

“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.

October 2010 Edition



**“Please stay strong and keep 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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What Helped Me Recover

There was no one “magic thing” that made my eating disorder go away. For me, it was an effort of a lot of little things. It was one day at a time. One step at a time.

One step at a time seemed too slow some days but all these small steps added up to a HUGE difference. **RECOVERED.**

Now there are no more eating disorder thoughts or negative voices in my head beating me up or telling me what to do and what not to do - no more body hatred. In fact, the opposite is true: I love food now. I love cooking and I'm excited about trying out new dishes.

I used to look in the mirror and hate everything I saw. Flaws, only flaws—that's how I saw myself. Today, I look in the mirror and I see me—I see a person. And I like what I see.

If I can do it, so can you. **Recovery really IS possible.**

Mark your calendar... On Wednesday, October 13th, MentorCONNECT is hosting a teleconference and they invited me to be their guest speaker – yay! During this teleconference, I'll talk in more detail about my recovery journey, especially what helped me move forward and eventually achieve being recovered.

You'll find more information about the teleconference within this edition of the Support Letter. And in case you miss it, you can listen to the recording here (which will be put online after the call): <http://www.mentorconnect-ed.org/teleseries/> (you'll have to scroll down a bit)

I wish you all the best and take very good care of yourself!

Andrea

PS. If you'd like to share your poems, artwork, recovery story and body image tips with the Support Letter community, send me an email at andrea@youarenotalonebook.com – I'm looking forward to hearing from you! ☺

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



You can also connect with me
on **Facebook**
and my **recovery blog** at
<http://andrearoe.blogspot.com>

Having fun on the road... ☺
Touring British Columbia,
Washington State and Oregon



My husband I.



Inspirational Quotes:

Words to help you on your journey.

“Refuse to accept the many reasons why it can’t be done and ask if there are any reasons it can be done.”

-- Hanoch McCarty

“Doubt whom you will, but never yourself.”

-- Christine Bovee

“It takes courage to grow up and become who you really are.”

-- E. E. Cummings

**“A ship in harbor is safe
—but that is not what ships are for.”**

-- John A Shedd

“Fear is a dark room where negatives develop.”

-- Usman B Asif

“The only real mistake is the one from which we learn nothing.”

-- John Powell

“Someday all you’ll have to light the way will be a single ray of hope—and that will be enough.”

-- Kobi Yamada

“Dream it, think it, visualize it, make it real!”

-- Oliver dela Cuest

“Tonight when you lay your head on your pillow, forget how far you still have to go. Look instead at how far you’ve already come.”

-- Bob Moawad

**“Standing your ground is progress
when you’re battling a hurricane.”**

-- David Weinbaum

“I will persist. I will always take another step. If that is of no avail I will take another, and yet another.”

-- Og Mandino

“We acquire the strength of that which we have overcome.”

-- Ralph Waldo Emerson

“Always be a first-rate version of yourself, instead of a second-rate version of somebody else.”

-- Judy Garland

“There is just one life for each of us: our own.”

-- Euripides

Inspiring Woman – Making a Difference in the World



Laurie Glass

This month, I have the pleasure of introducing you to Laurie Glass—author of *Journey to Freedom from Eating Disorders*—who'll talk about what helped her break free from her eating disorder, the importance of her faith and how it helped her recover, and how she is now reaching out to help others and make a difference.

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

Tell us a bit about yourself.

I'm a middle aged, never been married, single woman who has enjoyed doing clerical work for several years, working in a variety of office settings. Home is my favorite place to be, and summer is my favorite season. I enjoy taking walks, writing and encouraging others.

When and how did your struggles with eating disorders begin?

When I was 32, I lost a lot of things that were very important to me, and it all occurred due to circumstances beyond my control. I was devastated and turned to others for support, but I found none. Their silence cut deep in my heart. I even confronted a few of these people and still they didn't reach out to support me. I went to God and yet I couldn't hear His voice. In time I became angry with Him and distanced myself from Him as I blamed Him for the painful circumstances in my life. Since He's God, He was actually still with me, but I no longer wanted anything to do with Him. This was after being close to Him for 15 years. It was the loneliest time ever.

Since my life was significantly affected by circumstances beyond my control, I wanted to control my food intake. I had studied eating disorders, so I knew exactly what I was doing. However, I felt powerless to stop it. Also, **I reasoned that I would only do this temporarily, just long enough to help me through a difficult time. But it didn't take very long to realize that I wasn't controlling anything, but that the eating disorder was controlling me.**

How long did you suffer before someone noticed/before you told someone?

It was within the first year of the eating disorder that I told my doctor. I hadn't even intended to do so, but it came out as I answered his question about my appetite. He was good to support me, but I didn't see him throughout the whole time I had the eating disorder. Other than that, I didn't tell loved ones and none of them noticed. Since I had health problems and sometimes experienced weight loss, no one questioned my change in size.

How did you get started in your recovery?

When my doctor threatened to hospitalize me, I decided I would try to recover. If I was hospitalized, then people would know. That thought terrified me. As much as I wanted to hang onto the eating disorder, the guilt and shame of others finding out was even stronger. I did well for a while, but then I had a very long relapse during which time the eating disorder was stronger than before. I just gave up and gave into it, and I didn't believe I would ever actually recover. **I was afraid I would go to all of the work only to relapse again.** Plus, I simply didn't want to give up the eating disorder. There were times I felt it was the only thing I had. However, in my sixth year of being anorexic, I became very weary of the gain/lose cycle I was in, and I was getting sicker. Plus I didn't want to see myself still struggling with the eating disorder in the years to come. **I wanted a better future than that, so I thought it was time to give recovery another shot.**

What helped you most in your recovery?

Although I was initially terrified to allow my feelings to surface, I did eventually allow that to happen. It was painful, and I spent countless hours in tears writing in my journal, but I was able to release inner pain that

way. Furthermore, this set the stage for a more successful attempt at recovery later on when I decided to give it one more try.

I didn't know the appropriate amount of food to eat anymore, so I saw a dietitian a few times to obtain a meal plan. It was a general guideline of serving sizes and how many servings from the various food groups I should have each day. **Following those guidelines also helped me in my recovery.**

I had become close with the Lord again. It was a process, but I found Him ready and waiting for me to talk to Him again. He was very patient and gave me time to trust Him again. I was overwhelmed with His love, His patience and His grace. So when I decided to try to break free of the eating disorder one more time, I had been enjoying a sweet fellowship with the Lord for some time. Therefore, I approached recovery differently. I believe that God wanted to help me more than I had allowed Him to up until that point. I was afraid that if I let Him help me, He would end up taking away the eating disorder. **Although a part of me still wanted to hang onto it, the part of me that was ready to leave it behind me became stronger.** I decided to allow Him to take control of my recovery. This was a big step and one that I will never regret. So this attempt at recovery was different, it was effective, and it ultimately led me to freedom.

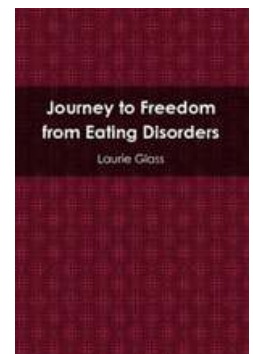
Once I began to move forward, even though it was difficult, I didn't look back. I clung to Phil. 4:13, "I can do everything through him who gives me strength." (NIV) I also wrote on note cards various scriptures, quotes and other truthful statements, and I even taped some of them around my full length mirror. **I didn't trust myself to recall these positive thoughts when I needed them most, but those written reminders helped me to combat the eating disorder voice.** It was a way for me to replace the lies with the truth. Rom. 12:2 tells us that we will be transformed by the renewing of our minds. For me, filling my mind with the truth did help me to change in such a significant way that I can say it truly transformed me.

Congratulations on publishing your first book! Tell us more about it.

Journey to Freedom from Eating Disorders is for those with anorexia, bulimia, EDNOS and binge eating disorder, for both males and females in all walks of life. I wrote it in a conversational tone, so it is my hope that readers will take comfort in knowing someone understands what they're going through. Each chapter has a brief discussion on a common eating disorder issue followed by journaling questions, a personal note from myself to the reader and a written prayer. So it is **designed to encourage and inspire eating disorder sufferers in their recovery.**

Tell us more about your website "Freedom from Eating Disorders."

I knew I would need a website in order to promote my book, and I thought it would be good to have it up and running before I published the book, so I originally built it in 2007 (and rebuilt it in 2010). I had some ideas about what I wanted to do with it, but once I got started, more and more ideas came to me. I wanted to provide practical and unique features, and I wanted the site to be **a place for anyone with an eating disorder to find hope, encouragement, inspiration and support for their own eating disorder recovery.** It is my hope that anyone, regardless of their beliefs, can find that at *Freedom from Eating Disorders*. But since it was through God's power that I recovered from my own eating disorder, **I also wanted those interested in Christian eating disorder recovery to have a place where they could find information and inspiration in that regard.**



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

I would like to do more mentoring for those with eating disorders. Depending on how things go with this book, I'd like to publish another paperback with poems, essays and prayers for those with eating disorders. I also have other ideas, but I'll wait and see how things go before I move forward with them. Mostly, I consider it a privilege to be even a very small part of anyone's recovery experience.

For more information about Laurie Glass and her work, visit www.freedomfromed.com

If you want to get in touch with Laurie, visit <http://www.freedomfromed.com/contactme.php>

You can also connect with her on Facebook.

"You can find freedom from Ed!"

New Memories

By Miriam R.

Here's to new memories
hopes and dreams
an exciting new future
just as good as it seems
a life full of love, trust, and hope
here's to learning positive ways to cope
here's to past regrets and failed attempts
here's to each moment completely content
not letting yourself be defined by your past
taking each moment
making it last
here's to wondering why or how it is so
beginning to believe you can let it all go
life is sweet, as good as it gets
full of trials and full of tests
here's to laughter, song, and dance
here's to giving yourself a real chance
don't let life just pass you by
you'll only succeed if your willing to try.

Miriam R., 24, from Milwaukee, WI.



Karen's Healing Column:

Live Life, Not Death

Your body is your own.

It belongs to you. And to no one else. Your body does not belong to the person passing you on the street, not to the man looking at you from across the room or passing you by in the grocery store, not to the fashion magazines, not to the advertising field, nor to female public opinion, and it certainly does not belong to ED (eating disorders).

So begin to own it.

When everyone else owns it, they have a say over it. You don't. And that is no way to live.

You walk around in your body, and if everyone else's say has the voice of ownership, than you will pass through many different emotional states as you go through your day depending on what you perceive other people's thoughts are towards you.

The female form has become such a public matter. I heard Tyra say to a woman on her talk show about her dress, "Let the guy see what he is getting," meaning, dress so he can see her body. You get to decide if you want to do that, and know that that is not the only way you will find a man. Yes, we all know that men are visual, and in today's world, we put an extreme amount of importance on that. A connection with a male that is right for you will go far deeper than just physical appearance. A man of substance will not just be looking for a body.

Consider another piece of advice that a father gave to his very beautiful daughter, "Honey, put on your baggy jeans and hoodie, and wait for the man who can see your heart."

I am not saying you should dress in a potato sack and not care about fashion at all. Extremes are usually not the way to go.

What I am saying is, stop listening to everyone else's opinion. Decide that you will love yourself. Build your self-esteem and worth. Learn to love your body. Own your life. And if it matters, there is nothing as compelling as confidence that comes from within.

Have a 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

"Welcome Back!"

M. Sinnott shares her recovery journey.



Tell us a bit about yourself.

I'm 25 years old and live in the Boston area (Massachusetts). I currently work in retail management but consider myself a writer first and foremost. I love to read, write, sketch, anything creative, really. I also like to bake and am learning to cook. I stay active, love walking and doing yoga...And I just took my first dance class, ever!

When and how did your struggles with eating disorders and body image issues begin?

It's hard to say, exactly. I didn't relate to any of the body types I saw around me, growing up, which was difficult. I would say that my struggles with my body image started when I was around twelve or thirteen. It's such an impressionable age, especially for a young girl. I remember feeling incredibly vulnerable, and I felt that way for a long time.

How did you get started in your recovery journey?

Slowly. Very slowly. I saw so many therapists, nutritionists, psychologists and doctors that I can't remember them all. I had a few feeble attempts at recovery, but I didn't begin to seek help in earnest until I really wanted it.

What helped you most in your recovery?

The people around me. My family. My friends. When you go through an eating disorder, it's like you're shut off from the rest of the world. Unreachable. But when you reach for help and realize that there are people there waiting? People who have loved you at your worst and want you to be healthy just as much as you do? That's real love, and for me, that love was the point of healing.

What helped you turn your negative body image into a positive one?

It was tough. And it was a gradual thing that started out with a part of journaling. I would intend to start the day writing down five things I was thankful for, instead of writing how many calories I was consuming. And the list of good things in my life kept growing and growing. Even still, I sit down to write the things I'm thankful for, and the positives always outweigh the negatives.

You're also one of MentorCONNECT's recovery mentors. Tell us more about your passion to support others in their recovery.

I had a mentor through MentorCONNECT (www.mentorconnect-ed.org) during my first year of recovery, and that was something truly invaluable. That e-mail correspondence or conversation with someone who actually HAS been there. Someone who DOES know what you're going through. The only way I can express my gratitude is by "paying it forward" and reaching out to others who are experiencing that struggle now.

Anything else you'd like to share?

Just stay positive. Every day. You're at a tipping point. Do the positive things in your life outweigh the negative? Even if it's just 51/50?


My answer is always, absolutely, yes.

The best analogy I could come up with in explaining the recovery journey and what it's been for me, is that of a traveler, who's been gone a long time, crossed many time zones. jet-lagged, confused, exhausted to the point of tears. Not knowing exactly where you are at any given moment. Are you on the ground or in the air?

I've felt that way so many times. And I repeat the same scenario in my mind. Recovery was like walking into an arrivals gate at Logan Airport, having spent a long while in going through customs. I'm standing in front of the airline attendant, worrying about whether or not I remembered to bring everything I took with me; second-guessing one last time as I hand over my passport, because the photograph was taken so long ago. Is that really me?

He looks down at the passport, then back up at me, and smiles. I smile back, relief washing over me as he says, with complete certainty:

"Welcome back, Ms. Sinnott."



You Are NOT Your Eating Disorder!

By Andrea Roe



In the beginning, the eating disorder felt like it was a friend to me. It was a solution to my problems. When everything else in my life seemed so out of control, the eating disorder was there for me, comforting me. But soon enough, the eating disorder showed its true face. And it turned out it was not a friend -- and never was.

A friend does not beat you up, a friend does not make you punish yourself, a friend does not make you feel miserable, a friend does not take away your passions... the eating disorder is not your friend.

And whenever you hear the voice in your head telling you that you aren't good enough, need to lose weight, punish yourself... ask yourself if that is the "real you" that is talking, or if it is your eating disorder that is speaking to you. At first, it can be very difficult to separate these two voices as it feels like you are "it" and "it" is you... During my struggles, it felt like the eating disorder was me, and I was "it" -- "it" was my identity; I didn't know who I was without it. I had forgotten.

During my recovery, I had to learn to separate these two voices --- mine and the eating disorder voice. And when it was the eating disorder talking, I had to learn to fight back, talk back and disobey its commands. I had to learn to take control back over my life -- after all, it was MY life, not the eating disorder's.

Now you have to do the same. And through it, your recovery will come. **You can learn to love and enjoy your life again.** Please stay strong and keep on believing in yourself!

All the best and take good care of yourself,

Andrea

Want to read more of my recovery focused writings, visit <http://andrearoe.blogspot.com>

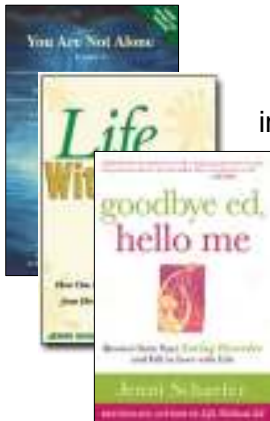
Eating Disorder Recovery Event in British Columbia, Canada:

Recovery IS Possible!

*An Inspirational and Empowering Evening...
All Size Fashion Show, Fundraiser,
Celebrating Healing of Eating Disorders*

Special Guests:

Jenni Schaefer & Michael Berrett PhD



Jenni, who is recovered from an eating disorder, is an international speaker, singer, songwriter, and author of "Life Without ED", "Goodbye Ed, Hello Me" and contributor to "You Are Not Alone Volume 2." She's also a consultant with the Center For Change in Orem, UT, and NEDA Ambassador.



For more information about Jenni and her work, visit www.jennischaefer.com

When: Saturday, October 16th
Time: 7:00-11:00pm

Where: Exective Inn (4201 Lougheed Highway)
in Burnaby, British Columbia, Canada

Tickets: \$20

For more information and to reserve your ticket,
visit <http://www.untilyourheartscontent.com>

*Presented by Center for Change
and Shelley's Angels Society.*



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IN SUPPORT OF EATING DISORDER RECOVERY

SPECIAL GUESTS: JENNI SCHAEFER
Sponsored by Center for Change DR. MICHAEL BERRETT

The Hearts Journey to Serenity and Peace

SATURDAY,
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7PM

JENNI SCHAEFER
AUTHOR
'LIFE WITHOUT ED'
'GOOD-BYE ED HELLO ME'

TICKETS \$20
RESERVE
shelleysangels@live.com
EXECUTIVE INN BURNABY
4201 LOUGHEED HWY
www.shelleysangels.org

www.jennischaefer.com



Love Your Body!

Interview with Singer, Songwriter & *You Are Not Alone Volume 2* Contributor Heather Purdin



Tell us a bit about yourself.

Though I have been blessed with opportunities to live all over the country, I currently call North Carolina home. I love the southern charm, kind people, moderate climate, and the extraordinary geography! Not many people realize this, but North Carolina boasts mountains for skiing and snowboarding in the winters and a beautiful coastline to enjoy surfing and bodyboarding in the summers. It's the best of both worlds here!

I ended up in Boone, NC, in 2006 to get my post-master's certificate in expressive arts therapy at Appalachian State University. Being a singer-songwriter and expressive arts therapy major, I often performed in the community and within a few months got connected with a touring reggae band. I have since caught the reggae fever and spread positive, uplifting, original music across the southeast!

On a day off, I am likely to be found practicing yoga/meditation, perusing thrift stores for treasures, chilling at a local coffee shop, experimenting with vegetarian recipes, soaking up the beach vibes, or inspiring my friends to try something new with me, like ladies night for fondue!

Tell us about your personal experiences with eating disorders, body image issues and recovery.

I was first diagnosed with anorexia at age 12, though my food issues budded long before that. I developed depressive, anxious, and perfectionist tendencies when I began elementary school and frequently moved when I was little, which did not help with developing a sense of confidence and security. From age 14 to 22, I dealt with restricting, bingeing, and purging behaviors. I had bouts of recovery and relapse throughout that time, including a two year stint of recovery.

In 2005, I had an epiphany during my first graduate degree program: "It's not that I want to die, I just do not know how to live." Soon after, I exited my final inpatient program and began day treatment, where I worked individually with an art therapist who introduced me to breathing, visualization, and meditation practices to help manage intense feelings and transform negative energy. I was truly thriving as a young woman and flourished when I moved to Boone.

Unfortunately, I relapsed in the winter of 2008, shortly after I completed the expressive arts program. My grandfather passed away that fall and my mother was diagnosed with terminal cancer on Thanksgiving Day. Grief was an experience I never attended to in school, and I did not know how to cope with it. Uninsured and barely scraping by financially, it was nearly impossible to find adequate treatment since I didn't qualify for outpatient. I toured myself into the ground while I begged program after program to help me. I began a regular, gentle yoga practice during this time and that helped me immensely. **Yoga classes became a sanctuary away from stress and hopelessness and also offered a moment of appreciation for my mind, body, and soul!** Finally, after a year of waiting for treatment, I was offered a partial scholarship and chose to go to the Tapestry residential program here in North Carolina. It was the perfect match for me!

My most recent and powerful "Aha!" moment has been to realize that **NO ONE CAN SAVE ME**. Dreaming for the perfect therapist to come along and pull me out of my mess was too passive a hope. *I knew I had to do the hard work myself* but with a supportive and encouraging environment to help follow through with making the changes I already knew I needed to make. **I learned to nourish myself, not just with food, but with patience, acceptance, love, and hope!** I felt confident when I began making positive changes before I even got to Tapestry, whereas in the past, I would have tried to lose as much weight as possible to "buffer" against oncoming weight gain.

Tapestry
www.TapestryNC.com



What role does music play in your life and how has music helped you in your recovery?

Music became a significant part of my life when I bought myself a guitar and tried teaching myself how to play it at age 18. Never successful at learning cover songs, on my nineteenth birthday, I randomly wrote my first song and things just took off from there. Performing music was

probably my first intense spiritual experience. I knew there was something greater out there channeling lyrics and melodies through me, because if I made the effort, nothing would happen. It was not until I let go that I would write a song. I did not choose music, music chose me.

Songwriting became my form of journaling and self-expression. I found my voice through music and since becoming a musician have relied less and less on my body to tell the world what I need to say.

I spent approximately nine years in college and university learning to become a healer. I thought I was preparing to be a therapist or counselor, but somehow I became a musician instead. I am sure I will eventually work in the human services field, but for now I get to travel and bring people positive messages and healing vibrations through the medium of reggae music! Though most of our shows are in restaurant/bars, when we have a big concert, it's pretty incredible to realize we are reaching thousands of people at a time. Music has a language of its own that can transcend boundaries of race, age, gender, ability, and even religion. Our lead singer, Mark, has the last name, "Evangelist," and that basically sums it up! I do not think of it as coincidence. ☺

Tell us more about your passion to help others and what you are doing to make a difference?

As I have already touched upon, I am currently helping others through music. Time and time again, someone comes up to us at the show and says, "Hey, knowing you guys were coming into town helped me get through the week," or, "I listen to your CD whenever I'm feeling down." As musicians, we feel responsible for the messages we put out there. Instead of bringing into the room messages of revenge, anger, and hatred, we sing songs like *No Bad Vibes*, *Bring the Light*, *Heala*, *Soul Dimension*, *Party on a Sunday*, *Neighborhood*, etc... **Our band is always looking for ways to help the community through our work.** We have helped causes ranging from: breast cancer research, muscular dystrophy awareness, environmental concerns, surfers' charities, and now eating disorders.



I started college at age 16 and from the beginning I knew I was going to study the healing arts. I have a B.A. in Psychology with an emphasis in counseling. I also have my M.Ed. in Therapeutic Recreation and a post-Master's certificate in Expressive Arts Therapy. I am also hoping to complete my yoga teacher training by March of 2011. Learning is my primary passion.

One day, I would love to offer a coaching service to supplement the traditional treatment options with the real day-to-day, community-based support that we need to recover: relapse prevention, meal planning, meal support, grocery shopping, restaurant/shopping challenges, cooking instruction, body image work, stress management, and celebrating successes. Talking about recovery is a great start, but I tend to lean toward more active approaches of healing. After all, **we do not learn simply by imagining and thinking about things. We have to follow that up with action.** I hope to bring together yoga, therapeutic recreation, and expressive arts to make healing both interactive and exciting. Following through and DOING are the toughest parts of the journey, but at the same time, I want to help people realize recovery can be fun too. We are bright people; we just need a little bit of support and permission to help ourselves along the way!

Tell us more about the "A Love Your Body Campaign" event on October 21st in NC.

My mom passed away in the middle of summer tour this June. Then, three weeks later, Mark's father passed away. When I was visiting my family for my mom's funeral, hardly anyone was eating, so I was not alarmed by my own lack of appetite...until it went on for a few weeks. I thought to myself, **"Wait, I cannot go right back into this, not after the blessing I was given and the hard work I have done!"** I made a



choice to react with positive intentions...yes, *I truly believe energy is contagious!* My mom was always giving to others, so I decided to “give back” and “pay it forward.” I contacted Liana from **Project H.E.A.L.** (Help to Eat, Accept, & Live) in July and proposed the idea of starting a treatment scholarship because it is one of the few non-profits that have actually had success raising money and sending people to treatment. Together, we have started **The HEAL Tapestry Fund**, which will help an uninsured North Carolina woman overcome the costs of getting treatment at Tapestry. Because not every program is for everyone, Tapestry will nominate appropriate applicants and Project H.E.A.L. will interview the women and award a scholarship to a motivated woman in need!

My friends, family, and fans have already made online donations, but we're also putting on the benefit to address Project H.E.A.L.'s two-fold mission: (a) to raise treatment scholarship funds and (b) to promote healthy body image. The community response has been incredible and the event has grown beyond my initial vision.

The National Organization of Women promotes an annual love your body day campaign at the end of October, so I chose the date accordingly. I wanted a more creative event title though, so Liana and I got in touch with Caitlin Boyce from **Operation Beautiful™** (www.operationbeautiful.com) and have joined forces with her initiative! In the weeks leading up to the event, we will also be doing the *Operation Beautiful™* post-it note campaign around campuses in the area!



The benefit night activities include: live reggae from my band Selah Dubb (visit us on MySpace: www.myspace.com/selah.dubb – / Facebook: www.facebook.com/pages/Selah-Dubb/83156846756), live action painting, hula hoop performances, belly dancing, free chair massages, wellness tables, and a fundraising raffle. Most of the volunteers donating goods and services are friends or friends of friends whom I've met through my involvement with the band. We have been adamant about inviting local, green, and natural health based businesses to get involved. Raffle items include: spa/massage/acupuncture services, gift baskets/bags, gift certificates to restaurants/apparel shops, artwork, and even a hand-shaped surfboard donated by Carl Heverly—shapes that we have custom designed. Carl is going to be at the event to pick the winning raffle ticket for the surfboard! We've also gotten promotional sponsorship from Natural Awakenings magazine, The Penguin 106.7, and Digital Print & Imaging.

Despite how much money we raise, I feel it has already been a huge success. First, it's going to be a fun night for the community. Second, I've had people disclose their personal battles to me and thank me for speaking out. Third, the community has unified through the cause. I think the local businesses are looking forward to having a chance to support a cause that is so prevalent yet rarely discussed. ☺

If you can't make it to the benefit, you can still join in by grabbing your post-it note pad and getting sticky with it! Just include a positive message and the *Operation Beautiful™* web address (www.operationbeautiful.com) and post your messages anywhere from public restrooms, to diet magazines, to the gym locker room.

A Love Your Body Campaign!

When: Thursday, October 21st 2010

Time: 8pm to 11pm

Where: Soapbox Laundro-Lounge
(255 N Front Street, Downtown Wilmington, NC)

\$5 Donation at the door.

To view flyer, visit <http://www.youarenotalonebook.com/operation-beautiful-flyer.jpg>

For more information about Heather Purdin and to get in touch with her, visit her Facebook page at <http://www.facebook.com/hpurdin> and MySpace site at <http://www.myspace.com/heatherpurdin>



“Relationships Replace Eating Disorders” with Shannon Cutts:

Everybody’s Got Something

It is the truth – we all have something.

We all struggle with something.

We all want to know “who am I?” “why am I here?” “what am I supposed to be learning from all this?” “what is the meaning of life?” But we need motivation to actually do the hard work this level of learning requires.

This motivation typically comes in the form of what I call “a something” – this is something without which we would happily lay in the river sunning ourselves on the rock of complacency forever.

But then our “something” comes along, possibly in the form of a sudden watery surge, nips from hungry fish or mosquitoes, an overly curious water moccasin, or a seasonal shift in temperature, and we are finally motivated to climb off that now not-so-comfortable rock and get to work.

My something was an eating disorder. My mentor’s something was alcoholism. My close friend’s something was bipolar disorder. My brother’s something was being born with one leg shorter than the other. I know of others whose something has been cancer, the loss of a loved one, divorce, bankruptcy, depression, anxiety, loss of employment...the list goes on.

Over the years my own mentor has reinforced to me time and again that when our something first arrives to introduce itself to us, it is quite normal and human of us not to rush to greet it with open arms and thank it for coming. Instead, we often are tempted to waste precious time and energy by whining, “why me?” “why do I have to struggle with (fill-in-the-something)?”

Why us? Because we are human. Why this? Because, as my mentor so eloquently explains, this is the catalyst event that is most effectively positioned to get us off that comfy and warm rock of complacency and into the river of shared learning, growth, and human evolution!

But why would we want to do that? Death. Grief. Loss. Loneliness. An eating disorder. Depression. Financial hardship. Substance abuse. Crumbling relationships. These do not come attractively gift-wrapped. We do not want to learn from them. We did not ask for them. We just want them to go away.

But they won’t – they can’t – because while we may not have asked for them in the form in which they first arrive, we very much DID ask for the lessons they are here to teach us. Our something may not show itself overtly as an answer to our longing for course correction and connection when we first see it standing there at our door, but attached to it is an open invitation that says, “if you will acknowledge me, open me, examine me from every angle, explore the questions I prompt and seek diligently after their answers, then I am your golden ticket to anything you’ve ever dreamed of.”

What we’ve dreamed of – underneath all the dreams for a better job, a better car, better health, better grades, a better spouse, better friends, or a better life, is a better US. We have dreamed of being able to sit in our own company without feeling lost, confused, or scared about who we are and how we want to live. We have

dreamed about being able to walk into a room with a friend at our side – without having to bring somebody else with us!

Our something brings with it the lifelong chance we've been waiting for to learn how to become our own best friend. It is our chance to confront the "dark side" of our own fears and emerge triumphant. It is our chance to find out what we are made of, and learn to USE it on our own behalf.

Our something offers us the chance to create the life we secretly dream of – right out in the open where we and everybody else can see it taking shape.

Our something offers us the chance to put the whole of our life together the way we visualize it can be, one essential piece at a time.

Most of all, our something offers us HOPE – for ourselves, and for everyone else too. Having a "something" makes us human – it is a badge of honor that says, "yes, I struggle too – yes, you and me, we do have something in common no matter how different we may seem from the outside." Having and acknowledging our something levels the playing field and teaches us, among many other things, that our something is not "better" or "worse" than someone else's something – it is just ours. There is always something we can do to support others. And we always need support from others as well.

We all cry. We all laugh. We all fear. We all rage. We all hope.

And we all have something.

When we acknowledge this, we cease to accept remaining disconnected, isolated, afraid, and alone. We learn that the only thing that makes the process of answering life's essential questions bearable and even joy-full is the loving, supportive companionship of ourselves and each other. Our something gives us our self-respect back, and opens the door for us to rejoin the card-carrying, courageous human race through the power of compassion, empathy, and love.

Or, as I say in the chapter called "Just Get Over It" in my book "Beating Ana",

Love is the one force in this universe that can comfort, redirect, and inspire even the most rebellious and negative mind to transform itself into a force that can make an eating disorder stop dead in its tracks, stare, turn, and flee—never to be seen again!

*If you want your eating disorder out of your life once and for all, the surest way to accomplish this is to **let love in.***

With great respect and love,



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. Visit Shannon at www.key-to-life.com



MentorCONNECT Teleconference Series Presents:

"If They Can Recover, I CAN TOO!"

The Power of Being in Touch with Others Who Have Been There

You are invited to attend a **FREE** teleconference with Andrea Roe, eating disorder survivor, author, speaker, advocate, recovery mentor and MentorCONNECT Leadership Team Member.

In this teleconference, Andrea shares how she went from living all alone with Ed (for "eating disorder") to being recovered and surrounded by an amazing support team of professionals, mentors, friends, and family. Andrea's message is simple - **Recovery IS Possible**. In this exciting teleconference, she will tell you how she recovered - and how you can too!



When: Wednesday, October 13th 2010
Time: 9:00pm Eastern / 8:00pm Central /
7:00pm Mountain / 6:00pm Pacific
RSVP at <http://mentorconnectandrea.eventbrite.com/>

Andrea Roe is a native Austrian and lives together with her husband in beautiful British Columbia, Canada. She struggled with depression and body image issues for almost ten years, and with eating disorders, both anorexia and bulimia, for six years. Now that she is recovered, it is her passion to share her story and help and support others in their recovery. Andrea is the author of *You Are Not Alone – The Book of Companionship for Women Struggling with Eating Disorders* (Volume 1 & 2) and publishes a monthly recovery email newsletter called the *You Are Not Alone Support Letter*. For more information about Andrea and her work, visit www.youarenotalonebook.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 and one Houston-based book study support group, periodic retreats and 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

"If They Can Recover, I CAN TOO!"

Give-Away

In order to celebrate my MentorCONNECT teleconference, you have the chance to win 1 of 3 autographed copies of the **recovery companionship book "You Are Not Alone" (Volume 2) + Companion CD.**

About the book "You Are Not Alone" (Volume 2) + Companion CD:

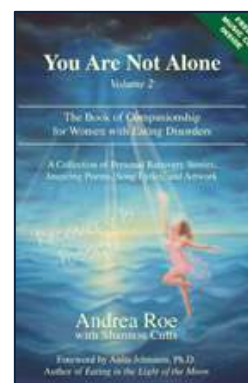
(by Andrea Roe with Shannon Cutts / Foreword by Dr. Anita Johnston, author of Eating in the Light of the Moon)

"You Are Not Alone (Volume 2) – The Book of Companionship for Women with Eating Disorders" is an inspiring collection of recovery stories, poems, artwork and song lyrics by women who are either fully recovered or in recovery from an eating disorder.



The Companion CD is filled with healing songs by female eating disorder survivors *(produced by eating disorder survivor, author and award-winning singer & songwriter Shannon Cutts)*

For more information about the book and CD, and to read reviews, visit www.youarenotalonebook.com/yana.php



How to enter the contest....

Simply send an email to giveaway@youarenotalonebook.com and put "I Can TOO!" in the subject line.

The draw will be held on **November 10th** and the winners 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, recovery stories, body image and 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!** 😊😊😊

For more information about "You Are Not Alone Volume 2" (+ Companion CD), visit www.youarenotalonebook.com/yana.php and www.amazon.com



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)

“To know that others have struggled just as much, and that they cannot ‘only’ survive, but **thrive and live a better life**, is truly inspiring.”

—**Ashley P.** from *BC, Canada*, is in recovery from anorexia.
*She encourages others to find their voice,
and never give up on themselves.*

“**This is a powerful collection of hopes, dreams, despair... and victories!** They are all war stories, written by survivors. Thank you to Andrea and to each of the people who share their journeys with eating disorders. I **started this book and read it all the way through.** It reminded me of so many of the stages that I went through for thirty years, struggling with my eating disorder all alone. Back then, no one talked about it, and I had no role models to know that recovery is even possible! Well, now I am living proof that it is... and that life can be fabulous once you give up “Perfect!” If you or someone you know needs help, please speak up and tell someone. **Don’t settle for less than wonderful in your life. And don’t give up five minutes before the miracle!**”

—**Barbara Niven.** Actress, Speaker, Coach, and
Eating Disorder Victim turned Warrior. (www.barbaraniven.com)

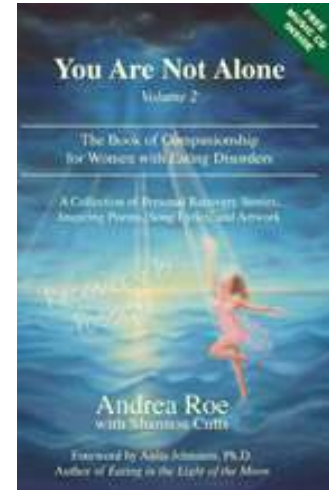
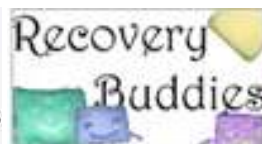
“I believe many people suffering with eating disorders ask one question in common: ‘If Recovery is Possible.’ Seeking an answer is somehow easier than taking the necessary steps towards recovery! Over the last four years I have been a constant reader of Andrea Roe’s work! Her writing and knowledge of Anorexia, Bulimia and other associated eating disorders are not only useful but also inspirational. Now with Andrea’s second book *You Are Not Alone, Volume 2*, comes more inspirational readings; perfect for anyone suffering, recovering, or supporting someone with an eating disorder. I personally recommend Andrea Roe’s work, as she has been a shining star in my own personal battle with Anorexia. Andrea, I am forever grateful to you for helping me find the right path on my road to recovery and reminding me that I am, in fact, **Not alone!**”

—**Kara R, 20, from Australia.**

You Are Not Alone Volume 2 + Free Companion CD is available online 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 recovery stories, recovery inspirations, healing poems and artwork, body image and recovery tips, resources and book submissions, inspirational quotes and meditations, nominations for the “Inspiring Woman” segment, and so on.

I'm looking forward to hearing from you! 😊