

S4E59 10 Minutes with George – exceptions to following the program

Geoff Allix

Welcome to the session to the second edition of 10 Minutes with George, where we're joined by the founder of Overcoming MS George Jelinek. Welcome back, George.

George Jelinek

Thanks very much, Geoff.

Geoff Allix

And as before, we've got a few quick questions, too, for people to get a more of an understanding about the OMS program. So to start off with, we've heard people talk about cheating. And does that make sense to you? And what would you call it? If you are cheating on the program?

George Jelinek

Look, I've never actually used the word. And I've never understood how it can be used in relation to the OMS Program. I mean, it, it sort of the word "cheating" implies that there's sort of some kind of external authority, who's making rules, and you're disobeying them, essentially. And we've never been about that at OMS, we don't make rules. I mean, we offer choices for people based on the best evidence, and then it's up to people to decide for themselves, whether they want to take all of them, some of them how much of them they want to take. Cheating sort of doesn't make sense in that context, really.

Geoff Allix

And so if people, let's say not not cheating, but let's say they, they either consciously or unconsciously slip up. And this is this has happened to me. So I was given the wrong meal once and, and I ate some food that had cheese in it. And I did, and I swallowed it. And then I kind of realized I thought that that wasn't right, that source was, and I said, and they went, Oh, no, that's, and then then the restaurant go into a panic, because they think that you've got something that's going to kill you in two minutes, which, thankfully isn't the case. But then I was sort of taking the approach, well, actually, I mean, I lived many years eating dairy, I wasn't having a relapse every time I had something with dairy in it. And the way I took it was, it's a bit like rolling the dice. You know, if you roll a double six, you're gonna get a relapse. Best thing to do is not roll the dice. But ultimately, I rolled the dice, then I was fine. It was okay. I thought, no point getting stressed about it, nothing I can do about it. Carry on. But what would you say? What would you say is the most important thing to do if they do, consciously or unconsciously slip up on the program?

George Jelinek

I think they're two very different things conscious and unconsciously slipping up. But the sort of situation you described, I mean, it's important to remember what the aim of the program is, and the aims of the program, really, your good health in the long term. This is about sort of your health in 20, 30 years' time will reflect the whole range of of things you've done of your daily activities over all that time. And that's true in general, or in any illness. So the occasional slip up in that context is essentially mostly irrelevant. It's when it becomes an intentional thing or becomes a habit so that you think, well, when I go out, I'll ask questions about and I won't be too fussed, if there's a bit of cheese and, you know, have it anyway, that's a different thing than finding you've eaten something that you didn't know how had cheese in it. And the difficulty with that second sort of scenario is that it can become a habit and become a way of life and

then gradually, you start slipping outside the guardrails, essentially, as Jack McNulty puts it in the chapter on food in the OMS Handbook. And the guardrails are sort of there, as broad guidelines to stop you falling outside what's going to be good for your health. So if you find that, over time, you're gradually increasing your intake of dairy products, so the dairy protein in particular, or saturated fat, then you're not going to get as much benefit as if you stay faithful to the actual program. So, you know, you may choose to do that because of any number of reasons. And that's a personal choice. And you can certainly make that choice if that's what you want to do. But it's important to know what the science is the consequence of that will be, and it's likely that you won't get as much benefit as if you did it faithfully.

Geoff Allix

And if someone's struggling with the program, what would you say or suggest to someone who's struggling to follow the OMS program?

George Jelinek

I always think it's useful to look at intention and motivation, I find those really critical things. For most people, if there's a struggle and inner struggle going on around this, then trying to actually get some help and understand what that that struggles about, I think is useful to know. Is that related, for instance, to, to not valuing oneself, not valuing one's health? Because of perhaps the way we've been brought up or whatever? I mean, there's all sorts of different reasons why, why a sense of not really placing yourself and your own health as, as important in your life would manifest in not doing everything that you can to try and stay well. I mean, that's one way of looking at it. There are other reasons why people might struggle with to stay on the program. For instance, it might be really difficult or inconvenient when they've got small children. They're preparing meals in a hurry, and so on. And I guess, there, it's pretty useful, from my experience to look for some peer support. And the best kind of peer support always, for me comes from other people who are on the program, understand what you're trying to do. And that's where I think the Circles really come in to be very helpful for a lot of people.

Geoff Allix

And how about if someone is challenged by a lack of support? You mentioned Circles, but it could be there's obviously their family as well, and or life events that are affecting them. And it could be traumatic life events? How do they manage that sort of journey?

George Jelinek

Yeah, that's, I mean, that that's life, isn't it, that that sort of up and down roller coaster of life, where sometimes things are easy, and sometimes things are hard. And that's, that's actually the nature of it. And I mean, everyone will find their own different solutions. I think the support issue is a pretty key one, though, for most people, and particularly for what I've really seen over the years is that the support of a partner is pretty crucial. And in in the days, when retreats were common, it was always a really sound, bit of advice to bring your partner with you to the retreat. But the same really applies to the resources that are available now. And a little bit of gentle encouragement of a partner to read this handbook or some parts of it . When partners came to the retreat would often find that their highly skeptical attitude at the beginning of the retreat was replaced with a total commitment by the end to not only support their partner but to do everything they could for their own health, because they would come to realize actually how important it is to stay well for themselves.

Geoff Allix

Okay, that's the final question for this episode. So thank you very much for joining us.