

## Ed's Story – Play It To The End

This idea is not original with me, but I got a lot of credit at our meeting for bringing this idea into our group. It's an activity called "Play It To The End."

The issue on the table was self-sabotage. Everybody in our group attends Suppers in the hope of turning around some long-term eating patterns that have gotten us into a lot of trouble. Some of us are literally digging our graves with our forks. We've eaten out of control until the diagnosis of diabetes stirs the fear of God in us. Our eyes were wide open. Every time we put something in our mouths, we were there (if not actually present). We knew it ran in our families. Still, we dug deeper.

One of our number said her best form of self-sabotage was continuing to socialize with people whose favorite activities were eating and drinking. Another said she could trick herself every time by telling herself, "Oh I'll just eat two". Wrong. Two equals twenty. We all had experience with the skip-breakfast-save-calories logic. Bad. But the form of self-sabotage we all did over and over was seducing ourselves into eating with blind anticipation and good memories of pleasurable eating that never, however, played out to remembering the consequences too. However many times I anticipated with relish some tasty treat, that's how many times my memory tricked me.

So my contribution to Suppers is the activity called "Play It To The End". Here's how it works.

The speaker recounts a made-up story in which he or she indulges in a favorite but problematical food, but they have to tell the whole story including the part about the consequences, "playing the tape to the end". Here's mine:

"We are at a reception and the dessert table is beckoning. There is a cheese cake dripping with cherry sauce, three kinds of chocolate cake, a key lime pie, champagne flutes of chocolate mousse and five kinds of cookies. I take slivers of each of the chocolate cakes. I am in heaven. The one with a layer of chocolate ganache is stunningly delicious. I go back for a big slice, a wedge of key lime pie and a few cookies. For 10 minutes, I'm in bliss. I swallow the last bite. It's all in my stomach. I think about the calories, the fact that it's 9:00 p.m. and how I'll probably be up for three hours in the middle of the night after so much sugar and stimulation. I sleep lousy. I feel bloated and disgusting. I kick myself for forgetting the consequences of late night blasts of sugar."

I have imagined partial scenarios just like this over and over but for some reason remembering the whole experience doesn't come automatically. The automatic part of my brain only recalls the anticipation and eating. It requires my full conscious participation to recall the consequences. I have spared myself many nights of lost sleep since I learned to play my eating scenarios to the end.

Exercise: Let members who care to share completing the imaginary experience of anticipating, eating and feeling the consequences of eating a food that acts more like a drug for them. To help you get started, you may use a prompt:

There was a bowl of chocolates on the table...  
Everybody wanted to go for ice cream...  
I am passing my favorite fast food joint and...