

The Doctor's Opinion

The doctor writes:

The subject presented in this book seems to me to be of paramount importance to those afflicted with compulsive overeating.

I say this after many years' experience as Medical Director of one of the oldest hospitals in the country treating compulsive overeating and food addiction.

There was, therefore, a sense of real satisfaction when I was asked to contribute a few words on a subject which is covered in such masterly detail in these pages.

We doctors have realized for a long time that some form of moral psychology was of urgent importance to compulsive overeating, but its application presented difficulties beyond our conception. What with our ultra-modern standards, our scientific approach to everything, we are perhaps not well equipped to apply the powers of good that lie outside our synthetic knowledge.

Many years ago one of the leading contributors to this book came under our care in this hospital and while here he acquired some ideas which he put into practical application at once.

Later, he requested the privilege of being allowed to tell his story to other patients here and with some misgiving, we consented. The cases we have followed through have been most interesting: in fact, many of them are amazing. The unselfishness of these men as we have come to know them, the entire absence of profit motive, and their community spirit, is indeed inspiring to one who has labored long and wearily in compulsive overeating field. They believe in themselves, and still more in the Power which pulls chronic compulsive overeaters back from the gates of death.

Of course a compulsive overeater ought to be freed from his physical craving for food, and this often requires a definite hospital procedure, before psychological measures can be of maximum benefit.

We believe, and so suggested a few years ago, that the action of food on these chronic compulsive overeaters is a manifestation of an allergy; that the phenomenon of craving is limited to this class and never occurs in the average temperate eater. These allergic types can never safely use certain foods in any form at all; and once having formed the habit and found they cannot break it, once having lost their self-confidence, their reliance upon things human, their problems pile up on them and become astonishingly difficult to solve.

Frothy emotional appeal seldom suffices. The message which can interest and hold these compulsive overeater people must have depth and weight. In nearly all cases, their ideals must be grounded in a power greater than themselves, if they are to re-create their lives.