

You Are Not Alone

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

December 2008 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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Merry Christmas From Winter-Wonderland Austria!

While I struggled with eating disorders, and all through my recovery process, holidays were always the most difficult time for me. I got nervous whenever a big holiday approached. I was scared of what would happen. I was scared of losing control. I was scared of all the food and what it would do to me.

Now that I'm recovered, **I enjoy the holiday season and am actually looking forward to it.** I no longer get stressed out during the holidays and do not experience anxiety about the meals. And I'm looking forward to just being able to relax, spend time with the people I love, reflect on the year and define my goals for the New Year.



My husband Brandon and I in Salzburg, Austria. December 2008

And this year Christmas is actually something very special for me because I am celebrating the holidays together with my family and friends back home in Austria. As you may know, I moved to Canada several years ago together with my husband (who is Canadian) and it's always special for me when I go back home to Europe for a while to visit my loved ones.

Please remember to take very good care of yourself during the Christmas season. Holidays can be a very stressful time for everybody and especially for individuals with eating disorders. It is really important that you do whatever you need to do in order to make this season easier on yourself. I hope you will find some time for yourself to relax and to just enjoy yourself! You deserve to be happy!

I wish you a very MERRY CHRISTMAS and all the best for the New Year!

Take especially good care of yourself! ☺

Andrea

PS. Within the Support Letter you will find some tips to help you cope with stress and food so you can make the best out of the holiday season.

PPS. If you like to contribute your poetry, artwork, story or thoughts on recovery with the Support Letter community, feel free to get in touch with me at andrea@youarenotalonebook.com I am looking forward to hearing from you!

“The turning point, I think, was when I really realized that you can do it yourself. That you have to believe in you because sometimes that's the only person that does believe in your success but you.”

- Tim Blixseth

“Kindness in words creates confidence. Kindness in thinking creates profundity. Kindness in giving creates love.”

- Lao-Tse

“Explain to people that everything they say is an affirmation. Everything they think is an affirmation. Everything! What you want to do is to get control of what you are saying and thinking, so these things bring you good experiences in life rather than rotten experiences.”

- Louise Hay

“Everybody has talent, it's just a matter of moving around until you've discovered what it is.”

□- George Lucas

“People often say that motivation doesn't last. Well, neither does bathing.. that's why we recommend it daily.”

□- Zig Ziglar

“The ill effects of thought come about when we forget that thought is a function of our consciousness.. an ability that we as human beings have. We are the producers of our own thinking.”

□- Richard Carlson

“We are the creative force of our life, and through our own decisions rather than our conditions, if we carefully learn to do certain things, we can accomplish those goals.”

- Steven Covey

“I didn't want to say "No" because I didn't want people to think I'm not nice. And that, to me, has been the greatest lesson of my life: to recognize that I am solely responsible for it, and not trying to please other people, and not living my life to please other people, but doing what my heart says all the time.” □

- Oprah Winfrey

INSPIRING WOMAN OF THE MONTH—Making A Difference In The World:



Amy Barbera

This month, I'd like to introduce you to Amy Barbera— she recovered from her struggles with eating disorders, body image issues and depression sixteen years ago. In the following pages, Amy will share with us how her eating disorder started and also her recovery and healing journey....



Tell us a bit about yourself.

Well, I grew up in a small town in Maryland called Hagerstown until I was 21 years old. At the age of 21, I moved to Fort Lauderdale, Florida. I've lived in Florida for 15 years and I love it. I have one younger sister named Julie who is 35 years old. And I have two very loving and supportive parents who have been married for over 30 years. I am 36 years old and this is the happiest time of my life. I'm with the love of my life, TC, and hope to get married very soon. My 13-song inspirational debut album "Beautiful Flower Of Life" was just released in June of 2008. I also have a special children's ministry and retail line called "God's Special Angel". I have a huge heart for the hurting, the sick, the depressed, and the outcast. I love to share the hope and love of God with everyone I meet. I also have a passion to bring hope and encouragement to those who suffer from eating disorders because I have been there myself.

Tell us a bit about your mom's struggles with eating disorders and depression. How did this affect you?

When my mother was growing up her mother and her Aunt Betty used to talk about weight, appearance, and achievement all the time and because of this my mother grew up thinking that she had to be perfect in every way to be loved. At the age of 12, she began to show signs of anorexia and by the time she was 15 she was so sick from anorexia that the doctor said she only had 3 weeks to live. Her parents rushed her to John's Hopkins Hospital in Baltimore, Maryland, for treatment. At the time (in the 1950's) John's Hopkins was one of the only hospitals in the world that knew anything at all about eating disorders. My mother received intense treatments such as insulin shock treatment, tube feeding and psychiatric counseling for a year at John's Hopkins. She was finally healed from anorexia but still struggled with depression and mental illness. In my early childhood years my mother was in and out of mental institutions and was a very sad person. As a little girl I remember feeling so sad for her and I wished I could make her feel better. Even though my mother was sad and depressed I knew she loved me very much.

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

My body image issues and eating disorder began in my late middle school/early high school years. At that time puberty was setting in and my emotions were haywire. I started to gain a little weight and although I was nowhere near fat, I was a little chunky. The boys in middle school used to tease me about my breast size calling me "boulder holders". For most teenagers, this period of your life is very difficult and so me being teased and gaining weight really affected my self esteem and opened the door for my anorexia to begin.

How long did you suffer from eating disorders before you told someone / before someone noticed?

In my case, my weight loss was very drastic and I looked very emaciated. My disorder was very noticeable to all who knew me. Although many people noticed my deteriorating condition immediately, I still struggled on and off with anorexia for about seven years. There were several

years that I lived a fairly normal disorder free life. But since I never had dealt with the root cause of my disorder, it came back like a thief in the night in my early college years.

How did your family / friends react when they found out/when you told them that you struggle with an eating disorder?

Well since my mother had suffered from anorexia in her teenage years; it made her very upset to watch me go through the same thing. My family and friends were extremely worried about me. I withdrew from everyone around me. And **the happy, bubbly, fun Amy no longer existed**: which made everyone very sad.

How did you get started in your recovery?

I got tired of being sick and tired. I was miserable and withdrawn from everyone around me. I was constantly hungry, sad, and heart broken. I was tired of being in denial and I knew I had a problem. I just wanted to be normal, happy and healthy.

What helped you most during your recovery?

My best friend Tammie from high school encouraged me a lot. But I have to say the two biggest healing factors in my recovery were my boyfriend at the time, Patrick, and a wonderful eating disorder counselor named Susan. Both of them were like angels in my life. God used them to show me unconditional love, understanding, patience and both of them gave me the courage to face the pain my disorder was hiding. My mom, dad and grandmother also played a key role in my recovery.

What role did music play in your recovery?

Music played a huge role in my recovery. During my lowest points of my disorder, I would escape by listening to music and singing. This may seem odd to some, but God used the music from the artist Prince (who was my favorite artist at that time) to inspire me to want to get well and pursue my own dreams. There were three Prince songs that aided me in my recovery: they were "The Ladder", "The Cross" and "Still Would Stand All Time". Although these three songs were not his well-known songs, they touched my heart in a profound way to search for God and healing in my own life.

What advice do you have for individuals who have an eating disorder?

My biggest advice to those suffering from an eating disorder is to **seek out a professional eating disorder therapist or treatment center** in your area. It is very crucial to get to the root cause of why you have your disorder in the first place. Being honest with your emotions, your past, your fears, and your dreams is a must to experience true healing. **Forgiveness is key**; not only do you need to forgive yourself but you also need to forgive those who may have been the triggers of your disorder. Learning to love and accept yourself even with all of your imperfections is also very important. **For me, finding God and discovering my true purpose in life was catalyst that set me free to fly.**

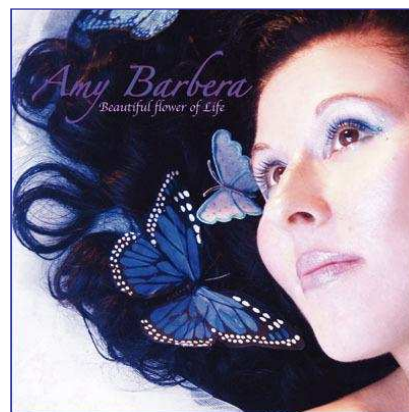
Was it difficult for you to publicly speak out about your experiences with eating disorders? What made you decide to take this step?

For me, **I have been set free from my eating disorder for 16 years now.** Over the years, I have verbally shared my story with others here and there. I have even tried to help a few individuals struggling with eating disorders here and there by sharing my story. But it hasn't been until recently that I have shared my story in its entirety with the public. The release of my inspirational debut album "Beautiful Flower Of Life" caused the organization "**Waging The War Against Eating**

Disorders” to contact me. Upon hearing my story and my music they further encouraged me to share my story and gift of song with those suffering from eating disorders. I am now a recovery buddy for the organization and I want to use my God given talent to bring hope and healing to those suffering with eating disorders.

Tell us about your debut album "Beautiful Flower of Life".

First of all, each song on my album “Beautiful Flower Of Life” was inspired by God to bring his love, hope, healing, peace, comfort, and encouragement to all those who listen. My album includes 13 of my original, heart felt songs all written or co-written by me. There are several songs on my album that will bring hope and encouragement to those suffering with eating disorders. These include “Make Me A Butterfly”, “Let Me Cry Lord”, “God’s Special Angel” “Your Love Is So Real”, “I Had A Dream”, and the “Healing Song”. Each song on my album stems from my own life experiences or the experiences of others that have inspired me. To listen to samples of each song and to read the inspiration behind each song; go to www.cdbaby.com/cd/amybarbera2 and www.myspace.com/amybarbera. I hope and pray my music touches your heart in a special way.



How do you see your future? What are your goals?

I feel that I have amazing future ahead of me. God is already opening so many big doors for me I can't even begin to tell you. My album has been released as of June 2008 and is already an enormous success. I know someday very soon that I will travel the world and share my gift of song with all those who need hope and encouragement. I have a God's Special Angel children's ministry and also have a God's Special Angel retail line. Currently I am helping two orphanages in Uganda and it is my dream to travel and bless the children in orphanages in Uganda, Israel, Italy, Japan, America, and all other countries God sends me to. I also want to be a spokesperson for those suffering from eating disorders and the disease “Epidermis Bullosa”; also known as “EB”. **This is the happiest time of my life and I continue to dream “BIG” for all things are possible with God.** To find out more information about my God's Special Angel Children's Ministry go to www.dosomething.org/project/gods-special-angel-inc-amy-barbera

For more information about Amy Barbara and her inspirational music, visit her MySpace site at www.myspace.com/amybarbera. For more information about her “God’s Special Angel Children’s Ministry” visit www.dosomething.org/project/gods-special-angel-inc-amy-barbera

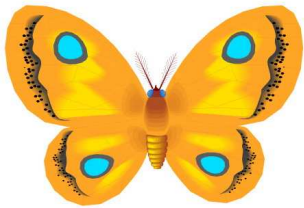


Make Me A Butterfly

Song Lyrics by Amy Barbera



Lord my soul longs to rest
From the troubles of this world
From my daily struggles, my inner pain
I call you
Though I'm hanging on the edge
Lifeless, tired and afraid
Trapped in my own cocoon
I long to be free



Make me a butterfly
So I can be renewed
Make me a butterfly
So I can dance and soar
Make me a butterfly
transform me and give me hope for change
Make me a butterfly Lord please

Lord I'm slowly breaking out
From my imprisoned state
I feel your breath, I see you light
I'm near you, so near you
Divine with open wings
With beauty, strength and faith
I'm ready to fly
I long to be free

Make me a butterfly
So I can be renewed
Make me a butterfly
So I can dance and soar
Make me a butterfly
transform me and give me hope for change
Make me a butterfly Lord please



Without limits I will fly
Closer to you
Higher and higher

Make me a butterfly
So I can dance and soar
Make me a butterfly
transform me and give me hope for change
Make me a butterfly Lord please.



Karen's Healing Column:

Success Tips for Living Life, Not Death

To sit in the sunshine is to experience the warmth penetrating your skin. If you stay long enough, and stay aware of its effect on you, it begins to relax you physically and mentally. And if you listen to what it is saying, it speaks kindness, warmth, encouragement and care. It gives hope and even says, "Trust in yourself. You can do this. Things will be okay. You will make it."

This is a mirror image of your own true voice. ED's (eating disorders) voice comes to you as if it were your own voice. It is not your voice. It is ED's voice.

And it is important to separate yourself and your own voice from ED's voice.

While suffering with an ED, its voice in your head is critical, demeaning, accusing, and encourages you to hate yourself and turn against yourself. It is a voice that encourages you to destroy yourself.

Your voice will be like sitting in the sunshine. It will feel warm, kind, nurturing and encouraging, even when dealing with difficulty. We naturally like ourselves as children. Just observe some children. They are fascinated with their own selves, and how they feel when interacting with the world.

We don't naturally dislike or hate ourselves as children. This is learned through painful and disappointing experiences. These difficult times create a natural vulnerability that allows negative ideas towards us to enter in. The negativity stays, if we believe it and agree that it is true.

The negativity gains power and grows to become deeply rooted inside you if you keep on believing it and agreeing with it.

The first step to separating is to recognize ED's voice and see it is not your own. His is a separate voice.

The second is to say you no longer agree with ED and to stop accepting his voice and his belief system.

The third is regularly focus on new and life-giving things. Some ideas you might try are:

- Inspirational quotes. Tape the ones Andrea supplies each month in this newsletter to your bathroom wall and read each month's copy, every morning, for that month. (How you begin your day is powerful.)
- Look at artwork that inspires the qualities that represent your own true voice and are things you want more of in your life.
- Music that soothes your soul and helps you center into the real you.
- Spend time with people who can hear who you are, care about you, and have the attributes you are looking to have in your life.
- Become involved in activities that feed you love and feed your life and well-being.

And, if you need a refresher course for what the real you sounds like, sit in the sunshine for a while, till you know it inside again.

Have a beautiful month,

Karen

About Karen Cook, M.A.: Karen, who is an eating disorder survivor herself, has over fourteen 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 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.

This poem I dedicate to all of us struggling through an eating disorder and feel a sense of lack in identity as we grope through recovery.

Mirror Mirror on the Wall

By Rochelle Naiman

Mirror mirror on the wall
With great urgency to you I call
In bold honesty can you detect?
Who does this face belong to? Can you detect?

Who is she and where is she from?
What's her essence, where is her origin from?

Can you fathom at all?
Her identity can you recall?

Mirror mirror on the wall
In utter despair to you I call!
Is she nice likeable or sweet?
Or a messy slob, perhaps a neat freak!

Can you love her just a fraction?
Or perhaps find a measure of compassion?

Maybe for fantasy sake
Fall in love with her to heal her ache!

Before you return to oblivion
Join her in her destination.

Mirror mirror on the wall
Please tell me! Can you recall!

How To Make The Best Out Of The Christmas & New Year's Holiday Season

For many people, the holidays are a time of joy and celebration. It is a time to gather with family and friends, get caught up on each other's lives, share a few laughs, and look forward to sitting down and enjoying the traditional holiday feast.

For people with eating disorders, though, the holidays are not quite so enjoyable. In fact, they can be the ultimate nightmare. For many, the holidays bring tremendous stress, anxiety, and fear.

Here are some tips to help you cope with stress and food so you can make the most out of this festive season:

- Make a list of things you can do to help relax and distract yourself from the feelings of fullness after a big meal. (i.e. take a relaxing hot bath with aroma oils, go for a nice long walk, call or visit a supportive friend, read your favourite book, write in your diary, etc.)
- Make sure that there is food available that you feel comfortable eating. If you are invited, offer to bring something yourself so that you are sure there will be food available for you.
- Plan time for yourself. You need to rest and take care of yourself. It is very important to take special care of yourself during the holidays.
- Avoid focusing too much on food; it only fuels your eating disorder.
- Remember that you are responsible only for your own actions and for taking care of yourself.
- Focus on aspects of life unrelated to food and weight! Take a break from the repetitive messages about body image on television or in magazines. Do something you would not normally do - go for a hike, volunteer for charity work, or visit with friends. The holidays are a time for reflection and celebration, so make sure you take time to do both with the people you care about.
- Try not to count calories and try to avoid the scale.
- Wear clothes that fit and that you feel comfortable in.
- Don't look in every mirror you see. Stop checking out yourself.
- Try to eat in some kind of regular pattern. Avoid "preparing for the last supper." Don't skip meals and starve in attempt to make up for what you recently ate or are about to eat.
- If you can, let yourself enjoy a few "special occasion foods".
- If you feel yourself starting to panic because you are feeling too full or if you allowed yourself to eat foods that you consider to be forbidden, remind yourself it is okay to eat what you did, that food will not make you fat, and it is only normal to eat more during the holidays. Most people do and it really is okay.
- If you have a period where you end up bingeing or purging, do not beat yourself up over it. Just put it behind you and move forward.
- If you have to be at an event with certain people who make you uncomfortable, plan ways to excuse yourself from their immediate presence to avoid spending time with them.
- Prepare responses to make to people who may say something to you that would make you uncomfortable.
- If you feel you need to, set some boundaries for yourself by telling people ahead of time that you do not want anyone to comment on your appearance or your eating.
- Choose to stay away from certain events when you know there are people there who upset you and you are uncomfortable being around. People might want you to go but you have to take care of yourself.
- Please do what is right for you during the holidays. Do not allow anyone to pressure you into eating more than you can handle. You are not eating for them, you are eating for yourself. If being with certain family members or going home for the holidays is too stressful, you may have to seriously think about not going. Do not be afraid to disappoint people by not showing up and if you can, be honest about why you will not be attending. **Holidays are a very stressful time for people with eating disorders and it really is important that you do whatever you need to do in order to make them easier on yourself.**

- Get enough sleep! Shortage of sleep can create an unhealthy imbalance in your body, which will interfere with your ability to handle the holiday stress positively.
- Remember that the "ideal" and "picture perfect harmony" holiday is not real for many people. Some people can't afford it. Many single people aren't close to their families or don't have a family. Many families don't look like and act like the "picture book" family. You still might feel the pressure to have an "ideal" family. Don't blame yourself for problems in your family. People are the same at holidays and every other time of the year.
- **Create your personal "Recovery Book/Gratitude Journal:** Write down inspirational statements, your goals for the future, what you will do when you are free from your eating disorder, things you are grateful for, your achievements, things you are proud of, things or moments that make you happy and activities you enjoy doing – everything and anything that can support you while you work at freeing yourself from your eating disorder. And have a look at this book as often as possible, and especially when you are feeling down.

Coping Methods When You Feel Like You Have To Binge:

Things to do Instead of Binging: Make a list of things you can do and enjoy to help you relax and take your mind off the urge to binge when you feel like being at risk from losing control over your eating. Instead of binging, try to calm yourself down. Ask yourself "Do I really need to binge?" The following tips may help you get the control back over your impulsive eating behaviour.

When you feel like being at risk of losing control:

- Wait ten minutes; count to 100 - waiting for a couple of minutes can make the cravings go away.
- Have a big glass of water.
- Call a friend.
- Visit a friend.
- Ask a friend to come over.
- Call an Eating Disorder Hotline.
- Call your therapist.
- Call someone from your support group.
- Write your journal.
- Write an e-mail to a friend.
- Listen to music.
- Listen to a comedy tape or video.
- Dance to your favourite songs.
- Watch a movie.
- Read a book.
- Scrap booking.
- Take a nap.
- Pray.
- Exercise.
- Meditate.
- Paint a picture.
- Clean your room.
- Take a relaxing bath.
- Go for a walk (don't take money with you!)
- Spend time with your pet.
- Colour your hair.
- Paint your nails.
- Go to eating disorder support websites and chat online with people who are going through the same as you are.
- Plan regular activities for your most difficult time of day.

Beauty Undressed



“Banning Anorexia”

My mother loves to read the paper. She frequently sends me articles relevant to the work I do. Recently she sent me an interesting article about a “ban on anorexia” issued by the French.

I thought this was a wonderful idea, in the same way that I think it is a wonderful idea to ban cancer, Alzheimer's disease, congenital abnormalities and blindness.

But I am still waiting to hear from the French on the “how” of enforcing their ban. Not to mention the “why”. Are they banning anorexia because it is bad for business, or because it kills innocent victims who are victimized most not by their disease but by mass ignorance of their plight? Are they, instead, banning it because it is inconvenient, expensive, and time-consuming, both individually and to society as a whole? Or are they perhaps banning it because they somehow think that a ban will make all the difference in individual's desire or willingness to contract it, or to 'fess up to their illness to those who could help?

The obvious issue I have with a ban is this – not one person I have ever met who suffers from anorexia, or any other form of eating disorder for that matter, *wants* to have the disease, in the same way that no one dreams of one day being diagnosed with breast cancer or congenital kidney failure. Banning a disease isn't going to stop the disease from spreading, or people from dying.

What WILL work is to ban the unconscionable triggers that perpetuate a potentially very curable mental disorder from claiming more innocent lives. Milan, for instance, attempted to institute weight restrictions for Fashion Week models in 2006. Models who were deemed by a qualified medical professional to be underweight in terms of their medically-determined ideal body weight were not allowed to walk the runway. Some felt this was unfair – a restriction of personal freedom, rather than a potentially life-saving precaution (the weight restrictions were implemented after several models dropped dead on and off the runway due to anorexia and bulimia in the space of one year). I, for one, applaud the Milanese, and see this caution in the same way as I view the ban against allowing professional athletes who are using steroids to compete in sports.

What may work, as well, is to raise the level of education and intervention for eating disorders that is available to all those who suffer, especially to those who are at a higher risk. The Tri Delta Greek organization, for instance, recently launched a nationwide eating disorders awareness program called 'Reflections'. This year the US Congress, for the first time in over a decade, passed sweeping mental health parity reforms, forcing health insurance companies to offer the same level of coverage and care to those suffering from mental disorders as they offer to those who suffer from physical illness.

Now THIS is the type of proactiveness that gets right to the heart of the matter – and offers so much more than a band-aid, and frankly lazy, “solution” such as banning mental illness.

Recently I gave a talk at a university on the East Coast. Afterwards, several students wanted to interview me for class papers. One student, an advertising major, asked me what can be done to make sure that the next generation isn't affected by eating disorders through exposure to toxic media marketing and messages. I told him that it starts with each of us. Wherever we are, whatever role we play in our local community, we can and must do so much more than “ban” an issue that causes us pain. We must work to END its influence over our lives, and the lives of those we care for, by DOING something about it.

So my question to you, to myself, to us all this month is – what are WE going to do to prevent, raise awareness of, offer education for, and eliminate eating disorders?

Warmly and with HOPE,



Learn more about *Key to Life* (www.key-to-life.com) & Beauty Undressed (www.key-to-life.com/BUflyer.htm)

Send us your [COMMENTS](#) about this column.

P.S. Be sure to [SIGN](#) the 'I Have A Dream of a World FREE from Eating Disorders' petition to DEMAND mental health parity for eating disorders treatment!

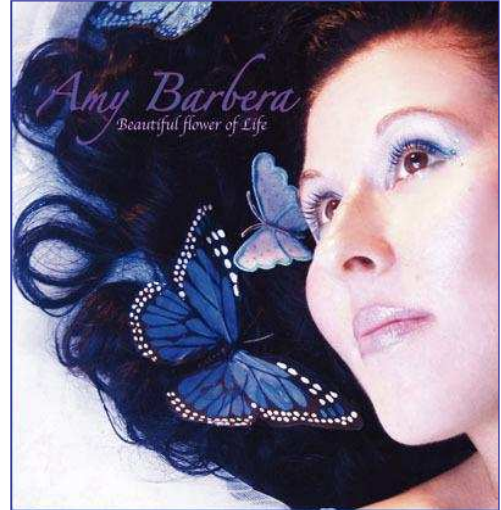
About Shannon Cutts: Shannon Cutts is known as a compassionate and charismatic advocate of our right to feel good about ourselves, our bodies and our lives. As a popular college circuit and conference speaker, writer and award-winning songwriter, she uses stories and songs to bring hope to those who need it most. As the Founder of *Key to Life: unlocking the door to hope*, Shannon is active in leading support communities for those recovering from eating and related disorders, including [MySpace](#) and [Facebook](#) groups and her own [Good News support ezine](#). She is currently in the process of completing her first book, *Letters to a Young*

Inspirational & Healing Music Give-Away

Amy Barbera's Debut CD
"Beautiful Flower Of Life"

This month you have the chance to win a copy of Amy Barbera's CD called "Beautiful Flowers of Life" which is filled with 13 encouraging songs.

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## ***How to enter the contest....***

Simply send an email to [giveaway@youarenotalonebook.com](mailto:giveaway@youarenotalonebook.com)

and put "**Beautiful Flower**" in the subject line.

The draw will be held on **January 10<sup>th</sup>** and the winner will be contacted via email.

Feel free to also include feedback about the Support Letter—what you like the most, topic suggestions, what you like to see more of. And if you want to share your poems, story, or 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! 😊**

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

"*You Are Not Alone* is long overdue. As a survivor/activist myself, I have steadily maintained that if I could heal from anorexia and bulimia, depression and anxiety disorder, literally anyone can heal. Now, here in the pages of *You Are Not Alone*, an international chorus of courageous fighters spreads this life-saving, life-giving message to any woman who needs to hear it. The stories shared here show us all that there are as many paths to recovery as there are unique souls walking that path. But that does not in any way dilute the fundamental truth – that any woman who wants recovery badly enough - from whatever holds her down - will FIND A WAY. We are strong. We are wise. And we are ALL beautiful, just as we are. So if you are out there, fighting your way through to hope, read this book and don't give up – life is a choice, and your life is so worth fighting for! much love"

– **Shannon Cutts**, Founder of "Key to Life: unlocking the door to hope". Singer, songwriter, recording artist, speaker, youth mentor, and eating disorder survivor. ([www.key-to-life.com](http://www.key-to-life.com))

"*You Are Not Alone*, by Andrea Roe, is a compilation of the writings of thirty-four women that are co-authors to this book and of varying ages. It has been written to provide insights, encouragements, and support to those that now struggle with an eating disorder. This book has also been written in order to raise awareness on eating disorders that stem from abuse.

Each of the stories are written in a detailed manner. They each carry with them some strong emotions. Yet, it is a book I feel will help other women. These women write of the horrors of abuse and the effects it had on their eating habits. Each of them carries a story that has the capability to touch the hearts of those struggling with eating disorders and such.

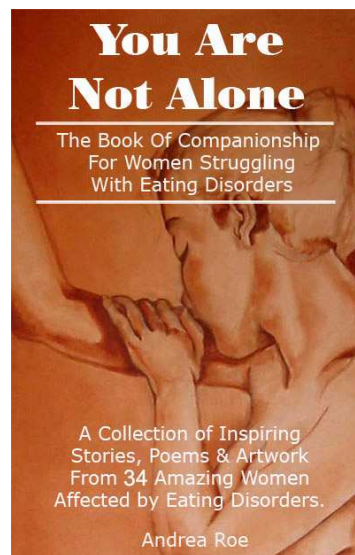
"Painted Desert," by Geri Karlstrom, tells the readers that although they are struggling, there is always hope. In essence, it is the hope that she runs to and finds courage. Jessica Beal wrote a poem titled, "Future?" In this poem, she writes of how everything looks to the loved ones of the woman. She writes from their perspective and talks of hope once again.

I recommend this book to any person that has ever had to deal with an eating disorder, as well as to their loved ones. The women that have written their stories in this book are truly courageous, for they have taken but a moment to sit down and write of encouragement, hope, and courage."

– **Kelli G. Deister**. Author of books on domestic violence and abuse. For more information, please go to [www.hopefields.com](http://www.hopefields.com) - a Website Dedicated to Survivors of Domestic Violence

"The courage and strength in each of the poems, stories, musical lyrics and artwork are both heartbreaking and stirring at the same time. By compiling this book of writing, Andrea is offering to those still struggling a ray of light, understanding and, above all, hope, that recovery from an Eating Disorder is possible. Congratulations on such a wonderful resource!"

– **Lori Henry**. Dancer, Actress and Author of "Silent Screams". Publisher and Editor of "Beauty: You Define It" magazine. Freelance Writer in Vancouver, BC, Canada.



You Are Not Alone is available online at  
[www.youarenotalonebook.com/order.html](http://www.youarenotalonebook.com/order.html)

## 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](mailto:andrea@youarenotalonebook.com)

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

### ***What can you submit?***

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

**I’m looking forward to hearing from you! 😊**