

Another Dor Story – No Commercial Messages

In the ten years of research and experiments that led to the program design for Suppers, remaining flexible and open was always a priority. With many years of AI Anon woven into my fiber, I had become convinced of the therapeutic value of sharing experiences in safe settings, knowing I would not be judged. So right after whole food preparation, the active practice of non-judgment became one of the few inflexible characteristics of the program.

One more emerged: zero tolerance of commercial messages. It was yet another gift from Bill W. and the creators of the 12 step programs. I called myself the founder of Suppers, but really I have been more like a shepherdess. The members created the program. I took notes, helped them write their stories, observed what it takes to turn a life around through diet and lifestyle change, and protected them from influences that could either slow down or artificially speed up (and therefore slow down) their processes. To keep things pure, it became clear that we'd also have to borrow the 12 step policy on commercial messages, none allowed.

People who come to Suppers are exposing their vulnerabilities. I felt a strong need to protect them from their own or anybody else's biases about what a good diet is and particularly from anybody who wanted to turn members into a market place for products and services. After all, wasn't it profit motive that got so many of these people into trouble to begin with? The food and beverage industries have a lot to answer for.

It has been very satisfying to see would-be presenters lose interest in Suppers once they learned there would be no audience for a sales pitch. It has been tricky helping members navigate through book summaries and presentations sharing -- but not promoting -- the diets, products and services that worked *for them*. But the pay off has been worth the struggle. We are all learning to acknowledge that we have biases and assumptions and to name them. I needed to learn the lesson too and it was having a few vibrant raw food vegetarians and a thriving Atkins dieter *in the same meeting* who taught me. It has kept our settings safe and focused entirely on healing for the greatest number through self-discovered diet and lifestyle change.