

For women, Food Addiction is unique. Our behavior ranged from daily binges and excessive exercise, to starvation and vomiting. We engaged in a high intake of sweets and unusual rituals while eating. For some of us it was Compulsive Over-eating. Bulimia and Anorexia. We used our bodies to create an illusion that gave us a false sense of self-worth. We jeopardized our relationships, health, jobs, morals and values; we even neglected our children. All the while, we rationalized our addictive behaviours. "Why can't I have a little something like everyone else?" "It's just food" or "What they don't know, won't hurt them." We tried to maintain a "normal" image, yet we lived a double-life. We became disconnected from reality making true intimacy with God or other people impossible. We took God off His throne and replaced Him with our behavior.

Why? We were running. Running from love, running from pain, and running from the pain of, shame, self-hate, and multiple forms of abuse. We lacked self-worth, had an unrealistic body image and feared intimacy. We tried to connect: we tried to escape. We felt abandoned. We had a need to be in control and have power over others and/or situations. Spiritually, we were bankrupt.

We learned to numb our feelings and to cope with our inadequacies by reaching out for a cure that would ultimately destroy us. This unhealthy belief system was not in line with the plan God had for the food in our lives.

Food addiction is progressive. It can begin as a little curiosity or negative self-talk. When we cross a line, it sets us in motion to cross the next line more easily. Ask the recovering compulsive over-eater, bulimic or anorexic "when, how they started, and how it ended." We've asked ourselves, "How did we get here?" Sometimes, we don't even remember why we started in the first place. We tell ourselves that tomorrow our food behavior will be better, but it never is. Eventually our behaviors resulted in kidney damage, destruction of teeth, malnutrition, cardiac arrest or diabetes. For many, the risk of death is now a reality. And hopefully before that happens we hit bottom.

### **Do You Suffer from An Eating Disorder?**

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. Do thoughts about food occupy much of your time?
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. Are you preoccupied with a desire to be thinner?
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. Do you starve to make up for eating binges?
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. Are you overweight despite concerns by others for you to lose weight?
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. Do you binge and then vomit afterward?
- \_\_\_\_\_ 6. Do you exercise excessively to burn off calories?
- \_\_\_\_\_ 7. Do you overeat by bingeing or by grazing continuously?
- \_\_\_\_\_ 8. Do you eat the same thing every day and feel annoyed when you eat something else?
- \_\_\_\_\_ 9. Do you binge and then take enemas or laxatives to get rid of the food you have eaten?
- \_\_\_\_\_ 10. Do you hide stashes of food for future eating or bingeing?
- \_\_\_\_\_ 11. Do you avoid foods with sugar in them and feel uncomfortable after eating sweets?
- \_\_\_\_\_ 12. Is food your friend?
- \_\_\_\_\_ 13. Would you rather eat alone? Do you feel uncomfortable when you eat with others?
- \_\_\_\_\_ 14. Do you have specific ways you eat when you are emotionally upset, sad, angry, afraid,

anxious or ashamed?

- 15. Do you become depressed or feel guilty after an eating binge?
- 16. Do you feel fat even when people tell you otherwise?
- 17. Are you ever afraid that you won't be able to stop eating when you are on a binge?
- 18. Have you tried to diet repeatedly only to sabotage your weight loss?
- 19. Do you binge on high-calorie, sugary, forbidden foods?
- 20. Are you proud of your ability to control the food you eat and your weight?
- 21. Do you have weight changes of more than 10 pounds after binges and fasts?
- 22. Do you feel your eating behavior is abnormal? Do you try to hide it from others?
- 23. Does feeling ashamed of your body weight result in more bingeing?
- 24. Do you make a lot of insulting jokes about your body weight or your eating?
- 25. Do you feel guilty after eating anything not allowed on your diet?
- 26. Do you follow unusual rituals while eating, such as counting bites or not allowing the fork or food to touch your lips?

If you checked five or more of the questions numbered 1, 4, 7, 12, 13, 14, 15, 17, 18, 19, 22, 23, 24, you may be dealing with compulsive overeating.

If you checked five or more of the questions numbered 1, 2, 6, 8, 11, 13, 14, 16, 17, 20, 22, 25, 26, you have eating behaviors typical of anorexia nervosa.

If you checked five or more of the questions numbered 1, 3, 5, 6, 9, 10, 13, 14, 15, 17, 19, 21, 22, 26, you have eating behaviors common in bulimia nervosa.