

Healing is a Social Experience

How to use this card:

Pass this card around. Each person please state your name and read a small section of the content on Healing is a Social Experience:

Concept 21: Healing is a Social Experience

Problems that feel impossible to solve in isolation become solvable with support.

Most illnesses today are chronic illnesses, problems that require behavior change, not magic-bullet pharmaceutical solutions like antibiotics for bacterial infections. We can't fix diabetes, autoimmune diseases, allergies and asthma, or addictions with a two-week course of pills. They require change. The assumption at Suppers is that the changes are mostly quite simple but not necessarily easy to make because entrenched patterns are hard to shake. They often involve an addiction-like relationship with favorite foods, and the change process requires support. At Suppers we form groups with the shared intention of living a healthier life. Healing is a social experience.

Brad's Story: Sugar

Hi, my name is Brad, and I'm becoming a statistic. I am 48. I'm tired a lot. And depending on who you talk to, I'm 50 to 70 pounds overweight. My wife says I snore. She says I have sleep apnea. My doctor gives me a talking to every time I see him. It's the same routine every time, "Your numbers are getting too high, Brad; you're getting older. It's only going to get harder..."

The scary part is the numbers continue creeping up and up and I'm watching them with my eyes wide open. I have been in the food industry since I was 14. I have always been around alcohol, had my first drunk and drug buzz at 13. Of course, I've been around food even longer. Now I'm a chef at a great little restaurant where we make almost everything we serve in house.

I'm sober now for years, but I'm still immersed in a world of great food and wine. There are still times I want to drink or drug, but I haven't relapsed. I go to AA. Problem is, I transferred my compulsion from alcohol to comfort food, and I'm surrounded by pastry! With food, abstinence is not an option. And because of my career and livelihood, I swim in a sea of constant temptations, sometimes 12 hours a day of high stress and chocolate mousse.

How can I repair my eating habits and still have a job in this business? I need constant reminders that how I feel is data. To stay in touch with my inner wisdom, I need friends who can listen without judging, support my efforts even when I'm not perfect. At Suppers I have people to relate to, to be accountable to (I chuckle at the idea that I have a hard time being accountable to myself, but there it is), to talk to, someone who can understand where I'm coming from without being judgmental. And maybe most important for me, they can give good quality advice, if I ask. Nobody beats me up more than I do myself. I'm an expert. If I eat poorly, I eat poorly some more and then some more, fueled by my own self recriminations.

I have demonstrated to myself enough times now that if I eat better I feel better. The mornings that I eat eggs, some meat and tomato juice, I am satisfied and not stealing cookies. If I eat this breakfast I can go for more hours before having lunch than when I eat a poor breakfast. My cravings are lessened as well, and the effects are both physical and mental. Breakfasts of just coffee and a croissant send me down the road of poor eating habits for the day, or longer. I end up craving sweets and inevitably my mood suffers, and I irritate my staff as well.

I need a constant infusion of support and nonjudgment to pull this off. I know that when I go to meetings my self-awareness improves. My self-esteem rises and when I feel good about myself, it's easier to eat according to my intentions. After eight years, I'm still free of alcohol, drugs and cigarettes. For me, by far the hardest substance to control is sugar.

Continue around the table by briefly sharing how you relate to the Suppers concept of Healing is a Social Experience.

Describe a time when you were able to accomplish something with support that you could not do in isolation.

Discussion Prompts (Each person select a prompt that works for you.)

- Describe a change you would like to make for which you will seek social support.
- Who are the important people in your life who will either support your intentions to lead a healthier life or sabotage them?

Ideas for Next Steps:

Experiments and Observations:

- Do a thought experiment: Imagine you already have the social support you need to live according to your intentions. What's happening?
- Do a thought experiment: Can you imagine yourself sooner joining in a social setting that already exists or inviting others to join one you provide?
- What happens when you share about a vulnerability? Journal your observation.

Between Meetings:

- Read how other Suppers members related to this concept.
 - For people who experience shame, read [Noreen's story](#) on page 273 in the 2nd edition of *Logical Miracles* or on the Suppers website.
 - For people who fail on diet programs, read [Julie's Trilogy](#) on page 281 in the 2nd edition of *Logical Miracles* or on the Suppers website.