

Launching into Recovery

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Much has been accomplished to promote awareness and prevention of eating disorders in recent years, and there is still work to be done in this area. Assuming that prevention efforts have failed, someone in the midst of a full-blown case of anorexia, bulimia or binge-eating disorder needs an idea of what treatment involves. It is tailored to the individual, with nutritional counseling and medical evaluations, while also focusing on emotional and spiritual needs. Therapy may address trauma resolution, assertiveness training, relationship issues, and body image concerns. As clients learn new solutions to life's difficulties, they replace destructive eating patterns with more satisfying coping skills. Self-esteem improves as one recognizes his or her value as a unique and worthwhile individual.

When you're in bondage to an eating disorder, you are blind to the truth that something exists beyond this life you're living. Even when it feels like bondage, at least disordered eating behaviors are predictable and seemingly controllable...and preferable to life's harsh realities. I want clients to know that they need not become complacent, settling for the comfort of their disorder. This tendency is especially true when recovery seems too difficult or even impossible. Together, we must find something that is more important and more appealing than the eating disorder. He or she must discover or re-discover a passion, a talent, a purpose. As clients move away from the imprisonment of the ED, they must move *towards* something. That might mean a career, a relationship, or starting a family. These things cannot co-exist with an active eating disorder.

Desperately clinging to the security of anorexia or bulimia makes it impossible to have truly intimate relationships with others, or to passionately pursue one's dreams and talents. May those in need of recovery find the courage to launch into the treatment process. Dare to move out of your comfort zone into the unfamiliar, and may you be amazed with what life has in store for you!

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