get the "glow" she radiated out of my mind. She truly appeared to be a different person than I had once known—physically, emotionally, and spiritually.

In March of 2004, I joined GSA and found a sponsor. I struggled with lots of 'Day Ones.' I just could not get it. I did not have the willingness to surrender to the food plan.

JUDY WOLFE

My attitude was, “Maybe I will be abstinent today?” On April 29, 2005, I ate throughout the day looking for the elusive taste. Did I want sweet or salty? Did I want to munch and crunch? Did I want mush and gush? I did not have a clue.

All I do know is on April 30, 2005, my attitude changed. It went from, “Maybe I will be abstinent?” to “How was I going to stay abstinent?” I believe this was a gift from my Higher Power (HP), whom I choose to call GD, and fortunately, I have never had to look back. It is why I tell people who are struggling, “Don’t keep coming back. Just stick around because you never know when the miracle will happen!”

Today, I am free from the obsession with food. By eliminating all sugar, flour, grains, and starches, I do not have the cravings which used to drive me to overeat and binge. By weighing and measuring my food without exception, I know I have had enough to eat. For whatever reason, I am a person who always wanted more and never felt satisfied. Even today at the end of each meal I am sad when I take my last bite. I always want more; however, if I wait 10-20 minutes, I am satisfied and can go for four to six hours without thinking of food or eating again. Today, I never feel deprived for I am not on a diet. I am on a food plan that works for me. I know there is always another meal coming. By the way, I consider myself a foodie. I love to cook, I love to feed people, and I love to eat good food that is tasty. Today and every day I get to do this guilt-free while living in a normal size body!

I believe I am a walking miracle! I am maintaining over a 130-pound weight loss for 16+ years. My physician, who has known me for over 30 years, marvels at my blood work, blood pressure, heart rate, and outstanding general physical health. However, that is not all! That is the physical benefit I gained by putting down my drug foods.

Today, I know that my drug/food is only 10% of my problem. I had to look within and become vulnerable and see what made Judy tick. By looking within and working on myself, I was able to change the way I think and the way I operate in the world around me. Today, I am able to respond and not react. I am able to pause. I am a kinder, more loving, and less controlling person than I ever was. I can more readily speak up for myself and ask for what I need and not be the doormat I was before, letting others walk all over me.

JUDY WOLFE

I have open, loving, and honest relationships with my spouse and adult children, who have their own children. Is it always perfect? Absolutely not! However, I consider myself a work in progress.

In the past five years, with my newfound confidence, I went back to school and became one of the first fifteen people in the world to become certified as a Food Addiction Professional through INFACT (The International School for Food Addiction Counseling and Treatment – Esther Helga Gudmundsdottir). There, I met my mentor, Bitten Jonnson, whom I have since studied under becoming SUGAR Certified & Licensed, and received a certificate in her course, Holistic Medicine for Addiction (HMA), in which now I am an instructor. To say the least, all this has changed my life forever.

Today, I work with two other colleagues, Dave Wolfe, and Anna Fruehling, have created SUGARx Global (<https://www.sugarxglobal.com/>), a virtual community for Sugar/Food Addicts worldwide to come together to Grow, Recover, and Transform. Our model is based on C.A.R.E. – Connection, Action steps, Recovery Protection, and Education.

All groups are led by coaches trained by Bitten. SUGARx encompasses all the facets we wish we had had when we were starting out on our recovery journeys. It is our privilege and purpose to serve other Sugar/Food Addicts – it is my dream come true!

I would never have thought by not eating sugar or grains of any type, and weighing my food without exception, that my life would change so radically forever. I am a self-proclaimed Food Addict through and through. My body acts as a distillery to these products and sets up a dependency on these foods just like alcohol does to an alcoholic. I am so grateful to know and understand this, for I never have to go back to the misery in which I lived before... chasing the food, my drug of choice! For this reason, today, I live with contented abstinence!

JUDY WOLFE



My Daily Routine

5:00 AM	Alarm goes off...first thought is, how will I remain abstinent today?
5:05 AM	Ritually wash my hands (reminds me of where my power and strength comes), pray, read from a daily reader, and meditate.
5:30 AM	Make breakfast for my hubby along with some standing stretching exercises I can do at the same time
6:00 AM	Perform my back and knee exercises to maintain strength and flexibility (post long-standing injuries probably caused by my obesity-related to Food Addiction)
6:45 AM	Prepare salads and lunches for the day for my hubby and me.
7:00 AM	Listen to a SUGARx Recovery Circle meeting while still making salads and lunches and drink 1 Tb of Sole water in 20 oz of water. Make and eat breakfast consisting of 2 eggs & 2 oz of full-fat plain yogurt & 0.2 oz of grass-fed butter.
8:00 AM	Out the door to go to a deep water aerobics class 3x/week (M-W-F)
10:00 AM	Work and drink a blended decaffeinated coffee with 0.2 oz grass-fed butter.
12:30 PM	Eat lunch consisting of a can of sardines mixed with 0.5 Avocado Mayo, 4 oz Salad with 0.5 garlic dressing (homemade) with 0.5 feta & 0.5 hard cheese sprinkled on top, and 4 oz of cooked veggies (usually 2 oz of roasted Brussel sprouts & 2 oz of broccoli).
1:00 PM	Work and drink a blended decaffeinated coffee with 0.2 oz grass-fed butter.
3:30 PM	Drink 1 Tb of Sole water in 8oz of water with ¼ tsp. of Potassium.
5:30 PM	Listen to or facilitate a 12-step meeting.
6:30 PM	Prepare and eat dinner consisting of 6 oz of protein (meat, fish, poultry), 4 oz salad with 0.5 oz dressing, and 4 oz of cooked veggies (roasted or stir-fried or made with some tomato paste).

JUDY WOLFE

7:30 PM	Downtime (with husband, read, catch up with friends, sometimes a meeting).
9:30 PM	Bedtime rituals: prayer, a reflection of my day, and gratitude.

Note: Daily, I get at least 10,000 steps... if I don't swim, I will take a walk outside using my Leki Exercise Poles or run around my house for at least 20 minutes for exercise... back and knee exercises are done daily; I drink at least 80 oz of water daily; sole water 2x daily. On days I don't swim, I start work earlier. My food stays the same on the weekend...I may sometimes sleep in until 7 AM... all other disciplines remain the same.



THINGS I LEARNED ABOUT GETTING & STAYING SUGAR-FREE — STRATEGIES THAT HELPED ME GET SUGAR-FREE AND STAY SUGAR-FREE

- On awakening, my first thought is how I will remain abstinent/free of my drug foods today.
- Before doing anything else in the morning, I pray, meditate, and take quiet time, acknowledging GD's faith in me by giving me another day.
- NMW (No Matter What) is a motto I use so I will not eat off of my plan or do anything against my integrity.
- I place my life in one hand and my food in the other, and I never clap them together.
- I weigh and measure all of my food without exception because I am a person of more.
- I have a scale in my fanny pack and extra batteries along with a backup bag in my car, which contains abstinent nonperishable food, a plate, a bowl, a can opener, scale, batteries, utensils, etc.; in other words, I don't allow myself any excuses to eat off-plan NMW.
- I plan, prepare, and protect my abstinent food choices by having what I need already available and prepared in my refrigerator/freezer... salad fixings, cooked veggies, and protein ready to go, not leaving anything to chance.
- I keep my eyes on my own plate and never worry about what anyone else is eating or what they are thinking about what I am eating.
- Daily I am accountable to another food addict/my sponsor by texting my meal plan for the day.
- Connection is Protection is paramount to me; I speak to at least three food addicts every day and attend or lead at least one meeting; I am only a phone call or text away from help.



MOLLY PAINSCHAB

MENTAL HEALTH PROFESSIONAL, ADDICTION
STRATEGIST, BEHAVIOR SPECIALIST, & CERTIFIED
INTERNATIONAL FOOD ADDICTION COUNSELOR



My Story

Hello! My name is Molly and I have been on a carbage free journey since November 3, 2017. I was 34yo and I was a mess to say the least. I weighed 280# and had 2 young children that I couldn't get on the floor to play with. I dreaded going to bed at night because it was painful. It was painful to wake-up and take the first steps of the day. I had to use a seatbelt extender in my vehicle. I stopped hiking. I was barely keeping my head above water. Twice in my life a book saved me.

How did I get to that point? I think it started when I was 9yo. My parents announced they were divorcing, and it was a SURPRISE to me. It seemed like it was a surprise to my dad too. He packed his truck and left that night. I remember standing in the driveway so he couldn't leave. After that, it was a blur. How did this happen? They never fought – not that I can remember. There was never any indication of a problem. I also do not remember an overly loving home either.

My mom quickly moved us to Montana from Wyoming, and we were a few hours away from my dad. She got a job (she previously ran a business with my dad) and I was frequently left in charge of my younger siblings. My only "time-off" was when I was in school. I think this is true when I began to use food to cope. It was my responsibility to make dinners and baked goods as well as manage my siblings.

Something you must understand is that my mother has no love for me. I'm certain, at this point, she did not want me (Yes, my parents were married for 8 or 9 months before they found out their first was on the way) from the beginning. In fact, she often said as much growing up, "If I had to do it all over again, I wouldn't have had kids".

MOLLY PAINSCHAB

Funny how I was the only one she treated poorly. Years later, in my own therapy (and as a clinical therapist) I was able to acknowledge my mother has Narcissistic Personality Disorder. (Eventually) The book, *Trapped In The Mirror: Adult Children of Narcissists in their Struggle for Self* by Elan Golomb saved me from a very dark place.

But, why am I telling you this? Because you have to know that my daily life was filled with torture and torment, physical, emotional, and mental abuse, and neglect. I didn't know it then - but I do know it now. She referred to me often as the "Fat lazy bitch" as if I didn't have a name. "Two-Ton Tilly" was another favorite ..., especially at my softball games. I was often reminded how much like my father I was. I was a "weirdo" and a "freak". I was "book smart" but not street smart. I read books one after the other as an escape.

When I was 11yo I was left to live with my dad. Just me. It was both torture and heaven. I was now left ALONE frequently. But I only had to manage myself. I didn't have to make all the meals for many people - I just had to find food for me when I was hungry. I found what I wanted, ate it, and was done. When my mother demanded me back to her home (she needed childcare for the summer) I had lost weight apparently because I remember her commenting on my body yet again - but in a positive way this time.

Back to her house, I went and back came to the responsibilities and coping skills that I learned just months earlier. Can I tell you something even funnier about this whole thing?!?! I wasn't once overweight. I was normal and have pictures to prove it. But she created a story in my mind that I was a "fat lazy bitch" and that I was somehow less than because of it.

At 18yo, I was told to leave. I was no longer welcome in her home. I had until I graduated (only a few weeks after turning 18yo) to figure it out. I have never been back in her home. I don't have a room to "go home to". I don't have a "home" to go back to. My home now is the most stable I have ever been in my life. That does something to a kid. Anyway, I found a construction job for the summer with my stepdad in a remote area of the state. We had an unfurnished apartment there and we slept on air mattresses. But it was a place for me to be until I started college in the fall. I went on to get my undergraduate degree by waiting tables. I was up 40 pounds from my senior year in high school and I was about to get married to my high school sweetheart.

MOLLY PAINSCHAB

SO? So I did the Weight Watchers program. No. I didn't weigh in every week. I just tracked my points and stuck to them. I lost the weight very quickly and kept it off for 6 months or so. Then the creep began.

At the time I was working in Corrections and (surprise, surprise) still didn't have great coping skills! I was independent and self-sufficient, but I was codependent, passive-aggressive, and depressed as hell. Suicidal even (for a second time in my life). I got into therapy and got on medication. It helped – A LOT! I really thought my main issue was codependency.

For years I worked on myself in therapy. For years I used food to cope. By the time I was 28yo I had a master's degree in Mental Health Counseling and wanted to start a family. I was also 250# and newly diagnosed with Polycystic Ovarian Syndrome (PCOS). I went gluten and dairy-free and was given Metformin. I developed gestational diabetes and had to lower my carb intake to 150g per day. I had to track my food and test my blood sugar three times a day. I was required to meet with a specialist at the Diabetes Center frequently and had to have extra fetal heart monitoring, ultrasounds, and early induction. My first daughter was born in December 2012 and I weighed 280#.

I remember the “baby weight” coming off easily. All 30#. Believe me when I say 250# is NOT my ideal body weight. But I was a new mother barely keeping my head above water with the colicky baby who screamed all night long, exhaustion, hormone craziness, trying to find trustworthy childcare, all the well-child checks, and more! I was in survival mode and losing weight was not on the “to-do” list. So, I maintained. I used food to cope but I wasn't gaining. I was holding steady.

A few years later, I had left Corrections but was still working in Sexual Assault and on the Suicide/Crisis hotline as well as trying to grow my tiny private practice. I was up 30# (hey! Imagine that!?) and we were hoping for a second baby to complete our family. Back to the OBGYN I went. Back on the Metformin and this time they let me stay on the medication for the entire pregnancy. I did not develop gestational diabetes with this pregnancy. I don't know how high my weight got. I couldn't sleep lying down because my right arm would go numb. I could hardly walk first thing in the morning because the pain in my feet was excruciating. My migraines were out of control (I've had them since I was 16yo). But we were blessed with our second daughter in December 2015.

MOLLY PAINSCHAB

Again- survival kicked in. I had a 3yo and a newborn. Every waking minute was spent trying to engage with the 3yo, trying not to give into the guilt I felt because she was no longer an only child, trying to keep the 3yo from squishing the baby to death, worrying over my Father-in-Law's mysterious illness and symptoms that no one could diagnose ... all the while taking 1 week (yes, 7 days) off work after having a baby.

So fast forward to October 2017. I was so done. I was crying every night before bed because it was quite literally the worst part of my day. I was upset with myself over screaming all day at the children. I was scared to go to sleep because of the pain that waited for me just by going to bed. I was depressed and anxious again (long ago I had gotten off the meds...I was still very much in therapy – to this day even!). My husband – God loves him – listens to the Joe Rogan Experience (don't even get me started on my opinion of Joe Rogan!!) and happened to hear the interview with Dr. Shawn Baker. In it, they mentioned keto, metabolic disorder, and PCOS ... and he asked me to listen to it.

So, I did. A light bulb went off and I started researching. I told myself I could do anything for 22 days and I did. And then I never stopped. I kept adding to it. At first, I practiced an "if it fits my macros" approach. That means sugar was still in the "foods" I was eating. I was also consuming baked goods made with alternative flours and sweeteners. I was eating fat bombs and I was fasting.

A few months into my journey, "Keto Kate" was on Instagram stories talking about a book she was reading, "Food Junkies: Recovery from Food Addiction" by Dr. Vera Tarman. I purchased the book and for the second time, a book changed my life. I now had words for what I was experiencing. As dual-licensed mental health and addiction counselor – I had NO CLUE Food Addiction was a thing. But it all made sense. But it didn't change how I was eating – not fully. A few months after reading Vera's book I found Vinnie Tortorich's NSNG. I stopped eating packaged foods at that point and really focused on whole, real foods. And so the story goes.

I knew I had to help others like me and took Esther Helga's INFACT program, Georgia Ede's Keto for Mental Health Professionals, and Bitten Jonsson's SUGAR Certification and Holistic Medicine for Addiction course. Today, I am down 100#, have a thriving Food Addiction Recovery Coaching practice, and get to co-host the Food Junkies Podcast with Dr. Vera Tarman and my best friend, Clarissa Kennedy!

MOLLY PAINSCHAB

Together Clarissa and I are launching our Sweet Sobriety programs and life couldn't be more amazing.

I hike, ride dirt bike, love driving atv/utvs on the trails, camping, going for walks and bike rides with my family. We enjoy swimming and being together! I am a recovery imperfectionist and rage-aholic. I no longer go to bed crying out of guilt, shame, or pain. I rarely have migraines.

I connect with others on this journey 2-3 times per week in support groups. I have goals and practice mindful self-compassion to connect with myself. I use helpful coping skills to manage when life gets "lifey".

I have met some amazing people on this journey and truly feel I am blessed. Having the disease of Food Addiction is the least interesting thing about me. Ask me about Montana. Ask me about raising two wild women. Ask me about growing up helping on the ranch - raising animals and butchering animals...helping calve, helping brand and vaccinate...helping hay and move livestock. Ask me about picking chokecherries and making jam and butter. Ask me about milking the cow and crossing the herd bull pen with a full bucket. Ask me about riding trails in the mountains. Ask me about the people I love. These are the interesting things about me. And I'm willing to bet, on the other side of Food Addiction - you have a tremendous amount of interesting things about you too.

MOLLY PAINSCHAB



My Daily Routine

6:00 AM	Wake, shower
6:30 AM	Dressed, answer emails, client needs
7:00 AM	Downstairs to feed dogs, girls' breakfast, pack lunches if needed, make/eat own breakfast, clean up the kitchen. I typically have protein and fat (farm fresh eggs and pulled pork for example). I sometimes have meetings at this time for the research project we are a part of, for the Food Addiction Institute, or for the Food Addiction Professional Network.
8:00 AM	Take girls to school
8:30 AM	Social media posts on business account platforms
9:00 AM	See clients until 12pm (If I have a break in clients I will get out for a walk). Friday's I host Sugar Sober Support at 11 am MST. Wednesdays at 11 am MST I hope on Jen Unwin's Clubhouse Meeting. I may have a podcast interview at this time.
12:00 PM	Lunch break: protein, fat, vegetables (I like ground beef with hard- boiled eggs, Normandy blend veg and some sriracha or Frank's hot sauce)
1:00 PM	See clients until 3 pm (If I have a break in clients I will get out for a walk). On Thursdays. I hop on Dave Wolfe's meeting at 2 pm MST. I may have a podcast interview at this time.
3:00 PM	Pick up girls from school
3:30 PM	Get girls settled after school; check emails, respond to client needs, decide on dinner with girls.
4:00 PM	I co-facilitate group treatment on Thursday at this time.
4:30 PM	Start making dinner
5:00 PM	Dinner: protein, fat, vegetables (Steak and Brussel Sprouts with bacon is a favorite) OR I am facilitating a group on Wednesday at this time.

MOLLY PAINSCHAB

6:00 PM	Take girls to girl scouts if a scout night or spend time playing with legos, doing puzzles or crafts.
7:00 PM	Start getting girls ready for bed. Showers, vitamins, teeth brushed, reading (lots of reading).
8:00 PM	Girls in bed
8:30 PM	Watch an episode of something with my husband.
9:30 PM	Start our night routine; vitamins, teeth brushed, wash face, contacts out, a short episode of something while we talk about our day and what we are going to do the following day.

THINGS I DO DAILY TO SUPPORT MY RECOVERY/SELF-CARE

- I limit my social media time/exposure
- I do not engage in a relationship with my mother or anyone else who is toxic
- I spend time alone
- I ask for hugs - a LOT
- I stay hydrated
- Regularly scheduled massages
- Essential oils
- Read with my daughters
- Get outside
- I connect with other Food Addicts in a group setting (2-3x a week) and individually (daily)
- I practice mindful self-compassion to the best of my ability every opportunity I can
- Therapy 2x per month (just where I'm at - I have been weekly for years in the past)
- I have a soft, warm blanket. Blankets and/or slippers in the dryer
- Showers as needed to cope (not just for hygiene)



THINGS I LEARNED ABOUT GETTING & STAYING SUGAR-FREE — STRATEGIES THAT HELPED ME GET SUGAR-FREE AND STAY SUGAR-FREE

- Start where you are, but acknowledge WHERE YOU ARE.
- Do what works for YOU. Shut out the noise of everyone else.
- Read Food Junkies (or listen to the podcast!!)
- Read Fork in the Road by Jen Unwin
- Prepare yourself for (unintentional) food pushers. Start practicing saying “NO”, now
- If you need to – start slow – get consistent with one meal (NSNF) and then add another
- Batch cooking in the beginning was very helpful for me! I only had to cook 2x per week
- Plan! Knowing what food I was going to have the evening before helped me to quite the anxiety
- I reminded myself daily what I was doing it all for (to LIVE for my kids, my husband, myself!)
- I reminded myself daily what I was doing it all for (to LIVE for my kids, my husband, myself!)



NETTA GORMAN

TEACHER, SUGAR-FREE FOR 6 YEARS, &
HOST OF THE PODCAST "LIFE AFTER SUGAR"



My Story

My name is Netta Gorman, and I'd like to tell you a little bit about my story with sugar. Up until my mid-forties, I had no problem with sugar. And I certainly didn't have the intention of giving up any of my favorite desserts, chocolate, cookies - I loved all that stuff! People used to make desserts just for me. But I'd been suffering since my early thirties from digestive problems. I'd gone to see doctors...They tried to help, but nothing really got to the problem at its source.

And as I got into my forties, and by the time I was in my mid-forties, I was really suffering and I had to do something. It was suggested to me to give up sugar, flour, and sweeteners for a temporary period. Two weeks, no more, just two weeks, and to see whether that would help my digestion. Well, it took me a while to get used to the idea, and I resisted it for weeks, but the fact is that I was just suffering so much, I thought: **What do I have to lose?** Well, I'll tell you what I lost. I lost my digestive problems. I lost my extra weight. I lost my energy slumps.

I had so much energy, I didn't know what to do with it at the end of those two weeks! And it's never stopped since! I lost the stiffness in my joints and I lost a whole host of other health problems. And I never looked back. I just felt so great after those first two weeks, which were pretty tough, believe me. But then I felt just so fantastic that I decided to carry on for another week and another week, and it's been over five years! This was in July 2015 when I first decided to stop eating sugar, flour, and sweeteners. It was also suggested to me to add more fermented probiotic foods and drinks to my diet and that was something really new for me. I knew nothing about that, but slowly I learned to make those foods, and slowly I started to share my experiences with other people because I'm just a regular mom and a teacher.

NETTA GORMAN

I've been a teacher for 25 years. I'm not a health professional, I'm certainly no doctor, but what I do know how to do is to explain things clearly and simply, so I started giving workshops about how to reduce sugar and how to make your own probiotic foods and drinks. And these workshops were becoming more and more popular, so I created a Facebook page called Life After Sugar. And then I was getting so many questions from people that I decided to create my website and then a podcast and a YouTube channel, all called Life After Sugar. I also have a monthly membership called the After Sugar Club, and a more intensive 6-week course, the Life After Sugar Program, with weekly support calls in a small group setting to give you support and accountability so that you can find your own sense of freedom from sugar and gain energy, confidence and feel healthier.

Why would you want to give up sugar anyway? Well, it's not a question of "giving up" anything, I think because what you're really doing is nourishing your body, nourishing yourself, and giving yourself all the best things from your diet. You would think that if you don't eat all your comfort foods anymore, then life would be pretty dull and boring. But it's the complete opposite!

Imagine your life with enough energy for all of your projects, for all of your hobbies, without energy slumps in the middle of the afternoon, without all the health problems that we tend to believe are part of getting older, but that can be kept at bay just by reducing or cutting out sugar, flour, and processed foods. Imagine your life without all the health and digestive issues that may be plaguing you because you know, your gut health is central to your general health. Helping you to feel great is the central goal of Life After Sugar. That's what I want for you.

If you're like me, a smart consumer, and you're wondering: OK, so what's left to eat if I don't eat sugar, flour, and processed foods? And what's the deal with fermented foods anyway? Well, Life After Sugar answers all those questions and offers you the support, encouragement, and guidance you need to break free from sugar in a sustainable way. It's like I say in my podcast: When you take away the sugar, you can start to discover the real sweetness in your life!

If you want to have more energy, the freedom from cravings and from the extra weight that's bothering you, and if you're curious about fermented foods and even learning how to make your own probiotic foods so you can take care of your gut health for yourself and for your family, then welcome to your **Life After Sugar**.

NETTA GORMAN



My Daily Routine

WEEKDAYS

6:30 AM	Get up, drink a small glass of homemade kombucha.
6:45 AM	Enjoy my café crème, take a shower, get dressed.
7:15 AM	Eat breakfast with my family (or sit with them if I break my fast later), consisting of my homemade viili yogurt or kefir, made with 10% organic cream, ground chia, and flax seeds, a little nut butter, a few raspberries or other fruit
7:30 AM	Look after my family, prep school bags, etc.
8:30 AM	Work/teach
12:00 PM	Take a break with my hubby while he has lunch, do a crossword together, drink herb tea
1:00 PM	Work/teach
4:30 PM	After school tasks (homework, etc.)
5:30 PM	Start prepping dinner. Family dinner consisting of a protein (meat/fish/seafood) and veggies with a yummy sauce, in 1001 combinations. Often a fermented veggie (homemade sauerkraut or kimchi), sometimes make a hot drink (mix hot water, cacao powder, cacao butter, cream)
7:00 PM	Wash dishes, clean up
8:00 PM	Relax, watch TV with family

NETTA GORMAN

WEEKENDS

8:00 AM	Get up, drink a small glass of homemade kombucha
8:30 AM	Enjoy my café crème, take a shower, get dressed
9:30 AM	Eat breakfast with family, consisting of 2 eggs any style, meat, with homemade sauerkraut or kimchi
DAY	Errands, mom-taxi, laundry, groceries, etc. Go for a walk or read.
5:30 PM	Prep dinner
7:00 PM	Dinner with family (see above)
EVENING	Family time



THINGS I LEARNED ABOUT GETTING & STAYING SUGAR-FREE — STRATEGIES THAT HELPED ME GET SUGAR-FREE AND STAY SUGAR-FREE

- Put my well-being first (without feeling selfish!)
- Have an open mind
- Don't give up at the first hurdle
- Try new foods and new tastes
- Appreciate all the reasons you're celebrating (so that you don't need cake anymore!)
- Learn to express and meet your emotional needs instead of masking them with sugar
- Train your tastebuds to enjoy less and less sweetness
- Enjoy your food, don't use it.
- Make daily small habit changes, one day at a time - "never" and "forever" are too overwhelming
- Make feeling good and eating real foods your new normal.



SARA LEVITE

LICENSED PSYCHOTHERAPIST, WELLNESS COACH,
& FOUNDER OF SARALEVITECOUNSELING.COM



My Story

After completing degrees in Psychology and Counseling at the University of Vermont and Springfield College I launched my professional career in Massachusetts as a social worker in the Department of Social Services and a court-appointed Guardian Ad Litem. I relocated to Southern Maine, where I accepted a position as a psychiatric social worker and counselor in the Department of Corrections. I then transitioned into private practice, which I have maintained in the Greater Portland area for over 25 years.

My areas of professional expertise include helping adults with concerns such as depression, anxiety, addictions, relationship challenges, stress management, and overall wellbeing. In addition to my clinical work with individuals and couples, I have extensive experience conducting presentations and workshops in Maine, Massachusetts, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, and Florida. I have completed advanced training in an innovative treatment option for couples called Discernment Counseling — an innovative short-term option for anyone who is considering separation or divorce. Unlike traditional couples therapy, discernment counseling is a short-term process (1-5 sessions) designed to help you as a couple decide what is best for you and your family. My process is interactive and collaborative, striving to guide and support clients on their own journey.

SARA LEVITE



My Daily Routine

6:00 AM	Wake up, drink a large mug of hot water and do any chores needed.
7:00 AM	Do 1- an hour of virtual guided yoga.
8:00 AM	Prepare and eat my breakfast which could be 1 of the following; <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 1 cup cooked quinoa, 1 cup fruit, medium sweet potato, OR• 1 cup cooked steel-cut oats, 1 ½ cup plain soy yogurt with cinnamon, 1 bowl of fruit, OR• 2 poached eggs on 2 plain rice cakes, a small veggie salad, and a cup of fruit.
10:00 AM	I either take a walk outdoors or ride my bicycle.
11:00 AM	I work.
1:00 PM	Prepare and eat my lunch which could be one of the following; <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Approx. 4 ounces of seafood, 1 baked potato, large veggie salad, OR• Approx. 1 cup cooked legumes, a cup of rice, and a large bowl of cooked veggies, OR• Approx. 4 ounces of tofu, 1 cup winter squash, and a large bowl of cooked veggies.
3:00 PM	Work, socialize, do tasks about my house.
6:30 PM	Prepare and eat my dinner which would be a similar version of what I made for lunch.
7:00 PM	Relax, Read, Watch TV, or tend to household tasks.



THINGS I LEARNED ABOUT GETTING & STAYING SUGAR-FREE — STRATEGIES THAT HELPED ME GET SUGAR-FREE AND STAY SUGAR-FREE

- I joined a 12-step program to get support from others struggling with food.
- I identified my trigger foods.
- I started reading all ingredient labels before purchasing something AND MADE SURE SUGAR WAS AT LEAST THE 5TH LISTED INGREDIENT OR LOWER
- I avoided getting over-hungry between meals.
- I made sure I had my healthy, non-triggering food with me whenever I was away from home for a meal.
- I read something spiritual on a daily basis.
- I slowed my life down as best I could to focus on this goal.
- I weighed and measured my food so I could learn proper quantities.
- I made sure the food I ate tasted good and nourishing.
- I learned as much as I could about food addiction – both the physical and emotional components.



SCOTT GARMAN

SUGAR AND FOOD ADDICT FOR OVER 45 YEARS,
ABSTINENT OF SUGAR, FLOUR, PROCESSED FOODS,
ALCOHOL, AND CAFFEINE FOR OVER A YEAR



My Story

I ate extremely healthy through childhood, until leaving home at age 22. However, sugar was used as a treat and as a reward for doing well, starting very young around the age of 5. I became a high achiever, always striving for that sugary reward. I never learned how to cook, and I never cooked a meal at home from age 22 to 48. I would eat fast food of some sort every day. I'm guessing over 5,000 meals at McDonald's! Also I would have 1-2 pops a day, usually Coke. And 6-8 cups of coffee a day with sugar and cream. I had zero intake of vegetables, and I would average one glass of water per week. I would usually end the day with an alcoholic beverage. I always kept active with a variety of exercise, including soccer, tennis, running, and going to the gym. Keeping in good shape, combined with my high metabolism, hid my sugar and food addictions well.

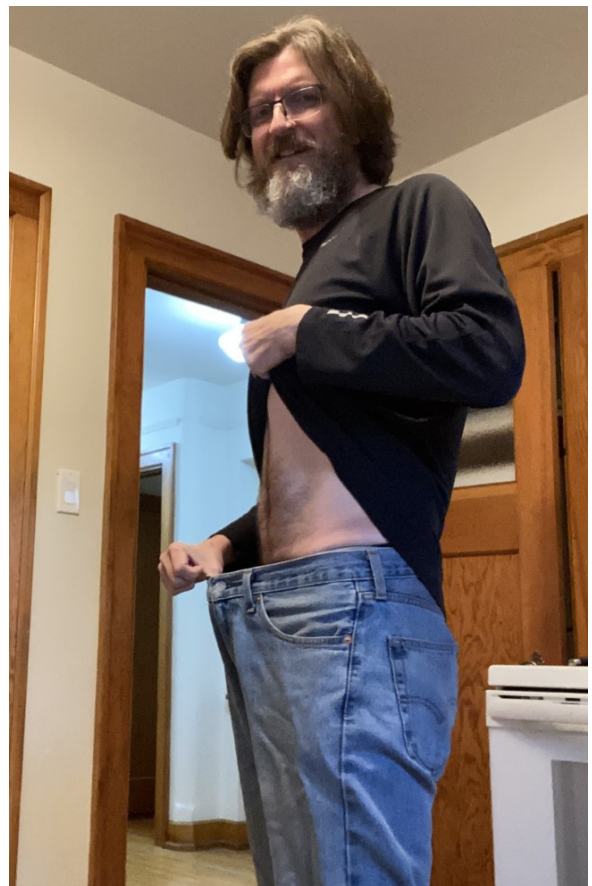
I was about 5 years on my own before serious mental health issues started bubbling through. I've been on a series of trials and error with SSRI's (Selective Serotonin Reuptake Inhibitor) over a 20+ year period. I have been diagnosed over the past couple of decades with anxiety disorder, depression, and PTSD. I have been through many counsellors and psychiatrists, and my diet never came up in discussion with them. The suicidal thoughts intensified, and I had one suicide attempt. I was admitted to an emergency psychiatric program about 10 years ago. My addictions and mental health issues didn't cause me to see the light, it was my physical health issues. The physical health issues I had subconsciously hid for so long starting popping up in serious heart, cholesterol, intestine, and stomach issues in late 2020. My doctor said I needed to make serious changes starting immediately, and to do it for my daughters. That was a big wake up call.

SCOTT GARMAN

At this time I met Jayn Steele, a food addiction and recovery coach, and that changed my life. I worked closely with Jayn, along with my doctor and a naturopath. Jayn put me through a series of assessments, the main one being the SUGAR assessment. I had such anxiety around cooking, but Jayn helped me get comfortable with cooking for the first time in over 25 years. I bought kitchen supplies, a wok, and a BBQ. And Jayn helped me devise a meal plan that was very simple, so even I could maintain it. I focus on meats, seafood, eggs, avocados, olive oil, and non-starchy veggies such as broccoli and asparagus. I maintain hydration through water and lots of organic herbal tea. My cravings have completely changed. Jayn has a support group that I attend religiously once a week. Ongoing support is so important in this journey.

Along with a daily self-care plan. I have now been abstinent from sugar, flour, processed foods, alcohol, and caffeine since January 11, 2021!

BEFORE VS. NOW



SCOTT GARMAN



My Sugar-Free Meals

I do not have snacks. Cutting snacks out reduces the temptations for me. I have 3 meals per day: my largest meal for lunch, and lighter meals for breakfast and dinner. My drinks with each meal and during the day are either cold water or a hot cup of organic herbal tea.

BREAKFAST

TIME: 7AM

Typically 3-4 eggs, either in a scramble with a meat such as bacon or sausage and with some veggies such as spinach, mushrooms; or peppers; or sunny side up eggs with bacon or sausage.

LUNCH

TIME: NOON

Usually a bbq of a steak, chicken or fish, with asparagus, mushrooms, and peppers. All topped with olive oil, and half an avocado.

DINNER

TIME: 5 PM

Chicken or beef with veggies in a stir fry, or a salad topped with olive oil and a fish such as tuna.

PHOTOS OF MY DAILY MEALS



AHI TUNA, AVOCADO, AND OLIVE SALAD IN OLIVE OIL



BBQ STEAK WITH ASPARAGUS AND MUSHROOMS

SCOTT GARMAN



My Daily Routine

MORNING

- I have found getting up at the same time 7 days a week and doing a similar routine really helps get the day off to the best start for me
- Up between 5-6am every day of the week
- Usually start with a jog outside, or an indoor stretching or exercise routine, for no more than an hour
- Set a couple of affirmations to start the day off right
- Then have my breakfast and tea before starting my work day
- Mid-morning tea break, at which time I will usually do a 10 minute guided meditation

EVENING

- Go out for a walk, especially if I have not hit my 5,000 steps for the day
- Shut off electronics by 9pm, and usually read a chapter of a book to wind down for the night
- In bed between 9-10pm every night

THINGS I DO DAILY TO SUPPORT MY RECOVERY

- I went from zero self-care to numerous self-care options to call on daily!
- daily food addiction support group contact
- sleep - make sure I get to sleep and wake up the same time every day
- guided meditation
- affirmations when I wake up
- 5,000 steps a day
- exercise - mix of stretching, weights, and getting outdoors
- epsom salt baths
- afternoon power nap for 20-30 minutes when I feel I need it
- recovery-focused reading, my favourite book so far being Atomic Habits by James Clear



THINGS I LEARNED ABOUT GETTING & STAYING SUGAR-FREE — STRATEGIES THAT HELPED ME GET SUGAR-FREE AND STAY SUGAR-FREE

- Being sugar free has been the biggest boost for my mental health. I don't think that is talked about enough, how mental health can substantially improve once the body is rid of sugar.
- I thought I needed sugar to keep up my high levels of energy. I was so surprised that I starting feeling more energetic off sugar than I was being hopped up on sugar.
- My quality of sleep dramatically improved. I used to go to bed around 1-2am and get 4 hours of sleep; I know go to bed by 10pm and get 7 hours of sleep.
- People around me kept mentioning changes to my physical appearance, such as better looking skin, loss of weight, and looking younger and more vibrant.
- I learned how important self care is. I went from zero self care in my life, and thinking it was selfish of me to think about self care, to realizing it's a huge component of staying mentally and physically healthy and abstinent.
- That it is ok to seek help, it didn't make me any less of a man, and that so many others are going through the same thing and we can be supportive of each other.
- Tackling my sugar addiction made me aware of the various process addictions (i.e. gambling, dating sites, social media, work) I was also battling and needed to focus on as well.
- This journey has increased my self confidence, and hope. I realized I'm not too old to make major changes!



SHELLY HUTSON

LICENSED SUGAR® INTERVIEWER AND AN
INTEGRATIVE NUTRITION WELLNESS COACH



My Story

I'm a Licensed SUGAR® interviewer and an Integrative Nutrition Wellness Coach who specializes in helping clients implement a healthy diet, self-care, and integrity. To find healing with diet, wellness, and changing limiting beliefs. Finding my own recovery from food addiction through diet, support, and lifestyle.

When I was just eight years old, I remember hiding away in a dark closet with a package of hostess snowballs, devouring them in secrecy & melting into the immediate solace they provided.

That was my first memory of bingeing. While everything around me was spiraling out of control, I took great comfort in having found something I could control - my food intake. I latched onto this cycle of restricting & bingeing, and soon found a similar effect with drugs & alcohol, which allowed me to turn my feelings & emotions off like a light switch.

By the grace of God, I managed to get sober from drugs & alcohol, but the bondage of bingeing and restricting with food continued far into my adult life, haunting me throughout motherhood as I did the best I could to raise my kids and keep up a "normal" facade.

Maybe it was the newfound space I had when the kids were grown, or maybe it was the fact that my physical health was spiraling out of control with chronic fatigue, depression, migraines, joint pain & pre-diabetes, but I finally reached a point where I knew something had to drastically change.

SHELLY HUTSON

It was there that I started a life of abstinence from the poison that controlled me, flour and sugar. It has had a very curvy road since then but the people that have been mentors, teachers, and friends I have learned from I can never unlearn or go back. I love my life and who I am today. My only hope is to pass my findings and learnings onto others who feel they want to make a change no matter how big or small. We all have a purpose to unfold.

BEFORE VS. NOW



SHELLY HUTSON



My Sugar-Free Meals

BREAKFAST

I only eat twice a day.

LUNCH

TIME: 12:00 - 1:00

- 8oz. Animal protein
- 3 tbsp Fat
- Water

DINNER

TIME: 6:00 PM

- 8oz Animal Protein
- 2 tbsp Fat
- water



My Daily Routine

MORNING

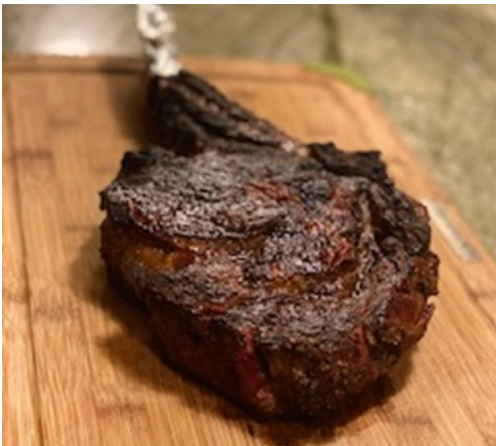
I wake, take my dogs out, speak with my sponsor, commit my food. I start with lots of water, I then do meditation, prayers, journal, and lite strength training. I'm just started to add in some cold water therapy 3X a week. I then take my dogs for a walk and do outreach calls. I come back to a nice cup of hot water with lemon and start my workday. My daily routine is 7 days a week, it does not change with weekends. I believe my addiction doesn't take a day off, so neither does my absitients.

EVENING

Routine My evening routine is not as rigid as my morning. I feel my morning is what sets my intentions for each day. I have dinner and do a meeting and then unwind for an hour. I then do some reading and end my nite with a 5-year journal writing. Just a quick few lines for how my day went.

SHELLY HUTSON

PHOTOS OF MY DAILY MEALS





THINGS I LEARNED ABOUT GETTING & STAYING SUGAR-FREE — STRATEGIES THAT HELPED ME GET SUGAR-FREE AND STAY SUGAR-FREE

- Community is a huge thing for me. Whether that is 12step or support from other groups.
- Building integrity with myself. When I commit to follow through on that each day little by little my integrity to myself grew.
- Structure, routine, and planning help to keep me on track.
- Meditation, prayer, being aware of and doing my best to be in my highest self
- Being outside in nature, exploring, and being present in the moments.
- Music, dance, and feeling my emotions at the moment is freeing for me.
- Reading
- Journaling or just doing mental dumps have also helped me to see things sometimes I'm not even aware of.
- Making my meal plan every day committing to a person each day.
- When I have fallen, I as quickly as possible get back on my plan. See where I have lacked in areas. I can always see where I let my daily routine slide before the food did.
- A day in my life; I wake to take my dogs out. Speak with the sponsor. From there straight to meditation, prayer, journal, and lite strength training. (1 1/2) hour time frame. I'm just starting to add some cold therapy to that. I then head my dogs out for a morning walk and outreach calls. I come back to a cup of hot water with lemon and start my workday. 12-1 is lunch which consists of protein 8oz and 3 Tbsp fat. Back to work or catch up on tasks that need tending. Dinner is 6 pm which is 8oz protein and 2 tbsp fat.
- My weekdays to weekends do not change as far as my food plan goes. Keeping my life structured helps me to be successful at staying sugar and flour-free for today.
- Being a carnivore my protein tends to be beef, fish a moderate amount of chicken. Fats are beef tallow, avocado oil, olive oil.



SIOBHAN HARRIS

INTEGRATIVE NUTRITION HEALTH COACH, PODCAST
HOST OF “UNSWEETENED SIO” & CERTIFIED IN
THE EMOTION CODE AND THE BODY CODE



My Story

I have struggled with sugar addiction my whole life. I can remember sneaking cookies before anyone else woke up in the morning, even as a toddler, and was never able to eat sugar in moderation. Once I hit puberty this addiction caused me to gain weight and so I started dieting, which led to a diet/binge cycle that lasted decades. After college, I struggled more and more with weight control and grew increasingly more frustrated around food. I tried every diet, workout method, therapist, alternative modality and vitamin/supplement regimen known. NOTHING worked.

Fast forward to my early 30's and I was diagnosed with Polycystic Ovary Syndrome (PCOS) and struggled to get pregnant. I read more and more about sugar addiction. I tried giving it up numerous times, but it never lasted and the ensuing binge would last at least twice as long as however long I managed to be off of sugar. It was depressing and exhausting. I was finally able to get pregnant and now have two young children that take up a lot of my time and energy.

A few years ago, I decided to focus on my health and not continue this sugar battle into my 40's. I attended the Institute for Integrative Nutrition (IIN) and became a Certified Integrative Health Coach with the hope of helping myself so that I could help others. Throughout the program, I felt like I was getting closer to solving this complex puzzle. I finally read an article about food addiction that recommended abstaining from ALL sugar and ALL flour to really overcome the addiction. I was terrified at the idea but committed to doing it for one year, beginning in January of 2018. Having reached that initial goal, I feel amazing and confident—and I am now happily committed to living a sugar-free, flour-free lifestyle for life.

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January 13, 2022 will celebrate my 4th year of being sugar and flour free and I am now committed to helping other people get free! I share my journey, both its victories and its challenges, plus interview other addicts in recovery, sugar addiction coaches and experts on my podcast called "Unsweetened Sio".

Most recently, I got certified in The Emotion Code and The Body Code because they have helped me so much in my own recovery. For years I used sugar as a way to numb my feelings and so when I stopped eating sugar and flour, I had to not only learn how to actually feel the uncomfortable feelings again but how to process some of the emotions I had neglected for decades. The Emotion Code and The Body Code are the most effective ways I found to help me do this. They are really powerful tools for anyone looking to clear trapped emotions and imbalances in the body that might be causing physical, mental or emotional discomfort.

My Breaking Free Group Coaching program incorporates all of this and is for anyone that is ready to get off the sugar rollercoaster and break free from their sugar addiction with the help of a certified coach and community. For more information please visit my website at www.unsweetenedsio.com.

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My Sugar-Free Meals

<u>BREAKFAST</u>	<u>LUNCH</u>	<u>DINNER</u>
<p>TIME: 8:00 am</p> <p>2 eggs, sweet potatoes sauteed with spinach, onions and peppers, avocado</p>	<p>TIME: 12:00 pm</p> <p>Leftovers from dinner night before (usually meat and a vegetable)</p>	<p>TIME: 5:00 pm</p> <p>Chicken, brussel sprouts sauteed in olive oil and garlic</p>



My Daily Routine

MORNING	<p>At least one meditation sometimes up to 3 - I really like doing the daily calm on the calm app. I also like to do some tapping with the tapping solution app and finally I start the day using Joy essential oil as I say my daily list of positive affirmations out loud. I try to carve out this quiet time for myself each morning</p>
EVENING	<p>Off screens by 9:00 pm and then asleep by 10 pm. Some nights I take a bath. I love to do my nightly skincare routine, brush my teeth and then read in bed. I also fall asleep listing all the things I am grateful for. Like to end my day on a positive note!</p>



THINGS I LEARNED ABOUT GETTING & STAYING SUGAR-FREE — STRATEGIES THAT HELPED ME GET SUGAR-FREE AND STAY SUGAR-FREE

- Being completely abstinent from all sugar and all flour
- Daily self-care including meditation, breathing techniques and emotion code
- Daily exercise - I love walking outside and getting fresh air
- Being prepared - meal planning, looking at restaurant menus ahead of time, bringing my own food to family and friend gatherings.
- Mantra of "I just don't do that anymore, I just don't."



ZIPPORAH LIVNEH

REGISTERED NURSE, FOOD ADDICTION COUNSELOR,
CREATOR OF GPS 2 SUGAR FREE, RECOVERED
COMPULSIVE OVEREATER FOR OVER 20 YEARS



My Story

I believe I was born a sugar addict. As far back as I can remember I had an unhealthy relationship with sugar. I loved sugar and all sweet things and could never leave over for tomorrow no matter how much there was. Yet, sugar was also a huge source of frustration. I always wanted more and there was never enough.

A few years back, my Mom told me a story that really clinched it for me. I was brought up in a small community near Montreal where my father was the Rabbi of the orthodox synagogue. I attended the local nursery and since we kept strictly kosher, I was not allowed to eat from the cake and treats at the birthday parties. On the days there was a birthday, my mother would send me to nursery with a bag of kosher food to have during the party. One day, the teacher came to my Mom very upset and apologetic. She had found me hiding under the table and eating the sweets from the party. I have no memory of this. Just so you understand – I was a good girl and listened to my parents. I also firmly believed in G-d and the laws of the Jewish Bible (still do).

Yet, from the time I was a little girl and well into adulthood, my parents' strict forbiddance, and even the commandment of God was not enough to keep me away from the sugar. I would steal from my Mom's wallet and go buy non-kosher candy at the store. It was always the tastiest! I would drive my bike many kilometers away so that no one would see "the Rabbi's daughter" buying a McDonald's milkshake. For many years, I thought my mother deprived us in our childhood because we never had junk food in the house, and that my twisted attitude towards sweets and junk food is a result of that deprivation.

ZIPPORAH LIVNEH

Now that I understand the workings of food addiction I know that's a bunch of crap. Both my parents have an unhealthy attitude towards food but that's not why I am like I am. It's just in my DNA, there's no one to blame – including myself. If there had been more junk I would have eaten more junk, and my attitude is twisted because I have a brain that is sensitive/addicted to sugar. By not keeping junk in the house my Mom saved me from the suffering of being a fat child. If we had had junk in the house I would have been fat. Today, I thank her from the bottom of my heart.

At the age of 17, I left home and went to live in Israel. Throughout the years I called myself “pleasantly plump” but inside I always felt fat and yearned to lose those 5 kgs (10 pounds) that would give me that nice figure and all would be right in the world. Another bunch of crap.

At the age of 20, I got married to the sweetest, gentlest and most accepting man. He never noticed or cared about what I ate or what I weighed. Can you guess what that meant to me? Yup, carte blanche to eat as much junk as I want whenever I want.

I spent more and more money and time eating junk and I began bingeing on a regular basis. I gained weight and when I complained about leg pain a nurse suggested I try to lose weight. I decided that's it. I began to count calories and for the first time in my life, I managed to diet and lose 8kg. I looked and felt great.

This lasted about 3 years, including 9 months of traveling in the far east and Australia. For 9 dreamy months, we had no pressure, just fun, and for the first (and last) time in my life, junk food was not at the center of my existence. I was able to take it or leave it.

My sugar addiction really took off after my first son was born and continued to progress to the age of 32. I am a registered nurse – I could have taught a dietician about good nutrition, yet I was completely incapable of applying to myself all those smart, wonderful tips on how to eat healthily. Occasional bingeing turned into 3-4 times a week and finally into this non-stop eating frenzy all day. I could eat incredible amounts of food including at mealtimes. I never felt hungry and never felt full. I just felt like I need to eat, all the time. Each year I gained more weight and by the age of 32, pleasantly plump had turned into unpleasantly fat.

ZIPPORAH LIVNEH

I couldn't understand what was wrong with me. I was a successful woman in so many areas of my life – marriage, career, family, and yet in the one area that I wanted to succeed most, I was an utter failure. I pretended it didn't matter that I'm fat and managed to fool everyone except me.

One day a new doctor came to the clinic I was working at. She was quite heavy but told me she had lost 20 kg in group psychology therapy that treated overeating as an addiction. She said that some people are addicted to food like others are addicted to drugs. It was like a lightbulb went on in my head. Yes! That's me. I really am a junk food junkie - there is such a thing! I went for therapy, lost 7 kg, and after a year was pronounced "cured". That helped until a year later when we had a financial crisis and boom - I was back in the food.

Here is where God / The Universe / Fate/ whatever you want to call it intervened. I had no money to go back to that nice, well-meaning psychologist, so I went to a 12-step program. There they took a small sum and talked about being addicted to food. It took. I lost 22 kg in 4 years. I took a sponsor, did service, spoke, and sponsored. Until today I live the spiritual program of the 12 steps to the best of my ability. I have had some relapses including a year when I went out – went back into the food, gained 10 kg of fat and tons of misery, came back to the 12 step rooms, and got abstinent again 12 years ago. I lost 5kg of the weight I had regained and 5kg stayed on as a souvenir.

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Some years ago, I came across some OA literature that made me realize there are people and centers in the US that treat food addiction professionally. It was a kind of epiphany for me.

ZIPPORAH LIVNEH

There were no professional “rehab” services in Israel for food addicts that I knew of. I personally knew a number of food addicts who had died or were severely sick from their addiction and wondered if professional help could have made a difference for them.

I began to dream of bringing this about in Israel. First, I dreamt, then I read, then I researched, then I traveled to meet professional food addiction counselors and learn about their programs. All the while I was working full time in the pharmaceutical industry. For six years I researched and studied but had no time to do anything about it.

In 12 step programs, there is a saying that God does for you what you cannot do for yourself. I thought I could not leave the financial security of my job and just when things were going really well for me in my career, my boss left the company. A new manager came to replace her and from the beginning, it was clear she did not want me in her department. This had never happened to me before. I was a hard-working and dedicated employee and always got along really well with my bosses. One part of me screamed - WHAT?? How can this be happening? In parallel, another inner voice said - “Maybe it’s a sign that it’s time to go and realize your dream”. With some heavenly placed suggestions and advice, I did not fight it, I let it happen. I actually made a decision that the best thing for me is to get fired and that’s exactly what happened. I had worked as a hired employee for 30 years and had never even come close to getting fired, and within 2 months of getting this new boss, I was booted out the door. It was so hard!! It was the greatest thing that ever happened to me.

It gave me the opportunity to open my own business for food addiction counseling. You see, getting fired was actually the greatest thing that ever happened to me, it pushed me to finally realize my dream and gave me purpose to my work and life that I had never dreamed possible - which just shows that we don’t always know what is best for us. Here’s the best part of it - throughout this very traumatic period of being fired I did run to the food to soothe myself, escape reality, or anything else. I ran to friends, my rock-solid hubby, inspirational videos, and podcasts, but not the food. My recovery from food addiction takes precedence over everything else in my life because it makes everything else in my life so much better.

ZIPPORAH LIVNEH

Since then, I have dedicated myself full time to helping other sugar/food addicts find release from the clutches of their addiction. I hope to help as many people as I can experience the freedom of recovery from sugar addiction. My mission is to help others be free of the obsession as I have been freed.

Is this possible? You bet! The most amazing part is that there are so many ways, that everyone can find the right path for him/herself. I'm here to take you by the hand and show you the way.