

What my life was like during the holidays before recovery and what it is like now

The holidays, always a potent time for compulsive overeaters, has dramatically changed for me since I have been in Program, in the last six years.

Before being in Program, preparation for the holidays included lots of baking, as well as special gatherings at which food held a prominent position. It was an opportunity to overeat, with abandon, every day and evening. Possibly because of the increase in sugar, I also became angry and resentful at my perceived expectations the holidays represented. Always, always, always, it was completely about the special food, and of making the holidays my idea of “perfect.”

These days, after six years in Program, the holidays have changed dramatically. I now realize I have choices for what and how to celebrate. I have let go of doing any baking and have given my children an opportunity to do this, if they choose. After stepping back from many of the “have to’s,” that I thought I needed to adhere to, I now have time to see what is important to me to celebrate the holidays. It is an exercise in letting go and in speaking up for myself. It has been risky for me to let go of so many traditional customs, but it has been immensely rewarding as well. Being willing to step into the unknown, speak my truth, and give the whole thing over to my Higher Power has been freeing.

For me, as a compulsive overeater, Christmas Day, Chanukah, and the Solstice remain ordinary days as far as my food is concerned. I plan abstinent meals within the guidelines of my food plan, and then proceed with the days’ events. I celebrate special days in relishing and blessings of being with my family, of watching delight fill my

grandchildren's faces, of enjoying the warmth of a fire and being with friends.

At the end of the day, remaining abstinent is the most loving gift I can give myself. No one else can give me this gift. It is time to count myself among the blessings I receive.

Patricia H.