

Recovery!

The Road to Recovery



by Lynne Robertson

Recovery from an eating disorder takes time. Chances are your eating disorder developed into a destructive behaviour over a period of months or even years. Therefore, chances are it is going to take some time and effort to change those behaviours and break free of the control that your eating disorder has over your life.

No one has a 100% successfully smooth road through recovery. Success or failure in a person's recovery from an eating disorder is not measured by one slip, slips merely identify the areas of weakness in your recovery strategy that need to be revised. It is completely normal to encounter a slip, or lapse. It is not always possible to avoid a lapse, but don't panic, it doesn't mean that you will relapse. A relapse is the process of becoming dysfunctional in recovery, returning to square one as a result of a reactive set of dynamic behavioural patterns of denial, isolation, elevated stress and impaired judgement.

Overcoming a lapse in recovery involves the following areas:

1. Recognizing the Signs of a Lapse

Are you able to recognize the signs that you might be experiencing a lapse? It is helpful to become more aware of these signals so that you can catch yourself. Some common signs of a lapse are:

- increased thoughts of weight, shape and size
- "feeling fat"
- actual significant changes in weight
- increase in dieting or exercise
- rekindling of desire to overeat, purge or restrict

Ask yourself if these thoughts and feelings you are experiencing are an early sign of emotional distress, an indicator that food related behaviours need attention, or both.

2. Identifying Triggering Situations

People recovering from eating disorders are generally sensitive to awkward or stressful situations. If you experience a lapse, sit down for a moment and try to figure out

Greetings!

Happy New Year! We hope that you had a joyous Christmas and a happy holiday filled with happy memories of family and friends. Hopefully Santa was good to all!

As many of you are aware, the road to recovery from an eating disorder can be a long and bumpy one, but it doesn't have to be. During treatment many people experience setbacks and trying times, but a full recovery requires an effective plan for preventing relapse. There is very little literature on the topic of relapse prevention, so we have put together a few ideas and proven strategies for preventing relapses from occurring to help make your road to recovery a bit smoother.

Water is one of the most important things we feed our bodies. Water is essential for aiding in several important functions within our bodies that we rely on. How do you know if you are getting enough water? Would you know if you were dehydrated? Remember, your body is like a machine, it needs to be fueled with not only food, but plenty of water, in order to operate efficiently.

It is fairly common for girls suffering from eating disorders to have issues relating to their relationship with their fathers. They feel that they lack a loving, communicative and supportive relationship with their father which has translated into conflicts about food and weight. Often this is not caused by a fault of either father or daughter, but misunderstandings, awkwardness and conflicting roles in the relationship. You may not be able to change the past, but you can begin now to build a stronger relationship with your father.

Wishing you all the best in 2003!

Lynne

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What's New at Westwind?

Newsletter Subscriptions

Due to the rising costs in printing and postage, we regret that we will no longer be distributing this newsletter, Recovery!, free of charge. Please see below for details on subscriptions.

Eating Disorder Awareness Week

This year we have planned a few activities for Eating Disorder Awareness Week, February 2-8th. We will have community booths at the Shoppers Mall and Town Centre, and informational pamphlets distributed to at risk groups within our community. For more information, or to volunteer during EDAW, please contact Westwind.

Support Groups

Support groups are offered free of charge to individuals suffering from forms of disordered eating, their family members and friends, every Monday evening at Westwind at 7pm. Join our on-line support group at <http://groups.msn.com/westwindeatingdisordersupportgroup>.

This newsletter is a publication of the Westwind eating disorder recovery centre, and is intended for general information only. It is not intended to provide personal medical or psychological advice, which should be obtained from a qualified health professional.

Subscriptions are \$13/yr US mailed to the USA, or \$15/yr CAN in Canada. Other countries are \$18/yr US. The newsletter is published six times per year. Subscriptions for past clients of Westwind eating disorder recovery centre are \$8/yr US mailed to the USA, or \$10/yr CAN in Canada.

More information about Westwind can be obtained by calling 204-728-2499, or call toll free in North America at 1-888-353-3372. Check our web site at : www.westwind.mb.ca, or e-mail us at westwindedrc@mb.sympatico.ca. We are located at 458-14th St, Brandon, MB, R7A 4T3, Canada.

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what it might have been that caused the lapse. Some common causes include:

- stress
- dealing with underlying issues in therapy
- becoming overwhelmed by feelings or emotions
- death of a family member or friend
- marital/family problems
- feelings of loneliness, shame, guilt, anger and abandonment
- people's reactions to changes you are making in your life
- fear of change and/or living without the eating disorder

Make your own list of events or situations that could possibly trigger a lapse for you.

3. Coping with Triggering Situations

Learn effective ways of dealing with high risk situations that you might encounter during your recovery. What are some more effective ways of dealing with your emotions rather than turning to food? What are some ways in which you can prevent a lapse from occurring in the future? Some examples are:

- remove yourself from the situation
- make up a contact list of support people and contact them when in need
- journal
- make a list of activities you enjoy and keep yourself busy with them
- return to your food plan

Come up with your own list of coping skills that would be effective for you to use. Make up cue cards with reminders on them of how you are going to cope in the event of a lapse.

4. Adopt Alternative Thinking

Instead of utilizing black and white (all or nothing thinking), adopt alternative ways

of thinking positively. For example, 80/20 thinking - 80% of the time you are making positive, healthy choices, and 20% of the time you are just being human. If you experience negative thoughts, counteract those by coming up with positive statements to change each of those negative thoughts. Write down the negative thoughts that you often hear yourself saying and write a list of positive statements to counteract each of those. Practice using those positive statements in place of the negative ones as often as possible.

5. Correcting Lifestyle Imbalances

Take a look at where you would like to be in life. What would make you happy? Make a list of realistic life goals, and a plan for how you honestly think you can meet these goals. Substitute activities that provide some form of self-gratification for binge eating or restricting. Make yourself a list of activities you enjoy doing. Join a group or take up a new or old hobby. Get out into your community and try to meet some new people, or rekindle old friendships. Social lives and healthy friendships are therapeutic for us.

Early recognition of high risk situations and signs of a lapse will allow you to become more aware of the chain of events that could lead up to a slip, therefore allowing you to intervene sooner to prevent a full relapse. Use the suggestions we have described above to learn how to recover from a lapse and prevent future lapses and, if you encounter a slip, focus on getting back on track as soon as possible. Make a contract with yourself to follow a Relapse Prevention Plan like this one. Most importantly, if you encounter a slip, try your best to cope; rather than berating yourself for it, learn from the experience.

If you experience a lapse, don't think that

you have to start all over again at square one, you don't! For example, instead of thinking "I ruined it, I had 9 consecutive good days without any eating disorder behaviours until today, now I have to start at one again", think "I've had 9 good days out of a possible 10." Pick yourself up, learn from the experience and keep going. Think positively...thinking positively will make you feel better!

If you suffer a lapse that lasts longer than a month, suffer a series of lapses, or maintain a low level of recovery, we encourage you to seek professional help.

References:

Herrin, M., Matsumoto, N. (2002). *The Parents Guide to Childhood Eating Disorders*. Henry Hold and Company: New York, NY.
Nash, J.D. (1999). *Binge No More: Your Guide to Overcoming Disordered Eating*. New Harbringer Publications: Oakland, CA.
Thompson, Colleen. (2002). *Recovery*. www.mirror-mirror.org.

Statistics Lie

A woman is often measured by the things she cannot control. She is measured by the way her body curves or doesn't curve, by where she is flat or straight or round. She is measured by 36-24-36 and inches and ages and numbers, by all the outside things that don't ever add up to who she is on the inside. And so if a woman is to be measured, let her be measured by the things she can control, by who she is and who she is trying to become. Because as every woman knows, measurements are only statistics. And statistics lie.

NIKE



Water is one of the most important components of our bodies. It provides us with many services and benefits. Water accounts for 55 - 75% of the body weight of an average adult. Lean tissue holds more water than body fat, therefore someone who is an olympic athlete, for example, will contain a higher percentage of water, this is why muscle weighs more than fat.

Water performs many jobs to keep our bodies healthy. It is needed by all the cells of the body to function properly. Water helps to regulate our body temperature. It carries nutrients and oxygen to cells and removes waste from the body. Water lubricates joints and protects the bodies organs and tissue. Water also serves as a medium for life-supporting chemical reactions in our bodies.

Sufficient water intake offers many benefits. It can help prevent kidney stones by diluting calcium and uric acid. It can reduce asthma attacks. Water can help prevent colds. When the body does not have enough water, the mucus membranes in the nose and throat die allowing bacteria to enter. Water consumption also helps to improve dental health. Dehydration causes a decrease in saliva, which in turn, decreases our ability to fight off micro-organisms and flush out food particles.

How much water should we be drinking in a day? An average adult should consume between 6-8 eight ounce glasses of fluid every day, throughout the day. This can include water and other beverages such as fruit juices and milk. However, alcohol and drinks containing caffeine such as coffee, tea or cola are not good water substitutes and will actually dehydrate your body. If you are very active you should drink up to twelve glasses a day and remember to drink before, during and after exercise. Other circumstances where more fluids are needed include pregnancy, breast feeding, eating a high fibre diet or being exposed to extreme hot or cold climates. It is not healthy to wait until you are thirsty before taking a drink, by then important fluids and electrolytes have been lost. It is good to drink about twice as much as needed to quench your thirst. You can tell if you are well hydrated by your urine - it should be clear, light colored, and nearly odorless.

There are many physical signs and symptoms of dehydration; one of which is thirst as mentioned above. Other signs include vague discomfort, a loss of appetite, weariness, nausea, emotional instability, tingling in the arms, hands or feet, stumbling, a headache, labored breathing or dizziness, increased weakness or mental confusion, inability to swallow, dim vision, sunken eyes, painful urination, and even death.

Water is literally the fluid that keeps us alive and well, so drink up! It can be as simple as carrying a water bottle with you and substituting a juice for a cola drink.

Reference:

Providence Health Care. (2001). *Are You Drinking Enough Water?*.

www.providence.org/healthplans

EXCELLENCE

vs

Perfectionism



Excellence is the willingness to be wrong.

Perfectionism is being right.

Excellence is risk.

Perfectionism is anger.

Excellence is power.

Perfectionism is frustration.

Excellence is giving.

Perfectionism is taking.

Excellence is confidence.

Perfectionism is doubt.

Excellence is flowing.

Perfectionism is pressure.

Excellence is a journey.

Perfectionism is a destination.

Excellence is surrender.

Perfectionism is consuming.

Excellence is trust.

Perfectionism is selfishness.

Are you striving for excellence, or do you think that you have to be perfect?

From *Liking the Me I See in the Mirror*.

Father Hunger

By Christy Vogen

Father hunger is defined by Psychologist Margo Maine as “a deep, persistent desire for emotional connection with the father that is experienced by all children. When this normal craving is satisfied, children are likely to grow up feeling confident, secure, strong, and ‘good enough’. Often, however, this yearning is not acknowledged and the child’s hunger and need for a bond with father grows. This causes self-doubt, pain, anxiety, and depression, as well as learning and behavior problems. For our purposes, father hunger will refer to this unfulfilled longing for father, which for girls and women, often translates into conflicts about food and weight.”

I always find the reaction to this topic surprising when it is discussed at Westwind. After reading out this definition and asking clients, “What is your relationship with your father like, does this sound familiar to anyone?”, we become involved in an intense, emotional discussion. The lack of relationship with fathers is obviously a key issue for many of the women we see with eating disorders. Why is father hunger such an important issue?



Father hunger is a significant issue because many women do not have the relationship with their fathers that they wish to have. In our culture, divorce is a common phenomenon. In a post-divorce family, the children often live with the mother, which limits the time that a father has with his children. In addition, many fathers that do live with their children feel that their role is to provide economically for the family. Often his time at home is limited as a result of this pressure to provide for the family. In both examples the relationship between a father and his children suffers.

When one considers the relationship between fathers and daughters there is an added dimension thrown into the equation. This added dimension is that daughters inevitably become women, and when this begins to happen, fathers often feel uncomfortable in relating to their daughters. As a result, fathers tend to back away from their daughters at the critical developmental period of adolescence. When the daughter begins to develop into a woman, often the father feels awkward and no longer knows his place with his daughter. It is at this same critical time when she needs her father the most. Therefore, he needs to make an extra effort to be close to his daughter during this difficult time. It is also during this critical period when a girl is beginning to develop

into a woman and her body goes through many changes. As a result, she is feeling heightened self-consciousness about her body during this developmental period. If she feels accepted by her father, she will be much less likely to feel that she needs to change her body or appearance in some way to be accepted by her father or by men in general. If she does not feel accepted by her father she may look to gain approval from other men and she will likely do this by focusing on weight, food, and being thin.

Ten Myths about Fathers, Daughters, and Food

1) Eating disorders and body image are women's issues.

Eating disorders are not simply women's issues. Eating disorders are often related to men in that the eating disorder can be used as a way of trying to please or attract men or to avoid relationships with men. Furthermore, men also have problems with food and their bodies. In fact, many experts believe that eating disorders in males are underreported.

2) Men can't understand....

It is often assumed that men cannot understand eating disorders and issues with food and weight. However, men can understand these issues when given the information and the opportunity.

3) Eating disorders are caused by problems in the mother/daughter relationship.

This is a simplified interpretation of reality. Eating disorders are not "caused" by any one relationship, they are the result of many different personal and social factors.

4) Distant, uninvolved fathers are the cause of eating disorders.

If this were the case, eating disorders would be even more common than they

are! A woman's relationship with her father is only one of the many potential contributing factors that leads to the development of an eating disorder.

5) Fathers play an inconsequential role in the development of their children.

This is simply not true. The role that fathers play in the development of their children is just as important as the role of the mother. The quality of a woman's relationship with her father has an enormous impact on her self-esteem, identity, emotions, and behaviour.

6) Father's role is to "provide" economically.

This myth ignores the fact that women and men can and do share the duties of breadwinner and caregiver for the family. Furthermore, this myth limits a father's access to his children and ultimately his relationship with them.

7) Parenting isn't important to men.

In reality, when a man becomes a father it is one of the most significant experiences in his life. For many men, they feel stuck between the obligation to be provider for the family and their need to be a good father.

8) Fathers don't feel.

Men are taught that they cannot cry and that they should not show emotions. As a result, they displace and deny their feelings. Men do feel emotions and when we become more accepting of this fact we will make it easier for men to express these feelings in a healthy way.

9) Girls learn about femininity from their mothers.

Girls do learn about femininity from their mothers, but their fathers also play an important role. By learning about

masculinity from her father, a girl will learn about what is feminine. Furthermore, the way a father interacts with women, particularly with his wife, teaches a girl about her future role in the family as a woman.

10) Girls need their mothers, not their fathers, during adolescence.

As mentioned earlier, girls need to feel accepted by their fathers as they are becoming young women in order to feel that they are accepted by males in general. When a girl feels this acceptance from her father, she can begin to feel confident with boys and with her body.

These myths help to perpetuate father hunger. By challenging these myths we can begin to reduce the father hunger felt by many women and men in today's society.

You are probably also wondering how you can personally begin to work on your father hunger. The first step is acknowledging your father hunger and the influence it has on your life. Then, it is a good idea to write a letter to your father expressing all of your feelings to him (this letter can remain unsent if you wish). If you feel comfortable, approach your father and tell him your feelings either in person or through the letter. This expression of feelings could change your relationship with your father and bring you much closer to each other. Alternatively, if your relationship does not change, at least you know you have expressed your feelings to him, and this can lead to closure. You cannot change the past, but you can possibly change your future relationship with your father.

Reference:

Maine, M. (1991). *Father Hunger: Fathers, Daughters & Food*. Gurze Books: Carlsbad, CA.

**Barbecue
Patootie Chicken
Pizza**



1/4 cup barbecue sauce
1/4 cup pizza sauce
2 boneless, skinless chicken breast halves
2 cups sliced mixed mushrooms
1 medium red onion, sliced into thin rings
1/2 tsp dried oregano
1 12-inch unbaked pizza crust (hint below)
1 cup shredded, reduced-fat Monterey Jack cheese (4 oz)
1 to 2 tbsp chopped, fresh cilantro or parsley

- Combine 2 tablespoons barbecue sauce with pizza sauce in a small bowl. Set aside.
- Grill chicken breasts over medium-hot coals for about 5 minutes per side, until juices run clear and chicken is no longer pink inside. Brush generously with remaining barbecue sauce during cooking. Remove from grill and let cool slightly. Slice into thin strips and set aside.
- Spray a medium, non-stick skillet or wok with non-stick spray. Add mushrooms and onions. Cook over medium-high heat until vegetables are tender, about 5 to 6 minutes. Add oregano and cook for 1 more minute. Remove from heat.
- Spread sauce evenly over unbaked pizza crust. Top with mushroom-onion mixture, followed by chicken. Sprinkle with cheese and cilantro. Bake at 450F for 13 to 14 minutes, until crust is lightly browned and cheese is melted. Serve immediately. Makes one 12-inch pizza.

Hint: If using a store-brought, pre-cooked pizza shell, reduce baking time by 4 minutes.

Reference:

Podleski, G., Podleski, J. (1999). *Crazy Plates*. Granet Publishing Inc: Waterloo, ON.