



**PODCAST #14: MARIA  
(Translation from Spanish)**

**INTERVIEWER: Welcome to Podcast number 14 of Overeaters Anonymous. This podcast will focus on individual stories of recovery. With us today is Maria.**

**During this podcast we will refer to Overeaters Anonymous by its acronym CCA in Spanish or by OA, its initials in English.**

**Maria, where are you from?**

MARIA: I was actually born in South America, but I have been living in Spain for some years, so I consider myself to be from both places.

**INTERVIEWER: What were you like? What was your relationship with food prior to coming to OA?**

MARIA: Before coming to OA, I thought my life was under control; that I had a successful career, and that I was doing OK in life. But what I really was, was a bitter and controlling person. It was very difficult to live with me. I thought I was the world's savior. I meddled in other people's lives without them asking me for help. If they happened to ask me, I was promptly there to dedicate myself to them. That way I did not have to dedicate myself to my own life.

Regarding food... well, I only had one meal a day. I was eating from the time I got up, until it was time for me to go to sleep – constantly eating sweets, snacks and junk food in between meals. † some days I ate only sweets and snacks, and no real meals. I also related with people through food.

**INTERVIEWER: I see that your food was out of control. How did your way of eating or your weight affect the way you lived your life?**

MARIA: I will give you an example of my eating being out of control: I used to get up in the middle of the night to go to the bathroom. On my way to the bathroom, I would eat some chocolate.

**INTERVIEWER: In the middle of the night?**

MARIA: Yes, I would go to the bathroom at two or three in the morning; I would eat some chocolate; go to the bathroom and then, I would go back to sleep. I would also have condensed milk. I loved condensed milk, and I always had some cans in my room and would consume the contents before going to sleep. If some milk remained in the can, when I would get up to go to the bathroom again, I would have some more.

**INTERVIEWER: That's incredible. And how did this affect your family or friends?**

MARIA: I will start by telling you how it has affected me. It has damaged my body. I have problems with my knees, a hernia and chronic lumbar pain. It is all a consequence of my being overweight, and the quantity of food that I ate.

My family and friends had to put up with many things. For example: my mother would buy the same sweets for my brother and me. I ate mine, and would always try to get some more from my brother. I stole food. When my mother cooked something that I particularly liked—because I was not fond of food, I liked sweets and some specific dishes—I could eat it all without thinking about anyone else. Sometimes no one had had a chance to even taste it. I just ate it, it was impossible to stop. I would

finish eating and later on, when I was doing something else, I would remember that this food or snack was in the kitchen, and I would go back for more.

**INTERVIEWER: What happened? How did you find out about OA? What brought you to OA?**

MARIA: My best friend told me to go with her somewhere. She only asked me to accompany her. She did not tell me where we were going. I am glad, because I might have invented an excuse for not going. When we got to the place, I found myself in an OA meeting. I was listening to people speak about things that happened to me. In that group, there was a part of the meeting where they would read the Third Tradition aloud; they would ask those that felt they were compulsive overeaters to raise their hands and say their names, and that they were compulsive overeaters. I was speechless. I only wanted to cry, and cry, and cry. I felt that I had finally found a place where there were other people who spoke about things that also happened to me. I also saw peace and serenity in those people. I saw that there was physical recovery, that some people had lost a lot of weight. All that was very appealing to me.

**INTERVIEWER: What are you like now?**

MARIA: Now I am a grateful person. I am less controlling. I try to live my life and let people live their own lives. I am more optimistic. I am not always looking at what I don't have, but being grateful for all that I do have. By being abstinent, I am a more serene and calm person. I am not constantly thinking about food. I now go to the bathroom in the middle of the night, and go back to bed without putting anything in my mouth. All this makes my life better.

**INTERVIEWER: Tell me about the miracle of being free from the obsession.**

MARIA: For me it is very important to be free from the obsession. I think that 90% of my life is obsession-free. I have been abstinent since September 1, 2005 (around three-and-a-half years). Over the last four years, I have been living my life, and not always thinking and obsessing about food. There are certain moments where I might have a craving; but I also remember all the suffering that came with food, and all the misery that came when I ate compulsively. That is enough to keep me away from food. I just tell myself that I have the OA program; I call an OA friend, and I do not have to turn to food in order to live my life.

**INTERVIEWER: What are you like now—emotionally, physically and spiritually?**

MARIA: I am really a more mature, kind and honest person. I think about me, but not in the absolute selfish way I did before OA. I think a lot about others and about trying always to be a better person.

Physically, I have lost over 35 pounds. I still have to keep losing weight. The best thing is that in these years, that weight loss has been maintained. It is not like the old times, where I would lose 40 pounds with a diet and gain back 80. Now my weight is more stable, always going down.

Spiritually, I have gained serenity. The freedom of being free of resentments with myself and others. I am now able to surrender my rancor and to pray for someone who has hurt me. That liberates me and helps me live peacefully.

**INTERVIEWER: How is your life different?**

MARIA: Well...I think my life is different in every aspect. By not being submerged in food, I live my life. I am also able to accept that life is real. It has good and bad things. Before, I used to bury myself in food to deal with bad things. That is why I was eating the whole day, because nothing ever turned out the way I wanted. Now, I understand that life has good and bad things. I am able to confront life

without turning to food thanks to the OA program. The program also gives me tools that help me live life.

**INTERVIEWER: Can you tell us again how long have you been abstinent?**

MARIA: I have not eaten sweets for three-and-a-half years.

**INTERVIEWER: How has your weight changed, and how long have you maintained a healthy weight?**

MARIA: I have lost a total of over 35 pounds over these last three-and-a-half years. In the beginning, I started to lose about 8 pounds the first month, and kept on losing weight progressively. When I had lost around 25 pounds, I got stuck. I did not lose or gain weight for a whole year, and then I kept on losing weight. I have periods of maintaining and periods of losing weight. But it is not a yo-yo anymore, going up and down, up and down.

**INTERVIEWER: In your opinion, what is the best gift that OA has given you?**

MARIA: I will put that in a few phrases: OA has given me a new life filled with reality, love for myself and respect for others. It has also given me the capacity to confront the many challenges of life without food.

**INTERVIEWER: Thank you, Maria, for your story. Please tell us how a person in your country can find OA.**

MARIA: We have a Website for OA in Spain: [www.comedorescompulsivos.es](http://www.comedorescompulsivos.es). We can also be reached by phone: +34 63 053 5033

**INTERVIEWER: Thank you Maria!**

MARIA: Thank You!

**INTERVIEWER: Thanks for joining us for this podcast. To obtain more information about Overeaters Anonymous, please go to [www.oa.org](http://www.oa.org), or call the World Service Office in The United States: (505) 891 2664.**