

Voices of Recovery, September 17

When it comes to abstinence, willingness and wanting are not the same. I may want to eat three slices of pizza for lunch (who wouldn't?), but I am willing to eat my pre-planned, abstinent lunch. Why am I willing, even when I don't want? There are several reasons why, and there are probably some of which I am not even aware.

One reason why I am willing is because I think in terms of today, not the rest of my life. Just for today, I can handle doing what I need to do. Another reason why I am willing is because I make it easier to want by planning and preparing what I consider to be delicious meals. An abstinent meal does not have to be a disappointing one! I also make it easier to be willing by abstaining from the specific foods that cause the allergic reaction. I have tried "controlled" eating of the foods that I am allergic to, and that just doesn't work. Now that they are out of my system, it is a lot easier to be willing.

Another reason I can be willing, even when I don't want, is because I have said good riddance to my subconscious and self-defeating belief that I am not capable of maintaining willingness. How did this happen? One evening, as willingness teetered on the edge, as I was walking toward the kitchen (and defeat), I heard a voice say, "Surprise yourself." It stopped me in my tracks. Why would continued willingness to abstain in that moment surprise me? Because, in my heart-of-hearts, I believed that I could not remain willing. If you had asked me, "Are you willing?" I would have said yes, but the truth is, I was really waiting for my own inevitable fall. After all, I had failed so many times before, right? But, in program I found a higher power that gave me the gift of surprising myself. So, I remained willing that evening. What a wonderful gift to know that I do not have to fall victim to my malignant underlying beliefs! They are not the boss of me anymore.