

You Are Not Alone

Monthly Recovery Support Letter

Filled with eating disorder recovery stories, exclusive guest interviews, inspirations, recovery and body image tips, poems, artwork, healing information and more.

April 2011 Edition



**“Please stay strong and keep on believing in yourself!
I know how you feel, I have been there!
You CAN recover!”**

Created by: Andrea Roe
<http://www.youarenotalonebook.com>
<http://www.eating-disorder-information.com>

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Trigger Warning: Please note that the content in this newsletter may trouble some people.
If you feel you may react negatively to the content, please don't continue reading.

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It's time for some spring cleaning!

Last weekend, I cleaned out my clothes cupboard. I haven't done so in a few years, so it actually took me a while to go through everything. And it made me think of the last time I gave my cupboard a good clean... and that was during my recovery from eating disorders. And I couldn't help but think what was different this time versus the last....



No “bad body” feelings were associated with any of the clothes. Years ago, that wouldn't have been the case.

During my struggle with eating disorders and through the recovery process, my cupboard was filled with clothes in several different sizes. At that time, every of piece clothing had a specific meaning—it was a way to measure my own personal self-worth. If I couldn't fit into certain clothes, I'd be mad at myself.

At some point during my recovery, I finally made the decision to get rid of my old “eating disorder days” clothes. And even though it was difficult to give away certain clothes (because a part of me was still hoping to fit into them one day), I knew it was the best thing for me to do... I realized that I couldn't be truly free of this clothing-size obsession—**and learn to be happy with my body**—if I was reminded of these clothes every day when I got dressed. And I also knew that I couldn't really recover and still fit into the clothes I wore while I was sick. It was either or. And I chose recovery. I got to the point that learning to **be happy with myself and living life (versus just existing) became much more important to me than how much I weighed or what dress size I could squeeze myself into.**

Saying goodbye to my ‘sick’ clothes (and my scale!!!) was a huge step forward in my recovery.

I encourage you to do the same. If you also have 'sick' clothes in your cupboard, now's the time to get rid of them. It might be a scary thought, but it's something that helped me a lot and will likely do the same for you.

All the best,

Andrea

Congratulations! ☺ The winner of last month's *Hope, Help & Healing for Eating Disorder* book giveaway is... Joelle, 24, from NY.

PS. If you'd like to share your poetry, artwork, story, or recovery tips with the Support Letter community, email me. I am looking forward to hearing from you! ☺

PPS. If you'd like me to visit your school, treatment center, support group, or special event to talk about eating disorders, how to develop a healthy body image, or to share my personal recovery story, send a message to speaking@youarenotalonebook.com—for more information and to read **what others are saying**, visit www.youarenotalonebook.com/speaking.php—I am looking forward to meeting you in person!

Inspirational Quotes:

Words to help you on your journey.

“We often take for granted the very things that most deserve our gratitude.”

– *Cynthia Ozick*

“Do not repeat anything you will not sign your name to.”

– *Author Unknown*

“You will not be punished for your anger; you will be punished by your anger.”

– *Buddha*

**“We don’t stop playing because we grow old;
we grow old because we stop playing.”**

– *George Bernard Shaw*

“When your heart speaks, take good notes.”

– *Judith Campbell*

**“The greatest discovery of all time is
that a person can change his future
by merely changing his attitude.”**

– *Oprah*

“The purpose of life is a life of purpose.”

– *Robert Byrne*

**“Obstacles are those frightful things you see
when you take your eyes off your goal.”**

– *Henry Ford*

“A hug is a handshake from the heart.”

– *Author Unknown*

“Never ruin an apology with an excuse.”

– *Kimberly Johnson*

“To think too long about doing a thing often becomes its undoing.”

– *Eva Young*

“Hope never abandons you, you abandon it.”

– *George Weinberg*

“You were born an original. Don’t die a copy.”

– *John Mason*

**“Forgiveness does not change the past,
but it does enlarge the future.”**

– *Paul Boese*

Inspiring Woman – Making a Difference in the World



Rosie Molinary

This month, I have the pleasure of introducing you to author and positive body image activist Rosie Molinary. In the following interview, she talks about her own journey to self-acceptance and how she learned to feel good about herself and life.

Thanks so much, Rosie, for your time
and for sharing your story with us! ☺

Tell us a bit about yourself.

I live in North Carolina with my husband and our little boy who is 2½ years old. We adopted him from Ethiopia just over two years ago. When I am not working or mothering, I enjoy reading, watching NFL football (it's probably my biggest quirk), painting, vegetable gardening, cooking, cycling, yoga, and Pilates.

I started my career as a high school teacher in the inner city, and I continue to have a passion for education and social justice. I serve as the board chair to Circle de Luz (www.circledeluz.org), a non-profit that a strong, committed group of women started in 2008 in an effort to radically empower young Latinas by supporting and inspiring them in the pursuit of their possibilities through extensive mentoring, holistic programming, and scholarship funds for further education.

Another passion of mine is writing. My first book came out in 2007 and is titled *Hijas Americanas: Beauty, Body Image, and Growing Up Latina* (Seal Press). My second book, *Beautiful You: A Daily Guide to Radical Self Acceptance* (Seal Press), came out in October 2010.

In addition to writing, I teach courses on body image and women and media in the Women's and Gender Studies Department and Honors College at the University of North Carolina-Charlotte and speak on these topics around the country.

Tell us about your own journey to self-acceptance and a positive body image?

For a significant part of my coming of age, I struggled with how I was different—I am Puerto Rican and grew up in South Carolina at a time when there were very few Latinos in the community.

And then, I ultimately came to this moment of clarity, where I realized that waiting for a consistent reaction to my looks, my reality might mean that I was going to wait for a long time—even forever because I couldn't control how other people took me in. **All I could control was how I embraced myself.** And that was a big first step to feeling peace with my physicality.

From there, I decided that I would do my best to treat my body well and that the journey was really the point—not getting to a destination of thinness or long, raven hair or whatever the obsession could be—but journeying through how to love and be loved which ultimately makes me feel much better than those physical features ever could.

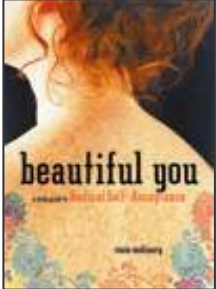
If I had to describe how I feel about my body now, it would be **peace**. My body is not as strong as I'd like for it to be and it's not as picture-perfect as some bodies are, but the truth is that it has truly never betrayed me. That is not to say that I have never, in the past, wished that it looked different. There have been those times.

What I mean by saying that it has never betrayed me is that it has gotten me through everything I have asked of it—100+ plus mile bike rides, long hikes, night times spent patrolling a beach in Trinidad to protect leatherback turtles, accompanying my father through health crises that have included an extended treatment process for an advanced lymphoma and a coma, waking for every wailing episode of my son's infancy (and there were so many) and then sustaining me through the next day in a way that allowed me to appropriately mother despite the lack of sleep.

My body has done everything I have asked of it, and, for a long time, it did it with very little gratitude from me. When I **think about how unkind I have been with my thoughts toward my body while it has simultaneously been so kind to my soul with all that it has allowed me to accomplish**, I am humbled. I wish to not ever be that unkind to the vessel that I've been given to enjoy and experience this life again. So, that's the promise I made to my body years ago. You've been good to me. I will be good, in all of its manifestations, back.

Congratulations on your latest book, "Beautiful You: A Daily Guide to Radical Self-Acceptance." Tell us more about it.

After I wrote *Hijas Americanas*, which was about the coming of age experiences of Latinas, I was struck by how the conversation in the book about body image and beauty perception as well as the messages shared about those issues—that **we are all enough, that our uniqueness is beautiful**—were universally embraced by women. Women are really hungering for affirmation of what they inherently know to be true and guidance for how to let that truth shine out in them.



I have always been particularly interested in journaling and in creating and taking actionable steps towards a larger goal and so the idea of putting together an action plan and empowerment guide for women where they could put together the pieces to their larger goal of loving and accepting themselves really resonated with me.

In *Beautiful You*, I wanted to take so much of the theory we know to be true about how to fall in love with yourself and offer yourself care and give women actionable steps that get them there. Each day begins with a short essay, reflective passage and then it is followed by a task. Each step is doable in a day, isn't too overwhelming, and really motivates the reader to build on her process.

Too often, we believe we will finally be content when our body changes in some way. Actually, we'll be content only when our mind changes, when we give ourselves permission and the tools to be content and that takes some time. *Beautiful You* provides the tools—vision, passion, purpose, resilience, productivity—for every woman who wants to see beauty in a way that is true to who she is and not in the way the world hands it to her.

The tasks really vary from journaling exercises where you look at beliefs you have about yourself, joys you have experienced or challenges to actionable steps like working on maintaining eye contact with others, watching what you say or think about yourself, or writing a loved one a letter to let them know how you feel. While the steps are each doable in a day, I am hopeful that people will feel such satisfaction from some of them—like maintaining eye contact—that they will incorporate them into their everyday behaviors, further boosting their confidence and sense of self-acceptance.

What's your favourite "feel good about yourself and life" tip?

There are some exercises whose incorporation into my life made a significant, positive difference over the years. But I think the tip that has had the most profound impact on my life—and my self-acceptance—is **"Celebrate Your Birth Day"** ("Day 32" in *Beautiful You*).

Every year on my birthday, I write a list of things I want to accomplish, try, enjoy, before my next birthday. The number of items on the list corresponds with how old I've turned.

I started this tradition in my mid-twenties when my self-care was really suffering and I was a constantly sick but very professionally satisfied high school teacher and coach. The thing is I had a bit of revolving door experience with the local emergency room—I was that sickly—and the emergency room doctor who I kept seeing finally said to me, "I am willing to keep seeing you here if you are willing to keep landing yourself here."

His words made me realize that sickness wasn't happening to me, I was evoking sickness in my self because of the way I worked so hard and so compulsively and didn't rest or eat right or nurture myself in any way. I lived in fear of letting my students down and so I worked incredibly hard to not do that. But I worked so hard that it was not sustainable and, in fact, was debilitating.

I realized that I was going to get to the age of retirement never having done anything but teach (which is amazing but life was meant to be more broad than that).

There was another realization that hit me at that time. My parents gave me an incredible gift as a girl by staying in this country after my father retired from the US Military (as opposed to moving back to Puerto Rico where all their family was) so that I could be educated here (I was in 2nd grade when my father retired). That said, there were not resources in my family for me to be able to try many other things.

All of a sudden, I realized that I was an adult and it was up to me whether or not I tried those things, gave myself those opportunities. So I conceived the 'birthday list' as a way to dabble in experiences that might become hobbies for me as well as to encourage self-care while trying to live the life I imagined.

I learned how to horseback ride, how to swim, started running and cycling, tried yoga and Pilates, planted a vegetable garden, got certified in first aid and CPR, learned how to change a bike tire, tried surfing and tennis, took

cooking lessons, tried watercolor painting and pottery, visited Germany, Brazil, Ethiopia, and Scotland, worked with leatherback turtles, and the lists go on.

Over time, the list broadened my understanding of myself. The list is *how I live my life*—it is a realization of the possibility that exists in everything, most especially, me.

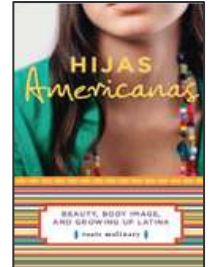
I am not static. I am vital and ever-changing. Understanding that has given me a peace about both my physical and emotional way of being in this world.

Tell us more about your first book, "Hijas Americanas: Beauty, Body Image, and Growing Up Latina."

I initially saw the themes of body image, beauty perception, and ethnic identity emerge in my work while I was in graduate school for an MFA in creative writing. I was surprised by their prevalence and the impact these concepts clearly had on my own development.

In conceptualizing *Hijas Americanas*, I wanted to look at how Latinas who grew up in a culture that had one idea of beauty, femininity, and gender roles reconciled those expectations with both what they heard from mainstream America and with what they wanted for themselves.

The stories shared show the significance of each individual's unique coming-of-age experience, but they also examine the universal truths that are part of all our experiences. These aren't questions that are only Latino or female in nature. We all must face our personal challenges—and sometimes our impenetrable insecurities—with an individual honor and dignity that allows us to define who we are in the context of so many things: family, community, ethnicity, race, religion, culture, and more.



Anything else you'd like to share?

I really want for **women to release themselves from standards that weren't of their own imagining and that keep them from being their best selves**—and anything that keeps you from thinking positively about yourself and behaving respectfully towards yourself falls in that category. I want us to take the time and make the effort to get to know ourselves and then to move forward from an authentic place.

We have to champion all women. As long as one woman is crippled by feelings of inadequacy, then the world that we have created is inadequate. Supporting one another and freeing one another from the limiting messages that we internalize can be revolutionary. We make the choice whether to internalize these messages. **We make the choice whether to build up or tear down.** We can have power in our lives by not taking in negative messages, and we can empower other women by not sending out negative messages. When we begin to see women in all of their dimensions, we begin to eradicate confining stereotypes and worldviews. We start to see all women as complex individuals, and not just as part of a larger stereotypical whole.

We can choose to create a society that encourages women to be healthier and more whole, a society that unites us in our commonalities while acknowledging the depth of the individual. The more we challenge the limits we place on each other, the more open the world will be to all of us.



How do you see your future, what are your goals?

If I've learned anything, life happens while you are making plans. What I know to be true is that I want to be of use, I want to live as authentically as I can, and I want to help others do that as well.

My professional work is an unbalanced triangle of writing, teaching/speaking, and activism through Circle de Luz, and I just move from corner to corner as each area has a need that must be met.

I'd love to start work on another book. I'd love for Circle de Luz to secure funding that would allow us (Circle de Luz is led by an all volunteer force to be reckoned with) to hire staff and expand it in a way that would positively impact the lives of even more girls around the country. I'd love to get on the road more to take the *Beautiful You* message to more people as I so believe in releasing women from the agony we sometimes inflict on ourselves.

For more information about Rosie and her work, visit her website at <http://rosiemolinary.com> and her blog at <http://rosiemolinary.com/blog> - you can also follow her on Twitter at <http://twitter.com/rosiemolinary>

For more information about *Beautiful You*, visit www.sealpress.com/book.php?isbn=1580053319 and www.perseusbooks.com/perseus/book_detail.jsp?isbn=1580053319



Karen's Healing Column: Live Life, Not Death

"You can curse the darkness, or you can light a candle." ~ Robin Sharma

To have struggled with an eating disorder (ED) long enough is to find yourself in darkness.

Why not light a candle? Today.

This will not be the easiest thing to do. Change asks you to resist the old and take on something new. "Greatness," Robin Sharma says, "in so many ways, is determined by whether you persist through failure or let it consume you."

It takes greatness to overcome ED. Greatness, is not something we are born with. It is something that is developed within you—one step at a time. One choice at a time. It is usually born out of difficulty. It is born in a decision to no longer remain in "difficulty's" grip but to overcome it and move to a new and desired place. A better place. One step at a time.

Oprah began in the most humble of places. She did not rise to greatness in one giant leap. She rose one step at a time. She moved into life, making friends, reading books, became a journalist, found mentors, started her own show, kept asking questions, kept learning and growing. I heard her say one time (in the beginning) there was no one to tell her the way to go, so she began with books.

What candle do you light today? Is it choosing to think of healthy, good and uplifting things? Is it reading a motivating or informative book or spending time with friends or family? Do you take a course? Do you speak kindly and with friendliness to yourself?

Sit in the sunshine or the soft glow of candlelight today. Hear what it speaks to you. Hear the light that is in you that ED tries to silence. Do not be discouraged if it does not come right away. If you are too used to hearing the darkness, you need to relearn how to hear the light and to let the hearing of it grow and develop.

After you choose to "be" in the light for a while today, be in it again tomorrow. And then the next day after that, until it becomes a new habit for you to live in the light.

And then do it for the rest of your life...

Have a brightly beautiful month,

Karen

About Karen Cook, M.A.: Karen, who is an eating disorder survivor herself, has over fifteen years of counselling experience in private practice working alongside women in a variety of their life's concerns and difficulties, including eating disorders. She is a professional counselor serving the **Langley and Vancouver community in BC, Canada**. If you are interested in getting in touch with Karen, please send an email to kcservices@shaw.ca or visit her website at www.karencookcounselling.com

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Something to Think About

Excerpt from "Handbook to Life"

Personality:

- ❖ Don't compare your life to others... You have no idea what their journey is all about.
- ❖ Don't have negative thoughts over things you cannot control. Instead, invest your energy in the positive present moment.
- ❖ Don't overdo. Keep your limits.
- ❖ Don't take yourself so seriously. No one else does.
- ❖ Don't waste your precious energy on gossip.
- ❖ Dream more while you are awake.
- ❖ Envy is a waste of time. Be grateful for what you have been given.
- ❖ Make peace with your past so it won't spoil the present.
- ❖ Life is too short to waste time hating anyone.
- ❖ No one is in charge of your happiness except you.
- ❖ Realize that life is a school and you are here to learn. Problems are simply part of the curriculum that appear and fade away (like algebra class) but the lessons you learn will last a lifetime.
- ❖ Smile and laugh more.
- ❖ You don't have to win every argument. Agree to disagree.

Society:

- ❖ Call your family often.
- ❖ Each day give something good to others.
- ❖ Forgive.
- ❖ Spend time with people over the age of seventy and under the age of six.
- ❖ Try to make at least three people smile each day.
- ❖ What other people think of you is none of your business.
- ❖ Your job won't take care of you when you are sick. Your friends will. Stay in touch.

Life:

- ❖ Do the right thing!
- ❖ Get rid of anything that isn't useful, beautiful or joyful.
- ❖ However good or bad a situation is, it will change.
- ❖ No matter how you feel, get up, dress up and show up.
- ❖ The best is yet to come.
- ❖ Your Inner most is always happy. So, be happy.

Excerpts from Thom Rutledge's e-book called...

The Greater Possibilities

By Thom Rutledge, Psychotherapist
Author of "Embracing Fear"

Renounce Victimization

Victimization is a state of mind in which you believe that how you are doing in any particular moment is determined more by the circumstances beyond your control than by how you choose to respond to those circumstances.

To accept full responsibility for yourself is to renounce victimization.

Blame & Responsibility

A victim will blame the dealer of the cards, or blame the person who taught him how to play cards, or maybe even the cards themselves. A victim may even take refuge in blaming himself, not understanding that there is an important *difference between assigning blame and taking responsibility*.

Reject Self-Blame

To admit that things are not going well in your life because you are a 'worthless piece of crap' is not accepting responsibility. It is quite the opposite. Hiding behind self-blame, and drowning in the resulting shame, is one of the most efficient—not to mention prevalent—ways to avoid personal responsibility.

**Being a victim is an indulgence
you cannot afford.**

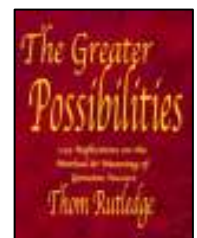
Acknowledge the Continuum

None of us are totally immune to victimization. At one time or another, we all think and act as victim, and we all think and act responsibly at other times. It would be a mistake to claim that you are always a victim, or that you accept full responsibility for yourself *all of the time*.

Think of responsibility as a continuum along which you will move back and forth, depending on any number of variables.

Thom Rutledge is a psychotherapist and speaker from Nashville, Tennessee. He is the author of *Embracing Fear: How To Turn What Scares Us Into Our Greatest Gift* and co-author (with Jenni Schaefer) of *Life Without Ed: How One Woman Declared Independence From Her Eating Disorder And How You Can Too*. For more information about Thom and his work (including his recovery weekend retreats), visit www.thomrutledge.com. You can also connect with him on Facebook.

For more information about **The Greater Possibilities—125 Reflections on the Meaning of Genuine Success**, visit www.thomrutledge.com/books/default.asp?page=Ebook



Declare Independence from your Eating Disorder! Beyond Eating Disorders—Weekend Retreat for Eating Disorder Recovery with Thom Rutledge. For more information about Thom's next retreat from July 29th till 31st, visit www.youarenotalonebook.com/thomflyer.jpg (special discount available until May 2nd)

“It’s not what you are that holds you back, it’s what you think you’re not.”

By Andrea Roe



During and before my struggles with eating disorders (ED), I never felt good enough. I didn't feel worthy. Like everybody else was better than me. Like my opinion didn't matter as much as others' did.

If you feel the same, I'd like you to know that you are worthy! You are special! And you can learn to love yourself! It's just a matter of working on your self-esteem. Here are some exercises that helped me during my recovery—and they can make a difference in your healing journey as well!

Building Confidence to Get Rid of ED

- ✓ **Stop thinking negative thoughts about yourself.** Of course, that's easier said than done, but lots of practice will eliminate the negativity in your head. Pay attention to your thoughts—and whenever you catch yourself being too critical about yourself, counter it by focusing on positive aspects of yourself and your life. This exercise does get easier over time. **“We are what we repeatedly do. Excellence, therefore, is not an act but a habit.”** ~ Aristotle
- ✓ **Stay away from things that don't make you feel good about yourself.** During my recovery process, I stopped paying attention to celebrity and beauty magazines and certain TV shows. Even though there was a part of me that wanted to look at all these pictures, I knew it was poisonous for my mind. Whenever I saw these *perfect* celebrities, I couldn't help but start comparing myself with them and beat myself up because *I didn't look like them*. So for me the solution was learning to not pay attention to this information—and doing so made a real difference in learning to accept and eventually love myself for who I am and what I look like. **“What we focus on, we empower and enlarge. Good multiplies when focused upon. Negativity multiplies when focused upon. The choice is ours: Which do we want more of?”** ~ Julia Cameron
- ✓ **View mistakes as learning experiences.** We all make mistakes. They are a normal part of life. And whenever you make a mistake, don't beat yourself up for it. Learn to accept that making mistakes is normal. Accept that you will make mistakes because everyone does. And whenever you make a mistake, do your best to learn something from this experience. Take something away from it. Grow with it. **“The greatest mistake you can make in life is to be continually fearing you will make one.”** ~ Elbert Hubbard
- ✓ **Make a difference.** Help a classmate who is having trouble, volunteer your time to help make your community a better place or do something else that makes a positive difference in someone's life. By doing so, not only do you help them, but you will also feel better too. Making a difference in someone else's life is very rewarding, and will help you feel better about yourself as well. **“Set your heart on doing good. Do it over and over again, and you will be filled with joy.”** ~ Buddha

These are just a few ideas that can help you start to rebuild your self-esteem. Give them a try and see how it goes, how it feels. You'll see how you grow.

Andrea

Recovery is Possible!

By Mary Pat Nally

Eating Disorders are a way to "deal" with life instead of "living" life. We may not always enjoy the process and yet we are the only one living our life.

I used to hate it when someone would tell me that everything I did was a choice. I didn't feel like I had a choice, especially over my eating disorder. And yet, after healing from a 27-year long eating disorder, here I am saying the exact same thing.

Healing is a choice. Suffering is a choice. Letting Go is a choice. Living a life filled with joy, compassion, hope and love is a choice. Living a life where you are able to love who you are, just as you are, in the moment, in your body and know that your family and friends love you just because you are you.



When I was in the middle of the healing process, I didn't understand why anyone would want to go through it. I kept thinking, "If this is recovery and healing, then I will pass." But I kept going because I knew that healing myself was the best way to get my life back.

Do you feel as though you are in the grips of some invisible thing that tells you that you are not enough? That you need to be perfect? Do you want to give up your eating disorder for a better life and not sure how?

Here are some tips from my experience:

- ❖ Pay attention to how you treat yourself while you are going through the eating disordered behaviors.
- ❖ You hold all the answers for your own healing and recovery—use your resources to help you find those answers.
- ❖ Your life is about what you think of you, not about what anyone else thinks of you.
- ❖ Love is the ultimate gift you can give yourself.
- ❖ It is not about the Food - Food is fuel for your body.
- ❖ Feelings are energy—let the energy flow—cry, laugh, dance.
- ❖ Find someone you trust.
- ❖ Do something creative—PLAY!
- ❖ Dream BIG—Take steps to make your dreams come true.
- ❖ Hold on to what you know to be true—**YOU ARE BEAUTIFUL NO MATTER WHAT!**

Mary Pat, from California, is a Certified Life Coach with a Masters Degree in Spiritual Psychology, as well as a Masters Degree in Experiential Education. She is also a writer, poet, and author of several books, including "**Give ED a Voice**" (available at amazon.com). For more information about Mary Pat and her work, visit her website at www.giveedavoice.com. Mary Pat is also a contributor to *You Are Not Alone, Volume 2*.

Poem by Mary Pat Nally:

What If?

What if I can't?
What If I can?
What I should be thinking
is it in God's plan?
What if I couldn't?
What if I could?
Then I start to wonder
if I really should?
What if I wouldn't?
What if I would?
What would I do,
if others really understood?
What if, I am beautiful,
just as I am.
That a scale means nothing,
when talking to a human.
What if, I am worthy of love,
just by being alive.
What if,
I don't have to prove myself
or feel ashamed to cry?
What if,
by some chance,
all my negative thoughts were wrong.
That I am free to sing and dance,
that I am not weak or strong.
What if, I did not make excuses,
I simply threw them out the door.
What if, I started getting honest,
and I started at my core.
What If...
When I am living in the present,
there is no reason for me to fear,
the *what if's* that surround me
and the negativity that is near.
When I am in the here and now
and take some time to breathe,
I realize that anything is possible,
as long as I believe.



MentorCONNECT Teleconference Series Presents:



10 Principles for Intuitive Living



A Roadmap to Full Recovery from an Eating Disorder

You are invited to attend a **FREE** teleconference with Dr. Berrett, from the Center for Change, and best-selling author and eating disorder survivor Jenni Schaefer.



This teleconference is designed for those suffering from eating disorders, their friends and families, and for anyone with a desire to have more joy and peace in their lives.

Several years ago, *Intuitive Eating* was offered as a philosophy for a healthy relationship with food that comes from listening to our bodies and following those cues rather than seeking external ones to know how and when to eat.



Intuitive Living is a broader concept that suggests we can best make decisions, have meaningful relationships, and be at peace with ourselves when we listen to internal messages, which come from the heart. When we truly follow the heart—rather than simply allowing our thoughts or emotions to rule—we find ourselves spiritually alive, giving and receiving the abundance life has to offer, and enjoying serenity (even in difficult circumstances).

Principles of Intuitive Living are critical for being in recovery and for becoming fully recovered.



Dr. Michael E. Berrett, PhD is a licensed psychologist and CEO, Executive Director, and Co-Founder of *Center for Change*, which specializes in intensive treatment programs for anorexia, bulimia, compulsive eating, and co-existing disorders. Dr. Berrett is the co-author of several books and book chapters, and has worked with eating disordered clients for 25 years. www.centerforchange.com



Jenni Schaefer, who is recovered from an eating disorder, is an international speaker, singer, songwriter, and author of *Life Without ED* and *Goodbye Ed, Hello Me*. She is also a contributor to *You Are Not Alone, Volume 2*. For more information about Jenni and her work, visit www.jennischaefer.com



When: Wednesday, May 11th 2011
Time: 9:00pm Eastern / 8:00pm Central /
7:00pm Mountain / 6:00pm Pacific
RSVP at <http://mentorconnect.eventbrite.com>



MentorCONNECT is the first global online eating disorders mentoring community. Membership and all services are always free to members, and certain events are also opened up to the larger community. In addition to offering one-on-one mentoring matches, membership includes access to a password-protected, moderated, PRO-recovery community forum with live weekly e-support groups, special events, a wide variety of online themed support groups, recovery blogs, personalized profile pages, the ability to upload photos/video/songs /artwork, and moderated chat / email services. To volunteer your services as a caring mentor, be matched with a mentor, or find general support, visit us at www.mentorconnect-ed.org



“Relationships Replace Eating Disorders” with Shannon Cutts:

The Importance of Good Self-Care

There is one guiding principle I have learned to live by: ***inadequate self-care now equals unwelcome consequences later.***

What exactly do I mean by that?

We should first define terms. By “inadequate self-care,” I mean *ignoring the needs of our body, mind, heart, and/or spirit when it is well within our means to meet those needs.*

By “unwelcome consequences,” I am referring to the *side-effects that come from ignoring our own needs...* anything from an increase in emotional stress to a physical breakdown to a loss of faith or an inability to maintain treasured friendships and relationships.

To put this in a practical context, visualize what would happen if your car ran out of gas and you saw a gas station up ahead, yet decided to drive by and try to make it home on fumes. You would probably end up by the side of the road, hoping for a lift back to that gas station, right?

We don’t want that—especially when it is our intention to order our priority list so that “recover from my eating disorder” is in the number one position.

So here is the simple fact that lies at the heart of any successful recovery story—we cannot recover from anything that we wish to overcome by ignoring our own needs. Everything else we want, everything we dream of and long for, depends on us to be available as a willing, able, healthy and valued participant in it.

Post-recovery, it becomes mind-boggling that we ever willingly chose to disrespect any aspect of ourselves in the interests of something else that seemed to take precedence at the time. But in the midst of our recovery journey, especially while trying to disentangle ourselves from the black-or-white world of the eating disorder, establishing good self-care habits can seem distressingly grey.

When I get confused about a seeming grey area I am facing, I like to have a list handy. Lists help me remember what stress causes me to forget.

So now, I invite you to join me in beginning a “ME-Care” idea list that you can add to as you think of new ways to take good care of your most valuable possession—***you***. Below, I share one idea in each of the four categories of good self-care, and you can add your own ideas to it.

Body: Nourishing food and adequate hydration to give me energy throughout the day.

Mind: Stimulating material to read and ponder—just because it interests me!

Heart: Connection with at least one significant relationship per day.

Spirit: No less than fifteen uninterrupted minutes of quiet time per day.

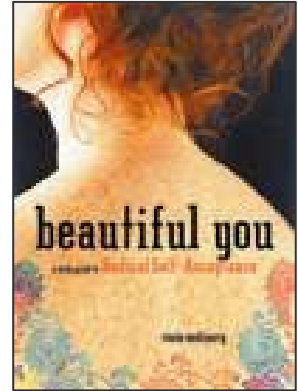
Shannon

Shannon Cutts is the author of ***Beating Ana: How to Outsmart Your Eating Disorder and Take Your Life Back.*** She is also the founder of **MentorCONNECT** (www.mentorconnect-ed.org), the first global mentoring community to connect those in strong recovery from eating disorders with those who need recovery support. For more information about Shannon and her work, visit www.key-to-life.com



“Beautiful You” Book Giveaway

This month you have the chance to win a copy of Rosie Molinary’s book, *Beautiful You—A Guide to Radical Self-Acceptance*.



About “Beautiful You”

In *Beautiful You* author Rosie Molinary passionately encourages women—whatever their size, shape, or color—to work toward feeling wonderful about themselves despite today’s media-saturated culture.

Drawing on self-awareness, creativity, and mind-body connections, *Beautiful You* incorporates practical techniques into a 365-day action plan that empowers women to regain a healthy self-image, shore up self-confidence, reframe and break undermining habits of self-criticism, and champion their own emotional and physical well-being.

Through accessible, doable daily actions, women and girls learn to manifest a healthy outlook on life—teaching them to live large, and starting them on the path to learning to love themselves and others.

**“Too often, we believe we will finally be content
when our body changes in some way.
Actually, we’ll be content only when our mind changes,
when we give ourselves permission and the tools to be content.”**

How to enter the contest...

Simply send an email to giveaway@youarenotalonebook.com
and put “**Beautiful You**” in the subject line.

The drawing will be held on **May 15th**
and the winner will be contacted via email.

*Feel free to also include feedback about the Support Letter—what you like the most,
topic suggestions, etc. And if you want to share your poems, story, recovery tips, or
inspiring artwork with the Support Letter community, feel free to email them as well.*

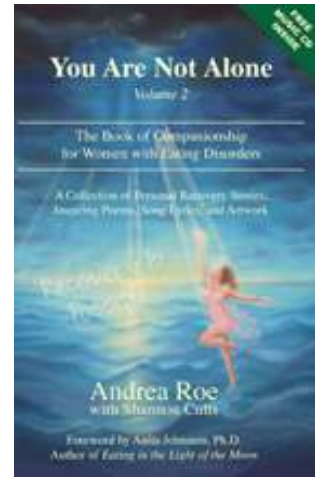
A big thank-you in advance from your fellow Support Letter readers!

😊😊😊 **Good luck!** 😊😊😊



FREE Gift Included: Also included is the *You Are Not Alone Companion CD* (produced by eating disorder survivor and award-winning singer & songwriter Shannon Cutts), which is filled with healing songs by women who are either fully recovered or in strong recovery from an eating disorder (**value of \$9.95—yours for free with *You Are Not Alone, Volume 2* book purchase!**)

What People Are Saying About *You Are Not Alone, Volume 2* (plus FREE Companion CD)



"One of the major barriers to recovery from eating problems is loss of hope. This book will inspire you to overcome your eating problems no matter whether you're only contemplating beginning the work, have just started, or are in the midst of transformation. **I recommend it!**"

– *Karen R. Koenig, LCSW, M.ED, Author of The Rules of "Normal" Eating*

"Through music, prose, and poetry this book and CD give all suffering with eating disorders **inspiration and clarity to seek recovery**. [...] This book and CD will make those who are in the midst of struggling know 'They are not alone.' This book and CD **should be in every treatment center.**"

– *Stacey Prussman, Comedian, actress, speaker and eating disorder advocate*

"It really touches my heart to know that I am not the only one fighting with my recovery from an eating disorder. *You Are Not Alone, Volume 2*, also **gave me new hope and courage** to keep on with my recovery. **This book is a safe place** you can come to when you are having an awful day, one of those days of fighting your eating disorder."

– *Carly, from Georgia, is in recovery from bulimia and binge eating*

"This book is formed by truly inspirational 'artists' in their own right. Whether it be through a story, poem, visual art and/or music, *You Are Not Alone, Volume 2*, conveys its message throughout. This reassuring and comforting, 'real life' book reaches out to all those battling with, and in recovery from, an eating disorder, **reminding them that there are other people in this world who are experiencing similar struggles and that they ARE NOT ALONE!** Messages of joy shine throughout this book, providing its readers with inspiration and hope to begin/continue along their path to recovery—within it is written proof that **eating disorders can and will be beaten and that RECOVERY is POSSIBLE!**"

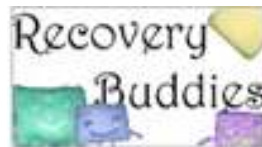
—*Stephanie, from North Wales, UK*

You Are Not Alone, Volume 2 + Free Companion CD is available at
www.youarenotalonebook.com/youarenotalonevol2.php (**FREE shipping to anywhere in the world**)

Profits are donated to eating disorder help and support organizations to help raise awareness and help others in their recovery.

***You Are Not Alone, Volume 2* is a proud sponsor of:**

MentorCONNECT, The Recovery Buddies Project, The Joy Project



Do You Want To Contribute?

I am always looking for submissions for the monthly **YOU ARE NOT ALONE Support Letter**. If you are interested in submitting any material for future editions of the Support Letter, please feel free to send your submission to the following email address: andrea@youarenotalonebook.com

Submissions will be considered for future **YOU ARE NOT ALONE Support Letters** and I will get in touch with you as soon as possible.

What can you submit?

Personal eating disorder stories, inspirational moments, poems, artwork, articles, helpful tips, resources and book submissions, inspirational quotes and meditations, inspirational short stories, important information, nominations for the “Inspiring Woman” segment, and so on. **Feel free to send me whatever it is you want to share!**

I'm looking forward to hearing from you! 😊