

You Are Not Alone

Monthly Eating Disorder Support Letter
Filled with Inspirations, Useful Tips
and Helpful Information.

February 2007 Edition



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

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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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Love Is In The Air!

Welcome to the *lovely* February edition of the **YOU ARE NOT ALONE Support Letter**. This issue is very special: It is our first Valentine's edition; and filled with lots of inspirational information!

I have also added a new exciting segment to the Support Letter called "**Inspiring Woman of the Month**" which every month talks about amazing women who use their eating disorder experiences to make a difference in other people's lives, to help and inspire others.

Healing Music... I'll also share with you some of my favourite inspirational and empowering songs, and I'll also introduce you to **four amazing women** who have not only survived eating disorders, but now **share their recovery stories and music** with the hopes of inspiring others still struggling, to make them feel understood, to provide hope and support and give them the strength to keep on fighting.

Valentine's Give Away!

And because it is Valentine's Day... I'd like to take the opportunity and say **THANK YOU** for all your kind support and feedback.

You will find more information about the *lovely* Valentine's Give-Away in this issue of the Support Letter. The draw will be held on February 28th, and the winner will be contacted via email.

Good Luck!!!

I'd also like to invite you to the **You Are Not Alone Support Forum**, which you can access through www.youarenotalonebook.com. This is a place for everyone with any type of eating disorder to interact with others and talk about emotions and issues surrounding the battle and recovery from an eating disorder. I invite you to post messages, ask questions, share experiences and provide support. **You are not alone – We are here to support one another!**

I hope you enjoy the February issue of the Support Letter, and wish you all the best and lots of love during this romantic season!

Andrea



Brandon and I on our first wedding anniversary in 2006.

Inspirational Quotes:

Words to help you on your journey.

"When you recover or discover something that nourishes your soul and bring joy, care enough about yourself to make room for it in your life."

-- *Jean Shinoda Bolen*

"Don't worry about growing older or pleasing others. Please yourself."

-- *David Brown*

"Personally I'm always ready to learn, although I do not always like being taught."

-- *Winston Churchill*

"Cherish your visions and your dreams as they are the children of your soul; the blue prints of your ultimate accomplishments."

-- *Napoleon Hill*

"The marble not yet carved can hold the form of every thought the greatest artist has."

-- *Michelangelo*

"Accept yourself as you are. Otherwise you will never see opportunity. You will not feel free to move toward it; you will feel you are not deserving."

-- *Maxwell Maltz*

"Do what you can,
with what you have,
with where you are."

-- *Theodore Roosevelt*

"Know that you are your greatest enemy, but also your greatest friend."

-- *Jeremy Taylor*

"I am a big believer in the "mirror test." All that matters is if you can look in the mirror and honestly tell the person you see there, that you've done your best."

-- *John McKay*

"It is of practical value to learn to like yourself. Since you must spend so much time with yourself you might as well get some satisfaction out of the relationship."

-- *Norman Vincent Peale*

"If you do not hope, you will not find what is beyond your hopes."

-- *St. Clement of Alexandria*

"Nothing great was ever achieved without enthusiasm."

-- *Ralph Waldo Emerson*

"Believe that you have it, and you have it."

-- *Latin Proverb*

"If you don't know where you are going, you'll end up someplace else."

-- *Yogi Berra*

"There is no happiness except in the realization that we have accomplished something."

-- *Henry Ford*

"Not everything that can be counted counts, and not everything that counts can be counted"

-- *Albert Einstein*



Lori's Corner:

February is Eating Disorder Awareness Week in North America. Events are happening all across the countries to promote positive body image and awareness of eating disorders. The article below outlines some of them, but make sure to check your local organization for more information.

This is also the month that I'm proud to announce the second printing of my book of poetry. *Silent Screams* is a book of poems I wrote when I was a teenager and struggling with bulimia. Since then, it has toured across North America and is used in school curriculums, research, eating disorder programs and workshops from here to the UK.

This book goes deep into both the excruciating pain that I felt to the triumph of hope that prevailed. Above all, the poems are honest and raw in their expression of my experience with an eating disorder.

You can purchase the book on-line at: www.trafford.com/02-0694.

I gratefully appreciate your support.

Lori Henry

Eating Disorder Awareness Week

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This year, February 25-March 3 marks Eating Disorder Awareness Week. The slogan is, "Be comfortable in your genes. Wear jeans that fit the REAL you." There will be a Great Jeans Giveaway, where organizers from all over the countries will help to promote the cause.

People are encouraged to donate old (or new) pairs of jeans that do not fit comfortably. Until we can live happily in the jeans we're in, we will always be struggling to attain someone else's version of perfection.

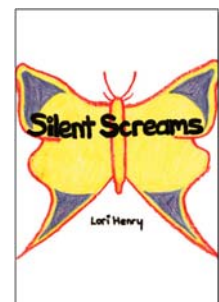
The theme was chosen because of the proliferation of individuals who fight against their natural shape in order to attain something different. We've all heard of or have a pair of "skinny jeans" that sit at the back of the closet, collecting dust, because we are determined that one day we will fit into them.

Visit [my column](#) to read the rest of the article.

(http://eating-disorder-recovery.suite101.com/article.cfm/eating_disorder_awareness_week)

About Lori Henry:

Lori is a dancer, actor and author of "**Silent Screams**", a collection of poems at the core of her journey in recovery from bulimia (<http://www.trafford.com/robots/02-0694.html>). She was also the publisher and editor of "**Beauty: You Define It**" magazine, a Freelance Writer in Vancouver and in charge of covering the **Eating Disorder Community at Suite 101** (<http://eatingdisorders.suite101.com>). Two of Lori's poems about her struggle and recovery with bulimia are also featured in "**You Are Not Alone**". If you want to get in touch with Lori, please send an email to eatingdisorders@suite101.com.



A LOOK BACK IN HISTORY...

Eating Disorders are nothing "new" and have been around for years. Many great and famous women of history have struggled with eating disorders and related issues such as depression and body image concerns. In this segment, we will look at one great woman of history every month and talk about her story...

AUDREY HEPBURN, born Audrey Kathleen Ruston, (May 4, 1929 - January 20, 1993) was an Academy Award-winning film and theatre actress, Broadway stage performer, former ballerina, fashion model, icon, and humanitarian.



Her Early Years

Audrey was born as an only child of Joseph Ruston, a British businessman, and his second wife, the former Baroness Ella van Heemstra, in Brussels, Belgium, and raised under Nazi rule in Arnhem, Netherlands. She had two half-brothers.

In 1935, Audrey's parents divorced and her father left the family. Later in her life, Audrey refers to this as "the most traumatic moment of her life." After not having contact with him for a couple of years, Audrey met her father years later, and stayed in touch with him and supported him financially until his death. It was important for her to get to know her father again because she needed to close that chapter of her life.

In 1939, Audrey's mother moved with her children to Arnhem in the Netherlands in the belief that they would be safe from the Nazis there. Audrey went to school there and also started training to be a ballerina. Dancing was her passion. "The best audience I ever had made not a single sound at the end of my performance."

In 1940, the Nazis invaded the Netherlands. In 1944, after the landing of the Allied Forces, things got worse... Food and fuel supply was limited and over the winter of 1944 people in the Netherlands had no heat in their homes or food to eat and many starved or froze to death. Audrey's uncle and a cousin of her mother's were shot in front of her for being part of the Resistance. One of her half-brothers spent time in a German labor camp. Suffering from malnutrition, Audrey developed acute anemia, respiratory problems, and edema--a swelling of the limbs.

"I have memories. More than once I was at the station seeing trainloads of Jews being transported, seeing all these faces over the top of the wagon. I remember, very sharply, one little boy standing with his parents on the platform, very pale, very blond, wearing a coat that was much too big for him, and he stepped on to the train. I was a child observing a child."

Audrey noted similarities between herself and Anne Frank: "I was exactly the same age as Anne Frank. We were both 10 when war broke out and 15 when the war finished. I was given the book in Dutch, in galley form, in 1946 by a friend. I read it . . . and it destroyed me. It does this to many people when they first read it but I was not reading it as a book, as printed pages. This was my life. I didn't know what I was going to read. I've never been the same again, it affected me so deeply."

When the country was liberated, Audrey said in an interview that she ate an entire can of condensed milk and then got sick from one of her first relief meals because she put too much sugar in her oatmeal. These life experiences are what led her to become involved in UNICEF late in life.

Her Career and Hollywood Stardom



Her performance "Breakfast at Tiffany's" resulted in one of the most iconic characters in 20th Century American cinema.

In 1948, she went to London, England, and took dancing lessons with one of the greatest male dancers in history. Her teacher told her that she could continue dancing and have a great career as a ballerina, but because of her height and her poor nutrition during the war would keep her from becoming a prima ballerina. Audrey trusted her teacher's advice, started looking for a new career and decided to pursue acting, a career which she at least had a chance to excel in. She acted in a couple of minor movies and also musical theatre plays, and she was also chosen to play a lead character in a Broadway play, which opened in 1951. Audrey's first significant film performance was in the movie "The Secret People" (1952) in which she played a ballerina and she did all of her own dancing scenes.

By the mid 1950s, Audrey was not only one of the biggest motion picture stars in Hollywood, she had also come to be regarded as a major style icon. Hepburn had cemented herself as one of Hollywood's greatest actresses, right alongside Marilyn Monroe. In fact, Monroe was not the only one to sing to President John F Kennedy on his birthday. For Kennedy's next (and last) birthday on May 29, 1963,

Hepburn, the President's favorite actress, sang "Happy Birthday, dear Jack" to him.

Her Private Life

Despite her stardom, Hepburn retained her humility throughout life. She preferred a more quiet living with family and nature. She lived in houses, not mansions, and she loved to garden.

Audrey was married twice, to American actor Mell Ferrer (the marriage lasted 14 years until 1968) and to an Italian Doctor, Andrea Dotti (the marriage lasted 13 years ended in 1982), and had a son with each. She experienced two miscarriages, before having her first child.

At the time of her death, she was the companion of Robert Wolders, a handsome Dutch actor. They lived together but never got married. In 1989, after nine years with him, she called them the happiest years of her life.

Her Work with UNICEF

In the 1980s, she was appointed a special ambassador to the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF). Grateful for her own good fortune after being a survivor of the Nazi occupation as a child, she dedicated the remainder of her life to helping impoverished children in the world's poorest nations. Her travels were

made easier by her wide knowledge of languages; she spoke French, Italian, English, Dutch/Flemish, and Spanish. She learned Italian while living in Rome. She learned Spanish on her own, and there is UNICEF footage of her in Mexico speaking fluent Spanish to locals.



"I have a broken heart. I feel desperate. I can't stand the idea that two million people are in imminent danger of starving to death, many of them children." ...
"Horrible. That image is too much for me. The 'Third World' is a term I don't like very much, because we're all one world. I want people to know that the largest part of humanity is suffering."

In September of 1992, 4 months before she died, Hepburn went to Somalia. Hepburn called it "apocalyptic" and said, "I walked into a nightmare. I have seen famine in Ethiopia and Bangladesh, but I have seen nothing like this – so much worse than I could possibly have imagined. I wasn't prepared for this."

"Anyone who doesn't believe in miracles is not a realist. I have seen the miracle of water which UNICEF has helped to make a reality. Where for centuries young girls and women had to walk for miles to get water, now they have clean drinking water near their homes. Water is life, and clean water now means health for the children of this village." "People in these places don't know Audrey Hepburn, but they recognize the name UNICEF. When they see UNICEF their faces light up, because they know that something is happening. In the Sudan, for example, they call a water pump UNICEF."

In 1992, President George Bush presented her with the Presidential Medal of Freedom in recognition of her work with UNICEF.

Her Final Moments - Appendiceal Cancer

In 1992 when Hepburn returned to Switzerland from her visit to Somalia, she began to feel stomach pains. She went to specialists, doctors conducted a laparoscopy surgery on Hepburn and discovered abdominal cancer that had spread from her appendix. The cancer had grown slowly over the course of several years, and metastasized not as a tumor, but as a thin encasing over her small intestine. The pains that Hepburn felt were a result of spasms in the ileum of her small intestine. The doctors removed one foot of intestine and sewed it closed. A few days later, she had an occlusion and the medication she was on was not enough to dull the pain. On December 1, she had a second surgery. After one hour, the surgeon decided that the cancer had spread too far and could not be removed.

Audrey Hepburn died on January 20th, 1993, at her home in Switzerland. She was 63 years old. To this day, she is referred to as a timeless beauty and fashion icon. She has often been called one of the most beautiful women of all time. She never considered herself to be very attractive. She said in a 1959 interview, "you can even say that I hated myself at certain periods. I was too fat, or maybe too tall, or maybe just plain too ugly... you can say my definiteness stems from underlying feelings of insecurity and inferiority. I couldn't conquer these feelings by acting indecisive. I found the only way to get the better of them was by adopting a forceful, concentrated drive."

It is said that Audrey struggled with anorexia and depression - which was unknown to the public during her career. She was known to lose weight under pressure and to be "strange" about food. Rumour has it that current actresses are being "harassed" by the media who points to Audrey as an example of a thin woman without an eating disorder, but that was NOT the case!



Famous Quotes by Audrey Hepburn:

"For beautiful eyes, look for the good in others; for beautiful lips, speak only words of kindness; and for poise, walk with the knowledge that you are never alone."

"Your heart just breaks, that's all. But you can't judge, or point fingers. You just have to be lucky enough to find someone who appreciates you."

"The best thing to hold onto in life is each other."

"I was born with an enormous need for affection, and a terrible need to give it."

"I don't want to be alone; I want to be left alone."

"Remember, if you ever need a helping hand, it's at the end of your arm, as you get older, remember you have another hand: The first is to help yourself, the second is to help others."

"My look is attainable. Women can look like Audrey Hepburn by flipping out their hair, buying the large sunglasses, and the little sleeveless dresses."

"Success is like reaching an important birthday and finding you're exactly the same."

"A quality education has the power to transform societies in a single generation, provide children with the protection they need from the hazards of poverty, labor exploitation and disease, and given them the knowledge, skills, and confidence to reach their full potential."

"I never thought I'd land in pictures with a face like mine."

"I was asked to act when I couldn't act. I was asked to sing 'Funny Face' when I couldn't sing, and dance with Fred Astaire when I couldn't dance - and do all kinds of things I wasn't prepared for. Then I tried like mad to cope with it."

"I never think of myself as an icon. What is in other people's minds is not in my mind. I just do my thing."

"Pick the day. Enjoy it - to the hilt. The day as it comes. People as they come... The past, I think, has helped me appreciate the present - and I don't want to spoil any of it by fretting about the future."

"I decided, very early on, just to accept life unconditionally; I never expected it to do anything special for me, yet I seemed to accomplish far more than I had ever hoped. Most of the time it just happened to me without my ever seeking it."

"I love people who make me laugh. I honestly think it's the thing I like most, to laugh. It cures a multitude of ills. It's probably the most important thing in a person."



Quotes from Celebrities who struggle(d) with Eating Disorders

"It heals you when you are communicating with people about it."
— **Elisa Donovan** (*Actress*)

"My boyfriend broke up with me, and you know, stupid thoughts started running through my head like 'Oh maybe I'm not as pretty or as skinny as the other girls'."
— **Jamie-Lynn Sigler** (*Actress*)

"My mum assumed my tiny body was a result of being busy with the band and working out regularly."
— **Melanie Chisholm** (*Former Spice Girl*)

"When I went to ballet school, I was around a lot of girls with eating disorders, and I actually had a minor one myself. But then my parents stepped in and made me eat."
— **Ashlee Simpson** (*Singer*)

"There's such a pressure on women that we put on ourselves and everyone else puts on us to look unrealistic and everything, but you just can't compare yourself to people in magazines."
— **Kate Beckinsale** (*Actress*)

"With what I was really searching for all along. It was spiritual hunger. I was learning to be satisfied by spirit, [whereas before] I had been trying to satisfy the hunger with other things. And so, you know, like many people, I could have sort of settled with being spiritual."
— **Jane Fonda** (*Actress*)

"I look in the mirror and I'm like why do you look pretty and I look ugly?"
— **Mary-Kate Olsen** (*In 2004, when comparing her looks to her sister's*)

"I was bulimic and anorexic for a while, just hating my body. As an actress, I was never thin enough, never pretty enough. My boobs weren't big enough."
— **Felicity Huffman** (*Actress*)

"I had bulimia for a number of years. And that's like a secret disease. You inflict it upon yourself because your self-esteem is at a low ebb, and you don't think you're worthy or valuable. You fill your stomach up four or five times a day - some do it more - and it gives you a feeling of comfort. It's like having a pair of arms around you, but it's temporarily, temporary."
— **Princess Diana**

"I've felt safer and more protected when I was heavy. Food has always been comforting."
— **Oprah**

"I think that half the women in this world who are plus-size would not be if they never went on a diet."
— **Christine Alt** (*Model*)

"Having dealt with depression on a personal level, I know how alone and alienated once can feel. Fortunately, you are not alone. Life can be better."
— **Vanessa Carlton** (*Singer*)

"I was anorexic for many, many years -- even before people knew what it was. They didn't even have a name for it back then."
— **Sandra Dee** (*Model and Actress*)

"I really feel that what's really helped me is talking about it with other people who share the same illness. And knowing that I'm not alone in it and really just being gentle and not beating myself up for it."
— **Geri Halliwell** (*Former Spice Girl*)

INSPIRING WOMEN – Making A Difference In The World:



Inge Hausmann and her daughter Jill

While I was on holidays in Austria, I had the honour of getting in touch with an extraordinarily strong woman from Germany named Inge Hausmann. Her and her daughter Jill's story touched me deeply and I'd like to share it with you....

Inge's daughter Jill struggled with anorexia for seven long years. Her battle started when she was 15 years old. All together Jill went to 13 different hospitals and treatment centers in Germany which unfortunately were not able to help her because she was not able to accept the treatment that was offered to her. Even at the last hospital she went to, she was not strong enough to accept their help and refused treatment and so she got transferred to a psychosomatic clinic. In the beginning, Jill was able to accept treatment and her condition improved, but after three months she started to struggle with the program and did not have the strength to continue anymore with the treatment and she was dismissed and sent home.

**”Mama, what can then happen to me,
I can not fall deeper than into the hands of God.”**

Eventually Jill hit a point where she had to make a choice. And she chose life. Together with the help and support of her parents, she managed to recover, to overcome her eating disorder, and to move on with her life. She was finally free again and literally had her life back!

Now that she was recovered, it was Jill's passion to share her story and to spread the message that recovery was possible. She wanted to help and support other individuals with eating disorders. She wanted them to know that eating disorders can be beaten and that recovery IS possible. That was her meaning of life!



**“Mama, it is so wonderful to be able to feel again,
to have feelings, to be able to love and to be loved,
who has that much? I thank god on my knees for
it.”**

In October 2002, Jill was invited to a German talk show to talk about her battle with anorexia and her amazing recovery journey on national television. Jill was an inspiration to others still struggling; she was a source of hope for them! I admire Jill for her courage and strength to openly and honestly talk about her struggles and wonderful recovery on national television. This is a big step and a huge achievement! You are an inspiration, Jill!



In October 2002, Jill told her amazing recovery story on a German talk show.

On December 1st, 2002, Jill's life took a tragic turn. She got hit by a driver who was racing with another car. She was immediately rushed to a hospital and fell into a coma. Her parents were told that she would not be able to wake up again due to her severe head injuries from the accident. Even though Jill was in a coma, when the pastor gave her the last blessing, tears ran down her cheeks. Jill's parents were by their daughter's side when she passed away on December 5th. Jill Hausmann was 22 years old. On December 16th, Jill got buried in a white coffin – just as she wanted.



Jill Hausmann
May 17, 1980 – December 5th, 2002

Jill's mother Inge is now caring on with her daughter's mission – which is supporting individuals with eating disorders and giving them hope. Inge published two books about her daughter's life which also includes original diary entries of Jill and Inge, and a poetry book filled with poems written by Inge about her daughter's struggles, her pain and grief. That is what keeps Jill's mother Inge going. That is what gives her the strength to keep on fighting and not to give up on herself or her life.

I read both books and they touched me deeply. I broke into tears more than once. Jill and Inge are very strong and inspiring women, and I feel honoured to be in touch with Inge. She is a strong woman and an inspiration!! Please keep up the wonderful work you are doing. I know your daughter is very proud of you!

There is so much sadness in this story, but equally, there is so much hope and inspiration too. It teaches us some very important lessons. Recovery is possible – for all of us! Due to her battle with anorexia, Jill's life was in severe danger and some doctors had already given up on her. She had almost given up on herself, but she found the strength in herself to find a way out and to successfully overcome her struggles. She turned to God, asked him for help and support. And once she was recovered and free again, she wanted the whole world to know. She wanted everyone

who struggles with an eating disorder to know that this is NOT the end, that there is a way out. No matter how bad it may look.

Unfortunately, Jill tragically died at a very young age. We cannot understand God's way, but I know, wherever Jill is now, she is happy, she is free.

You are both angels!

God bless you Jill.
God bless you Inge.

For more information about Inge and her daughter Jill, please go to the following "Hilfe Fuer Frauen In Not" (Help For Women In Need) website at www.hilfe-fuer-frauen.de. On the website you also have the possibility to order a copy of the book about Jill's life and a poetry book filled with poems from her mother Inge. Please note that the website and books are only in German.

JILL



FOOTPRINTS IN THE SAND

One night a man had a dream.
He dreamed he was walking along the beach
with the Lord.

Across the sky flashed scenes from his life.

For each scene,
he noticed two sets of footprints in the sand.
One belonged to him, and the other to the Lord.

When the last scene of his life flashed before him,
he looked back at the footprints in the sand.

He noticed
that many times along the path of his life,
there was only one set of footprints.
He also noticed that it happened
at the very lowest
and saddest times in his life.
This really bothered him
and he questioned the Lord about it:

"Lord, you said that once I decided to follow you,
you'd walk with me all the way.
But I have noticed that during
the most troublesome times in my life,
there is only one set of footprints.
I don't understand why when I needed you the most
you would leave me."

The Lord replied,
"My precious, precious child,
I love you and would never leave you.
During your times of trial and suffering,
when you see only one set of footprints,
it was then I carried you."

~Author Unknown~



LOOKING BEYOND THE MOUNTAIN

The Other Side.....

By Jo

I remember long ago seeing recovery as this large, seemingly impassable, ominous mountain looming forebodingly in the distance.

It was dark, it was scary, it stood for everything which I was not.

I didn't feel capable of climbing the mountain, and I nor did I feel I had any inclination to try to climb it.

I was quite happy to camp out at the bottom, after all if I had already sunk to the bottom, things couldn't get any worse, I couldn't sink further, so down at the bottom felt like a safe and comfortable place to be.

For years I trundled along, feeling like the bottom was best. People had passed me on their way up, people had tried to talk me up and over the mountain, I'd heard that the grass was greener on the other side, but down at the bottom, I couldn't see past the big black mountain...and couldn't be lured from my place of seeming safety.

It seemed too treacherous, and too risky for a reward I couldn't even see....I was promised it was there, but really, without seeing it, I couldn't bring myself to believe that life existed beyond my spot at the bottom.

The years passed. A couple of times, I felt motivated to see what was on the other side of the mountain, but I'd get a few steps up and remember how scared I was, and remind myself of all the reasons I had stayed at the bottom for so long in the first place till I convinced myself to turn around and head back down.

A couple of times I made it a quarter of the way up.....once I even made it half the way up. But then the path got slippery and I decided once again it felt safer to head back down. The terrain felt rocky and unfamiliar....I didn't think I could handle it....surely the safest thing would be to go back down again rather than to take agonisingly slow steps forwards instead. Right?

I decided if I was going to make it up the mountain I couldn't go it alone. I wasn't entirely convinced I knew the way, sometimes the path wasn't clear, sometimes the terrain difficult....and sometimes -- the load I needed to carry up just seemed too much. So I got myself a guide. It was scary to trust her, sometimes we'd disagree on which path to take, sometimes I doubted her judgments because I allowed my fear to creep in. And sometimes I got angry with her when the terrain got harder and she encouraged me not to turn back.

But she helped lighten my load. She let me share it with her so that it wasn't such a burden as I climbed up and up. And some of the load, well I found I didn't need it all anymore and so I left it behind. I found I could let go of some things without feeling the need to turn back down to the bottom..... it made my journey to the top easier as well.

I didn't do it all in one go though in case you're thinking. It was all in bitesized chunks. Sometimes when I felt I couldn't go further, I camped out, rested and talked things through, and went on

when I felt ready to give it my all. MY only rule was I couldn't give up and turn round.

The higher up the mountain I got, the more I persevered, the more determined I became to reach the top. I'd heard a lot about it and I was desperate for the top to live up to all of my expectations. So I kept going. I kept finding little things which spurred me on upwards.

When I had lived down at the bottom, the top seemed dark, scary, looming, ominous. Oddly, the higher I got, the smaller my view of the bottom became, the blacker and bleaker down below looked....it hadn't looked like that before. Down below from this height looked kind of scary. All a matter of perspective -- what you see depends on where you stand so the saying goes right? I had often wondered how people saw the top as something achievable and desirable, when they could have settled for the bottom. Now I was slowly beginning to realise...what could become if I made it to the top.

After a long time travelling upwards, we eventually reached the top. My guide explained it was there she would leave me. Scared and worried..... I asked her why she would leave me. She needed to go back down to the bottom, to bring more people up top....and to rally together those who were camping out along the path unsure of which direction to travel. She explained if I needed her, I would find her. But that she had faith that I could go onwards without her guiding me now.

She had worked with me building up my skills, I knew how to look after myself, she had taught me how to approach the different terrains I could possibly face in the future, she had showed me the view from the top. I could look down and see "the other side" -- the view which everyone had talked about.

I never figured I would find myself there.

I looked down, and saw how far I had travelled up that mountain, and finally knew that I didn't want to turn around. I wanted to keep going.

My first view of the other side, was amazing ... beautiful ... and filled with potential.

And that was when I realised my potential, and that most things are possible, even if at first they don't seem to be....they are achievable.

Now I am busy, building up the other side -- my "other side" is as yet a work in progress -- I'm gradually developing it, and finding out who I am, and choosing what directions I am going.

I urge you to see past the big ominous mountain, I urge you to step out of your comfort zone down at the bottom, I urge you to keep on travelling upwards and away from the ED.

You can reach your other side.

Persevere and you will make it.

About Jo:

Jo is 22 years old, recovered, and lives in England. If you want to get in touch with Jo, please send an email to jo@youarenotalonebook.com.

Little Acts of Love – Valentine's Day

By Marsha Jordan

As I loaded dishes into the dishwasher, I sang along with the radio. My grandson looked up from the picture he was coloring and said, "Grandma, there's one thing about you that I don't like." Anticipating what he was going to say, I asked, "What? That I sing all the time?"

"No," he answered, "It's not how much you sing, it's how BAD you sing."

Once again, I was reminded that God did not bless me with a good singing voice.

I used to wish that I were a wonderful singer, so I could entertain thousands of adoring fans packed into crowded stadiums. In reality, my singing can't even please one six year old.

I also used to wish I were a great orator. I've always envied people who could speak eloquently. I have trouble completing a sentence that can be understood by a preschooler.

I may not possess the talents I would have preferred to be born with, but **I still have the ability to change the world . . . and so do you!**

Changing the world doesn't require wealth, talent, or a huge investment of time. Right now, you (yes you), with your current limitations and abilities, have tremendous power to impact others.

Don't believe me? Have you ever had a day in which everything you touched went wrong? When you were at the end of your rope, did someone speak a kind word or help you out? Do you remember how it warmed your heart and perked up your spirit? **Small, loving acts make a profound difference.** Everyone longs to feel noticed and appreciated. That's why it means so much when someone surprises us with a simple act of caring. It assures us that we matter.

Discouraged people are everywhere. They need you. Don't overlook opportunities to make a difference in someone's life. **A smile, a note, or a phone call won't take much effort, but they can make someone's day.** Not only will your kindness be appreciated by the recipient and rewarded by God, but it will enrich your own life too.

Many folks say, "I'm just one person. I can't make a difference." If you've ever been on the receiving end of a hug just when it's needed, you know one person's concern is powerful. Do you compare your contribution to a tiny drop of water in the huge ocean? Mother Theresa's view was that the ocean would be less without that one drop.

There could be no mountains, if not for the tiny grains of sand from which the mountains are made. Little things pack a big punch. **Encouragement takes only a moment to give but it delivers an important message of love and concern to the recipient, and it could last a lifetime.** Your empathy and time can lessen someone's load and make their life journey easier.

We may not speak like Billy Graham or sing like Frank Sinatra, but **we each have our own unique talents.** *Have you considered that you may be exactly what someone desperately needs?*

Open your heart. Show you care. Share a little love.

Here's a great way to share a little love! Send a cheery card and a smile to a child suffering from serious illnesses like cancer. Visit the HUGS and HOPE Foundation's web site at www.hugsandhope.org. Read the stories and see photos of kids in need of cheer, and mail a card. One of the smiles you create just might be your own.

About the Author: Marsha Jordan is creator of the HUGS and HOPE Foundation (<http://www.hugsandhope.org>). She is author of the inspirational book of humorous essays, "Hugs, Hope, and Peanut Butter." Visit her site at www.hugsandhope.org/mj.htm. Article Source: http://EzineArticles.com/?expert=Marsha_Jordan

Happy Valentine's Day!!!

Here are some Valentine's Day ideas on how to make this day a success for YOU!!!



Do something nice for yourself – your body and your mind!

Take some time off for yourself and treat yourself! Take a nice relaxing foam bath, turn the lights off and light some scented candles. Treat your mind and body in other ways, like with a facial or a massage, get a manicure or pedicure. Pamper yourself. Do something nice for yourself so you can feel good about yourself. Today, **YOU** are the most important person – and treat this person well and show this person – *yourself* – how much you care. Celebrate yourself!

Buy a gift or write a Valentine's Card for yourself!



Take a break from your negative thoughts... Focus on the positive things, on your achievements, and be proud of yourself!! And reward yourself for being this strong, amazing, and beautiful person! Treat yourself with some lovely flowers, a cute teddy bear, or write yourself a kind Valentine's Day card, filled with affirmations, positive things about yourself and your life, forgive yourself for past actions, acknowledge achievements and be proud of yourself. And whenever you feel you are having a rough time or stressful moment, have a look at this card, and remind yourself **you are beautiful, you are loved, you are worthy, and you deserve to be healthy!**

Thank your friends and dear ones!

Instead of feeling depressed and ashamed for struggling with an eating disorder, express your gratitude and love to the people in your life who support and believe in you, who make a difference in your life. Pick up the phone and call someone who is important to you, or send them a letter, a card, or a kind email.

Anorexia – A Game Of Control!

By Wilma Watson

Low self-esteem produces a game of control. It causes a person to suffer in silence – suffering that can lead to anorexia.

Do you struggle with painful feelings about yourself, as a person? We can have so much in our western world, but lack the one thing we most desire – acceptance and a feeling of self worth!

Tania was a beautiful teenage girl. She was given compliments, but felt unable to accept them. Her distorted image of her body led her to become anorexic. This article is not primarily about the signs and symptoms of anorexia. Its purpose is to help the reader discover what lies behind the eating disorder called anorexia nervosa.

First of all, we need to understand how low self-esteem and anorexia are related.

The Link between Low Self-esteem and Anorexia

A sense of low self-esteem can be caused through inadequate nurturing as a result of emotional, physical or sexual abuse as a child. Abuse is when a person uses their power or position to force another person to perform in order to meet their needs.

Emotional abuse is the subtlest form of abuse. Most of us at some time or other, whether to a greater or lesser degree, have been victims of emotional abuse. It could come from anyone who has a position of authority who requires you to perform in order to have his or her needs met.

Tania was a victim of emotional abuse. Her self-rejection grew as her parents were not able to meet her emotional needs even though she lacked nothing materially.

Emotional abuse usually begins as a generational problem. Tania's parents did not know how to meet her needs as they themselves had unmet needs. They were what we call an 'adult child', searching for someone to nurture them and fulfill their needs.

Tania sensed these needs and subconsciously sought to fulfill them by 'being there' for her parents. As opposed to the adults 'being there' to meet her emotional needs! Tania listened as her parents shared their challenges but neither of them were able to spend quality time with her to allow her to open up and share her concerns. Tania had a false sense of security because she felt needed, but lacked someone to care for her own needs. This left her feeling abandoned and abused because she was not being affirmed.

As Tania did not have her own emotional needs met she was left with feelings of low self-worth, emptiness, loneliness, self-hate and depression. To compensate for her feelings of low self-worth she grew up putting more emphasis on 'doing' rather than 'being'. This set the scene for Tania to become anorexic!

Can you relate to Tania in some way? Do you feel empty inside wishing someone would meet your inner needs? Keep reading and you will discover how you can become all you can be.

Low Self-Esteem Is the Root of All Addictions – including Anorexia Nervosa

It has been said that addictions are an attempt to hide the real 'me' from the outside world. Addictions can come in many forms to help you feel better, change your mood and avoid painful feelings. In an attempt to avoid pain one can subtly be led into deception, lies and denial. Anorexia Nervosa was Tania's way of changing her perception of herself – her intense, irrational fear of being fat kept her in a cycle of deception and control. Let's look at how this cycle works.

Low Self-Esteem produces a Game of Control

Those with low self-worth often convey a sense of control. To avoid others seeing the real person, and in fear of falling victim again, they may either control others by being assertive, or control themselves by being non-assertive.

Tania's mother's commented to me that from her perspective she felt Tania used her eating disorder to control and manipulate her. It was like Tania was, consciously or subconsciously, trying to control both herself and her mother.

The non-assertive approach of control

The person with a non-assertive approach sees self-worth as being based on what people think about himself/herself: it is important at any cost to gain the approval of others. Sufferers of anorexia go to extreme lengths to achieve their goal of acceptance.

It is important to note that in endeavoring to deal with low self-worth, a person can swing from being non-assertive to assertive, or visa versa. One can start out as an assertive achiever, as we will discuss in the next section, and swing to become a non-assertive, non-achiever or "loser".

The non-assertive approach produces a cycle, which begins with denial and a desire to please because of fear of rejection. These people become resentful and angry with themselves and others when their goal is not achieved which leads to depression and increased feelings of rejection of self or others. Then in order to feel better about themselves, they begin the cycle of control again.

The assertive approach of control

The person with an assertive approach strives to feel good about himself/herself by meeting certain standards. Feelings of never doing well enough or being good enough can create a fear of failure, which results in both a drive for perfectionism and control of self and others.

Life becomes a problem to be solved for anorexia nervosa sufferers. They are constantly caught up in 'doing' rather than 'being' content, restful and enjoying life. If you have feelings of never doing well enough or being good enough you will know what I mean!

The perfectionist has inflexible rules on how people should act or think. Deep down, it is felt that self-value is only obtained through achievement; therefore new challenges or other people's opinions are threatening, as the perfectionist feels that mistakes are to be avoided at any cost to prevent shame. The assertive approach also produces a cycle, which begins with denial and a desire to control self and others through fear of failure. To achieve this goal the assertive person is legalistic and critical of self and others. These people become defensive and angry when their goal is not achieved, which leads to feelings of loneliness and depression. To feel better about themselves they begin the cycle of control again to achieve their goal.

Life becomes a game of control! How do we get out of this cycle we get ourselves into through low self-worth?

For all who struggle with low self-esteem, I invite you to see a cartoon presentation on our website (www.ydyc.org) that will give you hope and freedom from the cycle of deception and control. It will help you make a fresh start and become all you can be.

As a trained nurse I strongly recommend that you seek professional help if you are suffering from anorexia nervosa.

Music That Touches My Soul

by Andrea Roe



Music is not only a source of entertainment; it also has a healing affect and can support you in your recovery. It is an incredibly powerful form of expression which has a deep impact on the human body and mind. Music can help us heal!

Music is also being used in therapy and can help people express their feelings. This creative therapy approach can reach people in ways that traditional therapy sometimes cannot. For more information about Music Therapy, please go to the following website: www.musictherapy.org

In the next couple of pages, I'd like to share with you some of my **most favourite songs**, and my personal memories attached to them...

Also, I will introduce you to **four amazing women** who not only **survived eating disorders**, but also **share their recovery stories and music** with others to inspire them, to make them feel understood, to provide hope and support and give them the strength to keep on fighting.

"I am beautiful no matter what they say, words can't bring me down."

One of my most favourite songs of all times is **Beautiful** by Christina Aguilera. It was released in late 2002, a time when I still struggled with my eating disorder and severe body image issues. I hated my face, my body, everything. I remember when I heard this song for the very first time... I was alone in my room, watching television, bingeing, ... and suddenly they played this song... I closed my eyes, listened to the lyrics, and started to cry. Both, the music and the words deeply touched me and it almost felt as if Christina was singing the song only for me, to tell me **I WAS BEAUTIFUL, tell me I was loved.**

I remember I grabbed all my binge food and wrappers that were lying around all over my bed and the floor, stuffed them into a big bag and threw them in the garbage can outside of the house.

Whenever I hear this song now, all these memories come back... and on the one hand, I get sad because I get reminded about all my lonely moments in which I struggled so much. On the other hand, it makes me feel good and proud about myself because it shows me how far I have come.

"Close your eyes. Give me your hand, darling. Do you feel my heart beating, do you understand. Do you feel the same, am I only dreaming. Is this burning an eternal flame."

Another one of my most favourite songs is **Eternal Flame** by The Bangles. It was released in 1988, when I was just six years old – a time, when I could not have cared less about music. When I first started paying attention to this song, I was 15 years old, and I had a crush on a guy who could not have cared less about me. I remember lying on my bed, listening to this song over and over and over again and I was thinking about that boy I liked. At this point, I already had this idea in my head that I was ugly, and I was self conscious about the way my face looked. I hated my face! My eating disorder was just about to be 'born' but I did not have a real problem with food and weight at this point. Back then, my English wasn't that good either and I did not understand the lyrics completely, but that did not matter... I enjoyed the music, and I liked the meaning of the couple of words that I was able to understand.

I still love hearing this song today. And today, whenever I hear it, I think about my husband and how much I love him, how blessed I am to have him in my life. And this song also reminds me on the fact that there was a time when he was not in my life, and how lonely and lost I felt.

“Some say love it is a river that drowns the tender reed. Some say love it is a razor that leaves your soul to bleed. Some say love it is a hunger, an endless aching need. I say love it is a flower and you it's only seed.”

The Rose, by Bette Midler, was released in 1979, three years before I was born. I did not know that this song existed until I was 23 years old. The Rose was performed by a choir at Brandon's and my wedding in Austria in July 2005. I was sitting in front of the altar, and I started to pray. There was so much going through my head and tears started to run down my cheeks. In this moment, I truly realized that my life was never going to be the same again. I thought about my past, and in my head I said goodbye to my 'old' life. I realized that it was time for me to let go. Certain things were easy to leave behind, others were more difficult. I thought about my family, my childhood, good and bad memories while being a teenager, my friends, my room, ... and I noticed that it was time to move on and to stop holding on so much to certain things. Marrying Brandon was the final step of me moving to Canada. And during this song, I truly realized all this, and I thought about how much I loved my family and how much I was going to miss them. Whenever I hear The Rose on the radio, all these thoughts come back, and my eyes start to tear up, just like they do right now... I love you, mum and dad. I'm proud and honoured to be your child, and I'm sorry for all the hurt and pain I put you through. I love you both so much, and I miss you. You are the best parents in the world!

“Don't give up. It's just the hurt that you hide. When you're lost inside I, I'll be there to find you. Don't give up, because you want to burn bright. If darkness blinds you I, I will shine to guide you. Everybody wants to be understood. Well I can hear you. Everybody needs to be loved. Don't give up. Because...you are loved”

A little while ago, while I was driving in my car, I heard a song on the radio which immediately caught my attention. I actually had to stop the car on the side of the road, listened to the lyrics, and I got tears in my eyes. The song touched me so deeply. It is so powerful and very inspirational. The song is called **“You Are Loved (Don't Give Up)”** by Josh Groban. It is just a beautiful and very positive song and I love hearing it and if you don't know it, please check it out! It is very empowering!

“You're not alone. Together we stand. I'll be by your side; you know I'll take your hand. When it gets cold. And it feels like the end. There's no place to go. You know I won't give in. Keep holding on. 'Cause you know we'll make it through, we'll make it through. Just stay strong. 'Cause you know I'm here for you, I'm here for you”

Another beautiful and empowering song I just recently heard is **“Keep Holding On”** by Avril Lavigne. It is just amazing and its message is so inspiring, powerful, and strong. I was able to identify with the lyrics so much... now that I am recovered, it is my passion to share my story and to provide hope, comfort and support to others and to inspire them to stay strong and to keep on believing in themselves so they can successfully overcome their struggles. ***Keep holding on and you will make it through!***

If you are not familiar with the songs **“You Are Loved (Don't Give Up)”** by Josh Groban and **“Keep Holding On”** by Avril Lavigne, please check them out and pay close attention to the lyrics.

The messages of these songs are so **empowering, strong, and true**.
Please remember, recovery IS possible, and you can and will get through this!

Valentine's Day Give Away!

What Music Inspires YOU?

Do you have a favourite song? What kind of music inspires you and makes you feel good about yourself when you hear it.

Do you want to share your 'feel good' songs, feelings and thoughts about inspirational music with me and the readers of the Support Letter? If so, please write them down, and email them to me at andrea@youarenotalonebook.com.

I'd love to share the responses with the You Are Not Alone Support Letter community, and include some of them in the next edition of the Support Letter!





Plus, everyone who sends me their thoughts on inspirational music, will be entered into a draw to win a copy of the "**You Are Loved (Don't Give Up)**" CD by Josh Groban.

The draw will be held on **February 28th**, and the winner will be contacted via email.

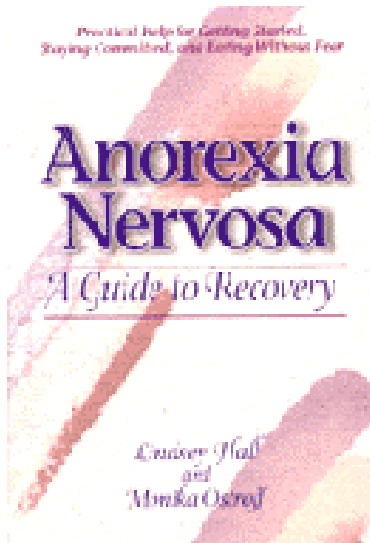
I'm looking forward to hearing from you!

Good luck!

Women Who Struggled With Eating Disorders Share Their Music:

	<p>Modern Day Eve by Shannon Cutts</p> <p>Shannon is a survivor of a fifteen year battle with anorexia, bulimia, depression and anxiety disorder.</p> <p>Since the age of eight, Shannon has been writing and performing her original songs to appreciative audiences. Recently awarded First Place in the Billboard World Song Contest for her song 'Mercy', Shannon continues to seek new and powerful ways in her songwriting and concert ministry to reach out through music to build bridges of hope and encouragement to those who need it.</p> <p>For more information about Shannon, please go to www.key-to-life.com.</p>
	<p>I Wanna Live! by Laurie Daily</p> <p>Laurie is a professional singer and Certified Eating Disorder Specialist who has dedicated her music to eating disorder recovery. All of the songs on Laurie's CDs relate to her own journey from eating disorders to health in hopes of inspiring others to live a life free from anorexia, bulimia, and compulsive eating.</p> <p>Laurie, who has toured with top bands internationally, delivers her inspirational message through her music and live presentations at schools and community groups. The music has helped many individuals stay on the path of recovery. Her music can also be used by professionals in groups to facilitate heartfelt discussion.</p> <p>For more information about Laurie, please go to www.lauriedaily.com.</p>
	<p>Full Circle by Halie Loren</p> <p>After winning her fight with an eating disorder, Halie Loren released her first solo album, Full Circle. She struggled with an eating disorder for years, during which she was also pursuing her music career.</p> <p>The album is filled with such honest and profound lyrics, bringing the listener deep into her world of both joy and pain.</p> <p>For more information about Halie, please go to www.halieloren.net.</p>
	<p>Life Without Ed by Jenni Schaefer</p> <p>Jenni is the author of "Life Without Ed – How One Woman Declared Independence From her Eating Disorder And How You Can Too", an autobiography about her battle with an eating disorder, which she fought for over 20 years.</p> <p>In addition to being an author and speaker, Jenni is also a singer and songwriter and is currently working on her first CD filled with inspirational recovery songs which will be released soon.</p> <p>Jenni already released her first song called "Life Without Ed", which you can listen to when you visit her website at www.jennischaefers.com.</p>

Book Suggestions of the Month:



Anorexia Nervosa – A Guide To Recovery

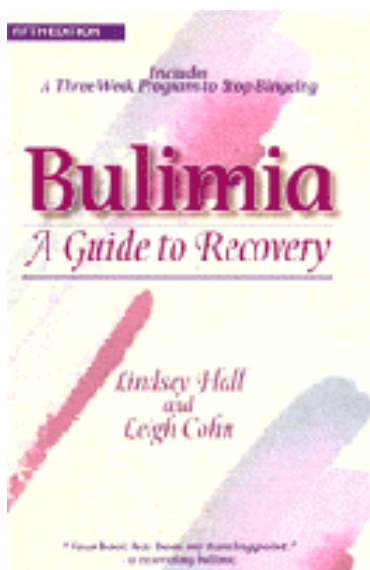
by Lindsey Hall and Monika Ostroff

Anorexia Nervosa: A Guide to Recovery is meant to be a compassionate, understanding companion on the journey through recovery. It offers a combination of factual information, the author's own story of recovery from a ten year battle with anorexia, insights from others who have recovered, and practical suggestions for recovery and staying committed. There is also a special section for parents and loved ones.

This book includes:

- Answers to questions most often asked
- Insight from recovered and recovering
- Monika Ostroff's story of recovery
- Specific things to do that have worked
- Information on healthy eating and weight
- Suggestions for how to stay committed
- A special section for parents & loved

About the Authors: Lindsey recovered from bulimia in the 1970's and has been involved with eating disorder education along with her husband Leigh Cohn who supported her through her recovery. Monika recovered from a ten year battle with anorexia and now works to help others who suffer with eating disorders.



Bulimia – A Guide To Recovery

by Lindsey Hall and Leigh Cohn

This self-help guide offers advice and resources for understanding and overcoming bulimia (the binge-purge cycle). The revised edition has updated information and additional material on men and bulimia, sexual trauma, body image, relationships, and much more. Includes recommendations from 400 recovered bulimics. Useful for therapists, educators, bulimics, and their loved-ones.

This book includes:

- Answers to questions most often asked about bulimia
- Insight from recovered and recovering bulimics
- A Three-week program to stop bingeing
- Specific advice for loved-ones
- Things to do instead of bingeing
- Lindsey Hall's own inspiring story, "Eat Without Fear"
- Suggestions from professional eating disorders therapists

About the Authors: Lindsey Hall recovered from bulimia in the 1970's and has been involved with eating disorder education along with her husband Leigh Cohn who supported her through her recovery. Lindsey and Leigh, who are married, are internationally respected authors of several books on eating disorders and recovery topics. Their original self-help guide was the first book ever published on bulimia, and Lindsey was the first "recovered bulimic" to appear on national television.

Books are available through **Gürze Books** (www.gurze.com), which is a publishing company specialized in books, resources, and education on eating disorder.

What People Are Saying About You Are Not Alone....

"I have treated eating disorders for 20 years and the one thing I know for sure is that no one can recover from this destructive disease alone. And so the title of this book certainly got my attention.

You Are Not Alone is an amazing gift waiting for anyone who is suffering with an eating disorder. This diverse collection of creative expression --- in prose, poetry and visual arts --- has the power to break through the barriers of isolation and deliver genuine hope to the reader's doorstep. Andrea Roe and her courageous co-creators offer inspiration, identification, and practical guidance that can make a real difference in readers' lives. It is a book that offers a variety of perspectives to demonstrate how individuals experience eating disorders and eating disorder recovery in unique and personal ways. Readers will not only be supported in their efforts to recover, but they will also very likely be inspired to put pen to paper or brush to canvas so that they too can creatively express their struggles and their triumphs in recovery.

I will be recommending *You Are Not Alone* to my clients and workshop participants for some time to come."

Thom Rutledge, *Psychotherapist,*
Co-Author of "Life Without Ed" by Jenni Schaefer.

"*You Are Not Alone* is a unique compilation of stories, poems, art and even song lyrics from women suffering or recovering from eating disorders and related issues. What this wonderful collection of women amply illustrates is the global nature of the problem and how it does not discriminate by race, age or indeed gender. The author Andrea Roe has given a voice to women of all ages and from countries across the globe including the US, Canada, Netherlands, UK and New Zealand to name a few.

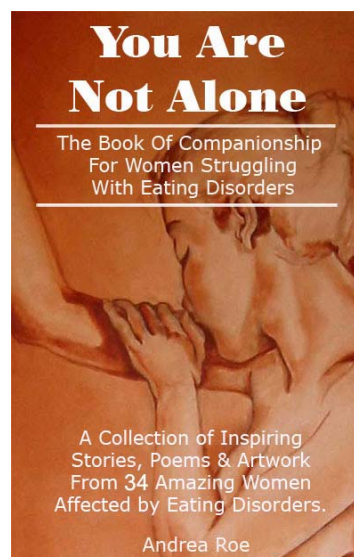
Each story is different in its circumstances yet similar in the passion and emotion that flows from words born out of the pain and isolation each contributor has suffered and yet these poignant stories and poems combine to convey a message of strength, courage and hope.

The title "*You Are Not Alone*" speaks for itself. This chorus of strong voices will provide other sufferers out there with a real sense of community and that there are others who understand and share their burden. This book, which may be disturbing at times for those who do not understand the complexity of the various manifestations of eating disorders, will leave the reader with a different perspective on those that suffer. These women are not weak victims, they are strong survivors. They deserve our admiration for the inspiration they provide. I recommend anyone touched directly or indirectly by an eating disorder to read this book and feel the power of these wonderful women.

As Whitney Johnson proclaims in her poem "Dear Enemy" - "You will not win oh enemy of mine, I will fight you until the end."

Jocelyn Golden,
Author of "Learning To Be Me
– My Twenty Three Year Battle With Bulimia".

You Are Not Alone is available online at www.bulimia.com, www.amazon.com, www.borders.com, www.chapters.com, and www.youarenotalonebook.com.



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 "A Look Back In History" segment, and so on.

Feel free to send me whatever it is you want to share!

I'm looking forward to hearing from you!