

SPIRITUAL DISCOVERY JOURNAL
FOOD ADDICTIONS AND BAD HABITS / OVEREATING



INTRODUCTION

Now that you have completed your study of *Spiritual Discovery – 7 Principles for Spiritual Growth*, you may find it helpful to write a Spiritual Discovery Journal. In this exercise, you will be taking another look at bad habits and addictions regarding food, specifically overeating. Because we are complex beings and our hearts are deep waters, there is often more to discover. Writing this journal is an opportunity to find more healing and freedom.

This journal is focused on overeating; however, you can adjust it for other unhealthy eating habits. (**Note:** If you struggle with a life-threatening eating disorder, please seek professional help.)

Writing this journal will require thoughtful reflection, and it may stir painful emotions. If you are tempted to stop writing, use the 7 Principles for Spiritual Growth to help you uncover what you believe and go to God for insight, wisdom and truth. Call a trusted friend, if needed.

PART 1 – CURRENT EVENTS

In your journal, include the following:

- Several recent examples of overeating (or unhealthy eating habits), and in each example, include the following:
 - Food or foods you overate (sweets, carbs, fats, _____);
 - The emotion(s) that moved you to overeat (happiness, boredom, anxiety, anger, fear, shame, loneliness, feeling like a failure, feeling unloved, _____); (See page 55.)
 - What you desired (comfort, pleasure, relief, happiness, _____);
 - All the things that you reaped (pleasure, shame, anxiety, anger, self-loathing, lack of sleep, obesity, health problems or _____). Give details.
- How you justified your overeating to yourself or others;
 - Did you blame something or someone else? If so, who or what? (See page 76.)
 - Did you claim helplessness? (See page 77.)
 - Did you minimize it or deny it was a problem? (See page 78.)
 - “This is no big deal.”
 - “I could stop if I wanted to.”
 - “It doesn’t hurt anybody.”
 - Did you compare yourself to others before, during or after this behavior? If so, how did the comparison impact you? (See page 79.)
- What feels true about your unhealthy eating habit?
 - “This will make me happy.”
 - “This is just the way I am.”
 - “I can’t live without sweets.”
 - “I can’t stop eating.”
 - “_____.”
- After you uncover what feels true, go to God for insight, wisdom and truth.
 - “God, is it true that I can’t stop?”
 - “God, is it true that I have no self-control?”
 - “God, is it true that _____?”
- Take time to meditate and listen to God.
- Include any insight, wisdom or truth that you receive.

PART 2 – PAST EVENTS

For this part of your journal, look back at any painful or unpleasant events that have shaped your life and consider whether or not these events move you to overeat. Include the following:

- Painful or unpleasant past events that have shaped your life;
 - What emotion(s) you felt during this event (primary and secondary); (See page 55.)
 - What emotion(s) you feel as you consider it now;
 - What you came to believe about yourself, others or God as a result of that event;
 - “I’m a mistake.”
 - “I don’t matter.”
 - “I don’t fit in.”
 - “God doesn’t care about me.”
 - “I’m not good enough for God’s love.”
 - “_____.”
- Does this belief(s) still feel true today? If so...
 - What emotion(s) do you feel when this belief is triggered?
 - How do you move when this belief is triggered? (See page 74.)
 - Does this belief move you to overeat?
- After you uncover what feels true, ask God for insight, wisdom and truth.
 - “God, is it true that I’m a mistake?”
 - “God, is it true that you don’t care about me?”
 - “God, is it true that _____?”
- Take time to pray, meditate and listen to God. (See page 109.)
- Include any insight, wisdom or truth that you receive.

PART 3 – YOUR FOOD CULTURE

“Food culture” is the connection, beliefs, and experiences we have with food.

- Are there any experiences surrounding the food culture of your childhood that move you to overeat (parties, ethnic celebrations, viewpoints of your parents or community regarding food, or _____)?
- What are your beliefs and expectations regarding food? Do these beliefs or expectations lead you to overeat?

PART 4 – UNHEALTHY DIETING

Complete this part of the journal if you practice crash dieting or other unhealthy practices to lose weight (starving yourself, laxatives, diet pills, excessive exercising or _____).

If you struggle with unhealthy dieting to lose weight, include the following:

- What you do to lose weight;
 - The emotion that moves you toward unhealthy dieting (anxiety, anger, fear, shame, loneliness, feeling like a failure or _____);
 - What you desire (relief, to be more attractive, to gain approval, to be accepted, to meet expectations of others, or _____);
 - All the things that you reap (satisfaction, shame, health problems, physical weakness, stress, or _____). Give details.
 - How you justify your unhealthy dieting to yourself or others;
 - Do you blame something or someone else? If so, who or what? (See page 76.)
 - Do you claim helplessness? (See page 77.)

- ◻ Do you minimize it or deny it's a problem? (See page 78.)
 - ◻ "This is no big deal."
 - ◻ "I could stop if I wanted to."
 - ◻ "It doesn't hurt anybody."
- ◻ Do you compare yourself to others before, during or after your unhealthy dieting? If so, how does comparison impact you? (See page 79.)
- What feels true about your unhealthy dieting?
 - ◻ "I have no other choice."
 - ◻ "I can do this because I'm young."
 - ◻ "Healthy diets don't work for me."
 - ◻ "_____."
- After you uncover what feels true, go to God for insight, wisdom and truth.
 - ◻ "God, it is true that I have no other choice?"
 - ◻ "God, it is true that _____?"
- Take time to meditate and listen to God.
- Include any insight, wisdom or truth that you receive.

PART 5 – REFLECTION

- What have you discovered about your overeating or unhealthy eating habits?
- What would it look like to "move toward God" when you are tempted with overeating or unhealthy eating habits?