

## INTRODUCTION

This workbook is designed to be used in conjunction with my book, *Dieting: A Dry Drunk*. Its chapters correlate with those in the first book. Whereas, *Dieting: A Dry Drunk* is written in a handbook style with short, easy-to-read chapters, *Dieting: A Dry Drunk – The Workbook* offers reading and writing assignments, exercises, visualizations, and affirmations. It was created to stimulate thought, insight, awareness, growth and, ultimately, change.

I wrote this workbook to help guide eating disorder “recovery students” into stable, long-term abstinence and to illuminate and enhance their recovery path — basically, to nurture the transition of the new information from “head to heart.” It was written to be used on your own or, preferably, as part of a supportive study group — a group using these concepts to recover.

I believe it is paramount, when addressing an eating disorder, to understand and accept the concept of eating disorders as eating addictions — biologically based addictions. (Note: I believe both Rockefeller University and Harvard have completed research on the brain chemistry of eating disorder sufferers.) When we use this premise, we then have a clearly defined blueprint with which to begin to arrest the addiction — a chance to put it, and keep it, in remission a day at a time, for the rest of our lives.

To begin our recovery from an eating addiction, our physical actions and mental postures must be conscious, thorough and deliberate. If we hope to achieve ongoing freedom from our eating addiction, we must be willing to accept and adjust to the permanency of the illness, much the same as someone does when first diagnosed with diabetes. This permanency implies that we will need to daily and faithfully take the “medicine” necessary to arrest our eating addiction. For only when we take the “medicine” of abstinence from the eating addiction do we have a chance to be conscious, thorough, and deliberate.

Firstly, we will need to use the principles of willingness, honesty, and courage to define a “bottom line” for our abstinence. A concise definition of abstinence will or, at least, should reflect abstinence from compulsive overeating and undereating, abstinence from dieting, restricting and all forms of purging. It should encompass abstaining from all the out-of-

control behaviors and from all the attempting-to-control behaviors. If we are willing to add the phrase “no matter what” to our bottom line, we’re creating the framework to keep it focused and surrendered — to make it a “done deal.”

Secondly, we will need to access a level of honesty — actually *rigorous honesty*. If we want to experience a moderate, comfortable abstinence, rigorous honesty is the key that unlocks the door. Frankly, we will need to know what abstinence looks like in practice, in concrete terms and actions. And, for an added touch of sanity, we will need a “just for today” attitude to begin to take our medicine called abstinence. Lastly, we will need to learn the art of surrender. This means, we will need to quit fighting or struggling to become normal eaters; we will need to simply, calmly and respectfully begin to address our eating “problem” as a major illness — an eating addiction.

Beginning our recovery with the additional spiritual tool of group support is the most preferable way to proceed. One thing we definitely know about recovery from any and all addictions is that having the support of other recovering people is magical! That group support is often our first experience of connecting to a Power greater than ourselves that can help us solve our eating problem. Group dynamics can assist us in exposing and revealing old, damaged beliefs with compassion and understanding. It can help us uncover, identify and challenge old patterns and old illusions that “feed” the addiction. It can help us release our shame and self-bigotry. A study group gives us a forum for discussion and ongoing support for our new, tenuous mind-set of recovery. It helps with the integration of new concepts and new beliefs — it accelerates positive changes.

The goal of my work is to enable you to find an answer to your eating, food, dieting, and weight dilemma and to help you clearly define a path of recovery that allows you to experience that answer. Once you get abstinent, a day at a time, *working* at your recovery makes it possible to stay abstinent. Once you *live* your recovery, a day at a time, you will begin to experience the absence of yearning for any aspect of your eating addiction. You can experience a new and solid freedom. To quote Alcoholics Anonymous, “When, therefore, we were approached by those in whom the problem had been solved, there was nothing left for us but to pick up the simple kit of spiritual tools laid at our feet. We have found much of heaven and we have been rocketed into a fourth dimension of

existence of which we had not even dreamed.” Good luck on your journey.

**Note:** On [www.eatingaddictionrecovery.com](http://www.eatingaddictionrecovery.com) we have a *Dieting: A Dry Drunk* (DDD) Book Study Meeting format and suggestions on how to start a support group available on request. Additionally, we suggest ways to vary the format to include the *DDD Workbook* and CDs by Becky L. Jackson.

You can design a weekly group meeting that is open-ended or one in which members can commit themselves for a specific length of time.

**PART I**  
**GETTING STARTED**

## Chapter 1

### GAINING AWARENESS AND ACCEPTANCE

The first assignment is to read the “Foreword” written by Joe Mortola, M.D. and the “Introduction” in *Dieting: A Dry Drunk (DDD)*. Also, read the “Preface and the “Introduction” in *DDD – The Workbook*. Mark, highlight, and/ or record any questions.

Doctor Mortola’s theory that a “chemical imbalance” puts us at risk for an eating addiction is an important insight. But equally important is his concept that “confusion, stress and painful feelings” activated it. Knowing that our eating addiction cycle started with pain and that full recovery means eventually walking through our pain might feel overwhelming in the beginning. So instead, I suggest we start with his statement that “no one can functionally deal with pain” when the eating addiction isn’t arrested. This statement can help us to prioritize our actions. It implies that the beginning work is to arrest the addiction. If we start there — with arresting the eating addiction — we will be setting the stage to be able to functionally deal with our pain and our past. We will be creating the foundation for our recovery.

The following is a concise representation of how I see the problem and how I see the solution. It’s a handout read in DDD Book Study meetings. I feel we can’t hear it often enough in the beginning.

#### **Dieting: A Dry Drunk –The Problem**

- There is a lack of understanding about eating disorders as eating addictions.
- There is a lack of understanding about eating addictions as being biologically based.
- There is a lack of understanding that dieting is part of the problem.

- There is a lack of recognition and identification of the existing bigotry of “looksism.”
- There is a lack of clarity about what to do to address and arrest the “problem.”
- There is a lack of clarity about how to break our dependencies on the eating addiction.

We get caught in a cycle of out-of-control, compulsive, obsessive manipulation of eating, food, and body image, with no permanent relief in sight.

### **Dieting: A Dry Drunk — The Solution**

- We learn to identify and understand eating addictions.
- We learn how to arrest the eating addiction.
- We learn to clarify and commit to a “bottom line.”
- We learn to challenge and break our dieting mentality
- We learn to challenge our own looksism bigotry about human value being in “looks.”
- We learn to release our self-directed bigotry about body size, shape, and weight.
- We learn to live from a deliberately created spiritual value system.
- We learn to identify and release our dependencies on the eating addiction.

Recovering means being in the solution. It means keeping a bottom line. Abstinence is the bottom line.

The key concept for me is the “First Things First” concept. When I know nothing else, and if or when I’m so engulfed in the pain of my life, at that moment, all I need to do is honor my abstinence with respect and keep it sane — no matter what my life issues are. At least I haven’t added to my life’s pain by throwing away my precious recovery and started a self-abuse cycle.

Write your thoughts and feelings about discovering a solution. Additionally, if you are going through this workbook with a group, share with your group any of the key concepts you noted as you read and highlighted the beginning parts of both *DDD* and *DDD – The Workbook*.