

## Chapter 1

### Getting Started

*“You cannot overcome something  
you have not yet admitted is there.”*

*-Laurie Glass*

Though difficult, it is necessary to admit what is actually going on in our hearts and thus begin the journey that will lead us to freedom. How can we heal from something that we have not yet even recognized? Healing requires that we take an honest look at ourselves: our thoughts, behaviors, attitudes, and false identities. We tend to minimize our self-defeating behaviors, our all-consuming negative thoughts, and our own desperate need for help. However, in breaking through denial and acknowledging an eating disorder, we can begin to try to change the thoughts that underlie our behaviors.

Is it possible for our deepest thoughts and emotions to lie to us? The prophet Jeremiah certainly thought so when, inspired by God, he wrote, *“The heart is deceitful above all things and beyond cure. Who can understand it”* (Jer. 17:9)? Being in denial about a struggle is one way we deceive ourselves. We believe it is not that bad: we are just doing this temporarily; it will not always be this way. Our thoughts even go as far as to believe that when we decide to stop these behaviors in the future, we will be able to do so at will. We may ask ourselves, “What is wrong with wanting to look nice and be fit?” We may think we do not deserve better than the harm we are inflicting on ourselves. Some of us reason that since we are not extremely thin or deathly ill, we do not really have an eating disorder. We may have lived with the eating disorder for so long that we do not realize how much richer our lives might be without it, and perhaps we doubt freedom is even possible. However, we cannot allow any of these thoughts to prevent us from embarking on this journey.

Once we decide to begin the journey, we know that it will be a challenging one. There will be days when we actually may not want to get better. We find comfort in what is familiar to us. Furthermore, we may fear the unknown or be discouraged about the work this journey requires of us. Nevertheless, there may also be many times when we still want freedom, but simply have not yet found our way. It is easy to feel defeated during the discouraging days, but hopeless thoughts only feed the eating disorder. Each day is a new day. Each hour is a new hour. Each minute is a new minute. Choices are always before us. We may choose to continue our journey or give up, to focus on God or focus on ourselves, to take steps forward or take steps backward. We also may or may not choose to learn from the decisions we make in any particular moment. As we travel with the Lord leading the way, we will be strengthened and encouraged during difficult times. Ultimately, He joins with us to declare victory – and we celebrate together.

Paul the Apostle understood our inner struggle. Listen to his words as he pours out his frustration... *“...For I have the desire to do what is good, but I cannot carry it out. For what I do is not the good I want to do; no, the evil I do not want to do – this I keep on doing. What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body of death? Thanks be to God – through Jesus Christ our Lord”* (Rom. 7:18-19, 24-25)! Yes, Paul knew that his actions did not always coincide with his intentions. What a familiar dilemma. Paul, however, looked to God for his strength and we

must do the same. At times, we will struggle because we want to do the right thing but feel unable to implement it. This is normal and need not prevent us from continuing on the journey.

We tend to cling to an eating disorder as if it is our friend. However, a true friend does not lie, deceive, or snatch away another's peace and joy. Unlike a friend, an eating disorder continually demands more of us; it is never satisfied. When we see the eating disorder as the enemy it is, we take a huge step in the journey toward freedom.

*Love from Above* - "You realize that something is not right. You are wise to be concerned. I know that it is difficult to do, but please admit you are struggling. Once you come to terms with what is going on, you can take positive steps to change. I know this will not be easy, but I will walk with you on your journey to freedom."

### *Questions to Ask Yourself*

1. Do I have a difficult time admitting that I have an eating disorder? If so, why?
2. What are some things this eating disorder has taken away from me?
3. Do I believe there is a better life out there waiting for me? In what ways would my life be better without this eating disorder?
4. Will I make a list of things I can do when the challenging times come that will help me to keep focused on attaining the freedom I desire?

### *Personal Message – Dear Friend,*

You have admitted that you have an eating disorder, and you have made an important step by deciding to take this journey. Perhaps you are determined to do whatever it takes to break free, or maybe your desire is more tentative at this point. If you feel hesitant, I would encourage you to at least investigate the remaining chapters. I spent a lot of time feeling defeated and submitting to the eating disorder that consumed me. Those behaviors denied me freedom.

There will likely be days that you will feel as if you are taking one step forward and two steps backward. You can embrace those steps forward and reflect on them during the challenging times. You can learn from the steps backward. Ask yourself what caused them and make a plan to prevent such relapse from happening again. It is vital to identify circumstances that trigger unwanted thoughts and behaviors. Be patient and gentle with yourself. Many steps will make up this journey, but remember: you only have to take one step at a time.

May God bless you,

Laurie

*Prayer* - Dear Heavenly Father,

I thank You for helping me to see that I have a problem and I need to make some changes in my life. I am aware of the fact that this will not be easy and that I will need to depend on You in ways that perhaps I've never done before. I know You will be available to help me understand why I must do what I do not want to do, strengthen me to follow Your plan, and assure me that there is something better waiting for me at the end of the journey. I thank You for all You are about to do.

In Jesus' name. Amen.