

Bulimia: A Journey to Truth

*"I who began a good work in you, will finish it until
completion"*

Philippians 1:6

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Thank you God for not giving up on me even when I have
given up on You.

I dedicate this book to those who have been there with me, on
my journey to truth.

To my friends Marisa and Amy...
Thank you

"Recovery"

What does recovery look like?

Is it a day without failure?

Is it a day without tears?

Is it a day without urges?

Or a day without fears?

To me recovery is the moments I can treasure
To sit in the present and have peace I can't measure
Recovery means to recognize my mistakes
To get back up and go where life takes

Recovery can look different each day
A day without dwelling on compulsions
A day without retreating into isolation
Or allowing food to be all my fixation

Each day I choose to take another step
To seek wellness and heal from all that is broken
One day at a time is what I can manage
One day at a time I make my advantage

INTRODUCTION

Journaling, what's the point? Is this going to make my eating disorder go away? No. I just was reading through old journals from three to four years ago. Most of the things I read were how much misery I had. Obsessions with guys, appearance, my failures, and jealousy. I was consumed by fantasy and desire to be anything but who I was. I was so unhappy I wanted to make those feelings go away. I found the patterns of when I turned to food. How food became my friend and comforted me. Food provided me with pleasure, security, entertainment, friendship, and a sense of control, but this friendship with food I noticed began to betray me. It started to make me fat, the very thing I hated.

I also knew that because I was, (and am) a type one diabetic, when I don't take my insulin I can eat whatever I want and not gain weight but in fact lose weight. It was such a great solution. One that I had turned to over and over again.

I was bingeing and purging, staying home and not going out with friends. My obsession became food. Waking up in the morning not being able to wait to go to Starbucks to get my coffee and pastry. Sometimes sitting in Starbucks for hours drinking coffee and pretending to do homework. This way I could be around food, people, and feel comfort.

My life became my eating disorder. I no longer was Kelie, I was bulimia. Misery consumed my heart. I wanted out but didn't know where to start. I found myself crying out to God. "Please God take it away, I want to wake up in the morning and no longer have to deal with this, God please take this away."

Crying out this prayer has been what has changed my life. This prayer is what has led me on my journey to truth. Even though I wanted God to just take "it" away, and that is how I thought He would answer my prayer, God had a different plan for my life, and I am so thankful that He has been in control of my journey. I am so thankful for where I am today. I am still recovering, but the experiences I have had up to this point are priceless. I would not want to go back to the beginning to start over, but I wouldn't trade it for a life of no trials. Praise be to God forever and ever. I hope that my journey to truth will give hope to you that Yes, there is help, there is hope, and there is a way out of this dark pit that eats away from the life we were truly created to live.

Chapter 1

“Flash Backs”

My Reflection Was Different

Gazing into the mirror, I saw my reflection. Noticing the differences between my own body compared to that of my best friend. Two bulges on my belly and thighs that slightly touched, I looked over at my friend and saw a flat tummy and muscles still defined. Shame was sparked inside of me, in the place right below my heart. I no longer wanted to be naked. I wanted to cover and mask my imperfection. Becoming aware of myself at the age of nine was when I wanted to change my body because of the disgust I then found in it.

The memory of that day is so clear it is like being in front of the same mirror right now. If I could look in that same mirror and it would have revealed to me back then where I am now, in the midst of an eating disorder, I would tell that little girl to love herself. Embrace your differences. Now when emotions like this arise I want to bury them by eating. Bury them with a binge.

Change Who You Are

Sitting at the dinner table my dad turned to me and said “since we will be moving to a new place, this would give you a chance to change who you are. Nobody knows you where we are going. You can become whoever you want to be. Maybe you would have more friends if you would just change.”

The doubt I already had in my mind of to who I was and the struggle with having friends became even more hurtful because now my dad was confirming what I already disliked about myself. I was hearing that my dad didn't even like me since he was telling me I should change.

Cattle Scale

Spying on my sister and her two friends as they jumped on the trampoline I overheard their conversation. They were talking about me, making fun of me, and laughing at my weight. One of the girls was saying "yeah, Kelie, she says she only weighs ###. What kind of scale is she using, because really she would need to use a cattle scale in order to know what she really weighed."

My sister didn't add to the comments, but by her lack of defending me I saw her agreeing and participating in the humiliation. I sat by the open window as anger and hurt welled in my heart. In my mind, this conversation confirmed that yes, people hated me. They would act one way, as if they liked me to my face, but as soon as I would not be around (or they thought I was not around) the teasing, cruel comments were spoken against me. The more incidents I had with my weight and friends, the more I realized that BEING FAT= HAVING NO FRIENDS.

Compare and Contrast

Comments around the lunch table when I was in seventh and eighth grade would revolve around "oh I can't believe she is wearing that." One of my favorite sayings to another person who was wearing a tight little outfit was "there's nothing wrong with a bigger size" and "two words, Weight Watchers" I would pick out other people's body flaws, make fun of them and therefore believed this made me feel better about myself. Comparing and contrasting myself to others was a constant in my mind. If I could only be thinner than her or wow, I'm so much thinner than her. This was the system in which I placed myself worth. The acceptance list for me was what my body type was compared to others, and of course mine had to be better.

“Taco Night”

“You’re a walking whale.” Words that pierced my heart. At that moment, I knew I no longer wanted to be fat anymore. I wanted to be thin and beautiful, but how I saw myself was disgusting, no wonder the boy I was madly in love with didn’t like me. I was fat, chubby, and robust was what I told myself, even though I wasn’t.

I remember that evening at my teacher’s house, I was in the 7th grade. We were having a class party, a party for the kids who went the entire semester without getting into trouble. Tacos were always served at this celebration. Taco eating contests were held each time. I was taking part in this innocent competition. I could only eat about four or five, until I was stuffed. Some of my classmates were able to eat up to ten or more.

After I had finish my tacos, ice cream was then being served. I remember taking some, pilling chocolate, nuts, and whip cream on top, creating the perfect sundae. My sundae and I walked into the living room. “We” entered in on a conversation, then it got quite real fast. I asked, “what, what were you saying?” no one would give me an answer. One of my classmates finally spoke up, he said they were talking about me and how I like this boy, but he didn’t like me back. In fact he really just pretended to be my friend, because when I wasn’t around, he called me a walking whale. Those words gouged my heart and knotted my stomach. My throat began to constrict. I was hurt and devastated. I looked down at my bowl of ice cream and it suddenly was no longer appetizing.

Instead of standing up for myself and realizing that this boy was a jerk, I internalized it. I wanted to become thin. Food made me fat. I hated myself, I was ashamed of myself, and I wanted to be somebody else. I didn’t finish my ice cream and from that moment on I began to hate food because of what it did to my body.

Food became an enemy. Food was a stressor. I began to eat less and less. I began to feel powerful but so empty inside. This memory is my first direct memory of becoming aware of my relationship with my body and food. This was my starting gate.

After the boy who I was madly in love with had called me a walking whale, I began to restrict my food intake. I no longer ate breakfast. Lunch consisted of two baby oranges, and I would eat little for dinner, just enough for my parents to not raise questions.

I spent most of my 7th and 8th grade years stressed about people liking me and wanting to be small. I hated myself so much and I began to think if I were smaller then people would begin to like me because I would no longer be a walking whale.

More and more experience paved a new belief system for me. I believed the smaller I was, the less fun I was made fun of and the more positive attention I would receive from my peers. Seething comments from fellow classmates became less and less as there became less and less of me. Fear came back that if I gained weight then nobody would like me. I must remain small, was my thoughts, and the smaller I am the more people will like me.

By my eighth grade year I had gone from being labeled the “fat girl” who no one wanted to be friends with, to the most popular girl in the class. The acceptance I had craved my entire life was now a reality. I was willing to do anything to stay here at my new social status, and if it meant I had to starve myself to do so, then it was all worth it to me.

Chapter 2

“Welcome to My Eating Disorder”

Some, no most nights, I would turn down offers to hang out with friends so I could stay at home and binge on cereal, bread, Taco Bell, popcorn, hot chocolate, ice cream, chips, and the list goes on. I would raid the kitchen, make any food concoction and eat until my stomach was so full, the pain that my body was in would bring me back to the reality of “I do exist.” Shame of the whole situation, what I had just done would overwhelm me and I would stick, at first, a toothbrush down my throat, then my fingers, and then I got so good at throwing up that I no longer needed to put anything in my throat. I could just bend over and throw up. So many times I’ve looked into that toilet bowl, knowing how disgusting it was. I could see my reflection in the water. My eyes sad, cheeks puffy, and my lips swollen. Around my reflection was mold, filth, leftovers from other people’s business on the white porcelain. None of this could stop me. The overwhelming feeling of “I have to get rid of this” over ruled how disgusting the condition of the toilet may be.

My room and bathroom were sacred eating disorder ground. My territory, no one better enter. I remember one time my garbage being full of vomit, but I didn’t know where or what to do with it. I double bagged it and hid it in my closet for weeks. Always on the back of my mind was, will someone find it? I think a part of me wanted someone to find it. To prove, “see, see how sick and disgusting I really am. See, I do need help.”

The question I want to answer to myself is why do I continue to hold on to my eating disorder? The very thing I hate, that interferes with my life, spend my money on, gets in the way of school, friends, breaks my commitments, keeps me sick, takes my time, kills my soul, is very toxic to my existence, why do I continue to hold on?

Recovery and wellness, seem like just an arm stretch away. It’s right in front of me. I reach for it, I want it. I can, I can’t. I can have it, I can’t have it. Kelie you’ll always be sick, Kelie you’re a survivor. Back and forward the argument goes. I’m tired of being controlled by this eating disorder and everything that comes along with it. Self criticism,

“you’re fat, you’re ugly, you’re a failure, you can’t do anything on your own, you must put others above yourself, but how will you look Kelie” thoughts that go on and on and never stop. The more I feed my eating disorder, the louder the voices become. Instead of purging my body, I want to purge the eating disorder. I deserve better than this. I have places to go, things to do, and people to meet, and I am not taking along a travel buddy called Bulimia.

My eating disorder seems like just the first hurdle. After I jump over this one there is a whole new track of hurdles called “managing my diabetes.” I don’t want to be diabetic, but I am. That’s the fact. I’m trapped. Its not like my eating disorder where I can get over it. I have it, I’m stuck and I don’t want to be here. No matter how much I hate it, no matter how much I don’t want it, it is still there. There is no solution to make it go away. With most problems and situations in life there is a solution on how to get past it, to overcome it. Here there is no solution on how to get past it, the only solution is how to live with it. And I have to ask myself “ am I ready for that?” How to live with something in my life that I don’t want to be there. How to befriend my enemy. I can’t push it away like I do with things in my life that I don’t want to deal with. I’ve pushed my diabetes away over the past 10 years and look at where it has gotten me. I fear my eyesight is going. I have pain in my legs, my lab results are always high, the truth is, my diabetes controls me. The tool I have used most to keep me thin, the friend I’ve had to keep me thin, has left me and I now am dealing with the results of our dysfunctional relationship.

Chapter 3

“Kelie, You’re Diabetic”

Before I had eating disordered behavior, I look back and recognize I had eating disordered thoughts. I remember lying in the bathtub on the morning of my doctors appointment. My weight was 102 pounds. I could feel my tailbone poking into the hard surface of the porcelain tub. Previously, undressing in front of the mirror I saw my hip bones protruding. My ribs in front and back, I was able to count through my skin’s surface. My thighs no longer touched, a gap was between them. From my wrists to my shoulders I could slide my touching fingers from my other hand up and down. The skin around my collar bone was sucked in but as I looked at my tummy, the place where I have always carried my weight, I said “Kelie, you’re fat.”

Lying in that bath tub, cold because I could no longer keep a warm body temperature. I thought about my doctor appointment. I didn’t know what to expect. I just knew something was wrong. I remember hoping that it was diabetes because if it was then I would have to eat healthy, which would help me lose more weight. I would have even more of a reason to not eat.

For me even at that age, I believed that eating food = being fat. If I didn’t eat then I wouldn’t be fat. I wanted to be diabetic, I thought it would help me have a new diet, one that would help me lose weight.

After two hours of waiting at the doctors office, a urine dipstick showed I had the highest level of glucose in my urine. A glucose blood test was ordered and my blood sugar results came back at 1,040. The words “Kelie you’re a diabetic” were spoken to me. My head fell on my mom’s shoulder and I cried for the first and the last time that I was diabetic.

From the doctors office to my home, my mom and I rode in the car, we just watched the road. No tears, no words. When we got home my mom and dad went in the other room while I sat on the couch and listened to their muffled conversation. Thoughts came to my mind of all the accusations over the pasts months of me having an eating disorder and that was why I had lost all the weight came to my mind. My dad wrapping his fingers around

my upper arms telling me I looked like I was in a concentration camp, that I looked like a walking corpse were the thoughts that kept coming to my mind. I was yelling inside because I knew when they made these accusations I didn't have an eating disorder.

As I heard my parents talking in the next room, I began to realize that now I had their attention, and now that I was sick they wanted to help me, not attack me. Now that I was sick, I had the best defense mechanism. I thought that now I have their attention meant that I now had their love.

My parents stopped talking and my dad came in and sat by me to talk. I didn't want him this close to me, for we had never been close before. Thoughts of I hate you mixed with I need you, will you love me now? Raced through my mind. My dad began to formulate a plan on how treatment was going to work. About how we will just deal with this and everything will be okay, life will now go on. I believed him. The day I was diagnosed, I grieved, got over it, and dove straight into action.

Two weeks later was my 15th birthday. For my birthday present I got to attend diabetes education classes with a bunch of old overweight type 2 Diabetics. People who's lifestyles had made them that way. I remember thinking its not fair. I had no choice to become diabetic, everyone else here has eaten their way into their diabetes. In some way I remember thinking they deserved to be diabetic, just as they had caused themselves to be diabetic they could choose to become well too. With the right diet and nutrition they would no longer be diabetic, but this was not the case with me. I did nothing to deserve this. I was just a child who got dealt a rotten hand, but oh well, I just had to get over it.

Three days of eight hour classes were what I had to attend. My mind was so foggy from the new diagnosis and I was trying hard to bury any emotions that were trying to surface, that I just couldn't focus on what was going on. What I remember most over those three days was my meal plan. I met with a nutritionist who wanted to know everything I would eat in a day. I remember thinking "what, how am I supposed to remember that?" Everyday I would eat something different or different portions. I would eat at different times, sometimes I would eat, sometimes I wouldn't. So when she asked me this question, I didn't know how to answer. I did the best I could. She mapped out an eating schedule and portions in which I was allotted to eat. This was fine and seemed okay until my first lunch time experience came.

All of us clients lined up in lunch line where we were to make a sandwich and add fruits, chips, and other varieties of food. This is when I had my first lesson in carbohydrate counting. Food was now a points system. I went through line made my sandwich and ate it, but I was still hungry so I stood up and went to get more food. My mom ran over and grabbed me by the arm and asked “Kelie, what are you doing? You can’t have any more food, you ate what you are allotted.” I remember thinking “but I’m still hungry, now that I’m diabetic I have to starve?” Tears welled up in my eyes and I began to cry. I felt I no longer had the freedom to feed myself and was now under the control of a piece of paper that said I could only have this many carbohydrates then I’m done, no more, no less. It seemed everyone became focused on what was on my plate and what I was putting in my mouth. I began to think that maybe I didn’t really want this whole diabetes thing anymore.

Four days after my diagnosis I experience my first low blood sugar. I didn’t know what it was. The educators had explained what the symptoms were, but to actually experience it was a completely different thing. It started with sweating, then my heart began to beat rapidly, my head became cloudy, and I began to shake. Fortunately I was in my diabetes education class, my instructor noticed I didn’t look right and suggested I test my blood sugar. Sure enough it was low. This is when I learned that having low blood sugar meant that it was okay to have candy. I tucked that useful information away in my memory and used it for future reference. When I wanted candy I would just say “oh, my blood sugar is low.” It worked well. Statements weren’t made of “you should not be eating that” in fact if I said my blood sugar was low, people would offer me candy. It was great. A little mini Halloween. People would pull out candy bar stashes from their purses and practically shove them down my throat. Yes, whenever I wanted candy, all I had to say was: “my blood sugar is low.”

I began to see the perks of having diabetes. I got to be out of school for two months. This was great because I hated school. I got to stay at home, sleep in, and be treated like royalty. My parents now did anything and everything for me. Wow! I was so loved now. My diabetes served me in a way of getting attention from my parents and I also defended me from having any responsibility or from being in trouble. I could do no wrong, now that I was sick.

Chapter 4

“Weight and Diabetes”

While I was at home getting better, my mom wanted to read a book to me about teenagers who had diabetes and how they dealt with it. I suppose that is had a lot of good information, but the only thing I remember from that entire book was the story of a girl who had Type 1 Diabetes. Her prom was coming up and she wanted to loose just 10 lbs to fit into her prom dress. By taking less insulin she could loose that weight in less then a week. “What?” I thought “hummm.... Re-read that. I can loose weight by not taking my insulin. Ohh... I would never do that.” But that information stuck in my mind.

I continued to get well by taking my insulin and testing my blood sugars. With the insulin I was taking to compensate for my food intake, I noticed that I gained weight. My size 0 went to a size 2, and my size 2 went to a size 5, my size 5 went to an 8, and my 8’s went to 10’s. I began to get scared for I remembered what it was like to be the fat child and I didn’t want to go back to that place. I was getting ready to go the boarding school for my junior year and there was no way I as going to attend as the “fat girl.”

The memory of the girl and the prom who took low doses of insulin surfaced in my mind. That was my answer. I decided in the last few weeks of my summer vacation I would take less insulin to loose weight for school, and it worked. My size 10’s went down to an 8, my 8’s went down to 6’s. I was amazed how easy it worked. I didn’t have to diet, I could eat whatever I wanted and loose weight. Yes, diabetes was my friend again.

I started my junior year at boarding school in my cute new wardrobe of Gap, Old Navy, Banana Republic, and Calvin Klein. My clothes were cute, I was smaller (although not small enough in my mind). “Yes, I look good on the outside and people are going to like me“ was what I thought and became true. I was immediately accepted into the popular group. The cool people at school. This was an achievement for me to be there, someplace I had desired to be all my life.

Not long after attaining this great achievement I began to notice it was all superficial. No one really valued each other, it was all about who looked the best, who was

the funniest, who could eat the least and leave the most on their plates. It was about who had the most expensive clothes, the best car, or the newest toys. I learned it took competition to be there and if I wanted to stay, I better get serious about how I looked.

During the first part of my school year my weight actually had climbed. I turned to food for comfort, entertainment, to relieve stress, and anything else, but now this food was becoming a part of me. My clothes got tighter and I hated the way I looked. I decided to take this whole insulin thing more seriously. Over spring break I decided to cut way back on my insulin so that I could return at the end of the week with less of me.

It worked. I lost 15 pounds over spring break and what I told myself would just be one week, turned into now over ten years.

From spring break to the end of the year I continued to lose more and more weight. I had a life guarding job coming up during the summer and I wanted to look good in a swim suite.

Friends began to comment on how great I was looking, which encouraged me to continue to lose weight. The more I lost the better I felt.

I never tested my blood sugar and I took the least amount of insulin possible to just function. My grades began to plummet and I rarely went to class. The down fall of not taking my insulin meant that I was tired all the time. I always wanted to sleep. I never had any energy, and it was annoying to me that I was always thirsty and had to pee all the time. My hair began falling out in clumps. Every time I would take a shower and wash my hair I would pull out more clumps and then brushing it would take more clumps. Over the summer, I went from having a full thick head of hair that people always told me how beautiful it was, to having thin, stringy, brittle hair. This wasn't enough to stop me. Being skinny was my priority. I was now down to a size 3. I loved to go shopping because it was rewarding to not only be skinny, but I got to decorate my skinny body with really cute clothes. I remember when I could finally shop in the little girls section at GAP. I was proud of myself.

The next year, my senior year, I didn't want to return to boarding school, so with a lot of convincing my parents allowed me to go to public school for the very first time.

My dream had come true, to go to school with "normal" kids. I believed this was going to solve my problems and the feelings of something missing in my life would go

away. Yes, going to public school was the answer.

As you can guess it wasn't. I fell deeper and deeper into my insulin manipulation. I was now down to a size 1. I skipped my classes, was barely passing (I almost didn't graduate) and I had no energy. The only thing I was good at was being thin, and that's all I cared about. I could eat anything I wanted, in fact I ate all the time, the more I ate the more weight I would lose. I would eat all day long, doughnuts, candy bars, and burgers. I would drink sports drinks, soda, juice, and coffee.

Toward the end of my senior year I was hospitalized for the first time ever. It started out that day with a really bad stomach ache. I thought it was from eating too many doughnuts and drinking coffee on an empty stomach.

My stomach ache continued all day and when I finally got home that afternoon I began to vomit. I continued to vomit all night long. In the morning we called my doctor and he said to take me to the hospital because it may be diabetic ketoacidosis. Sure enough he was right. I was amazed of what a night of IV treatment and bringing my blood sugars down in the hospital can do for a person. I felt so much better. After a short lecture on the dangers of diabetic ketoacidosis, they released me the next day. I was scared a little, but staying thin was still more important to me.

Over the next year and a half, I continued with the same patterns. My glycohemoglobin A1C's climbed from 7 to 12 to 14, and my highest as 18. I knew that the higher my blood sugar was, the more weight stayed off.

My endocrinologist never made any accusations, just suggestions of I may be insulin resistant. I think a few times he tried to question if I was insulin manipulating but I always denied it. I made up blood sugar charts. I was really good at making false patterns to explain why my blood sugars were so high. I played stupid and pretended I just didn't understand. My doctor would give me a treatment plan. I would agree to it in his office and then go home to disregard everything he said. I shut people out of my life and out of my diabetes. If they asked what my blood sugar was or how I was doing I would reply with a number that sounded good, and everything was fine. I just wanted everyone off my back and to leave me alone.

It took me awhile, but I was finally getting to the place where I was tired of being tired all the time, and I wanted a change. I wanted my life back. The suggestion was made

to me that I should try an insulin pump. I thought it sounded like a great idea and since I was leaving for college in a few short months I thought going on the pump would be the answer that I was looking for.

My doctor agreed the pump was a great idea and so I proceeded with insulin pump therapy. It did work, in just a week my blood sugars were coming down to normal, in the range they were supposed to be. A few weeks later I moved out into my own apartment two hours away from home and started college.

Chapter 5

“The Cost of Thinness”

Just a few weeks after my move to college I noticed I had a lot of pain in my legs. I thought that this was due to the fact I had been exercising a lot. You see going on the pump and bringing my blood sugars down had caused weight gain again. I didn't want to get fat, so I began to exercise compulsively so I would not gain weight. The pain in my legs wouldn't go away, it was only getting worse. I decided to go home and visit my doctor. He prescribed me Vicoden for the pain and sent me back to school. At first the Vicoden worked but then the pain became more intense and it was moving from my feet all the way up my spine and into the back of my head. I started taking two Vicoden every two hours but it no longer touched the pain. I called my parents to come and get me because I could no longer go to class, much less leave my apartment because the pain was too much. I went home and went from doctor to doctor trying to figure out what was wrong. I had a few different diagnoses but it wasn't until I went back to my endocrinologist and he gave me the proper diagnosis. He said that my body was going through nerve healing. All the damage that had been done over the years from having such high blood sugars was now being healed. He said it was going to take at least six months before the pain would subside.

He was right. Over the next six months I went through what I can best describe as HELL. I was on 23 different prescription medications, in and out of the hospital, my stomach stopped working and I didn't know if I was going to make it. I couldn't believe I had done this to myself and I began to feel guilty.

Eventually the six months were over and I did recover. I made it, I survived and now I wanted to go back to life. I wanted to return to school and be with my friends. I felt robbed from six months of my life.

I made plans to return to college in the Fall and live with one of my best friends.

When summer came we went house hunting and found a house we both liked. I moved back to school in August. Returning to classes having a job and having my life

back. I was on the pump and for a while taking care and managing my diabetes.

As the school year continued my weight began to climb again. I became frustrated because to me every time my diabetes was in check, I gained weight. I made the correlation that in range blood sugars meant I would be fat. As my clothes began to get tighter, I began to hate myself more and more and spiral downward in frustration of my weight gain. I made the decision to turn down my pump and not give myself any insulin at meals. What I knew in the past was that less insulin equaled weight loss.

Sure enough I began to drop those unwanted pounds fast, but this time it was different. My joy in life had left me and I found myself eating all the time. I found joy in eating. Food became my friend, my comfort, my stress reliever, my way of not to feel. I no longer wanted to go out with my friends, I just wanted to stay home and comfort myself with food. I would focus on my next meal, what I was going to eat, when I was going to eat, what I ate, how much insulin I didn't take, when I was going to exercise and not only did I measure this in myself, I looked to see what others were eating, what they weighed, and how much they exercised. I constantly compared myself to what other looked like and how they behaved, thinking that if only I could be like them, then I would be normal.

Not long after I began my nightly binges I began to notice that the more I ate, the higher my blood sugars would rise, which would make me nauseas from ketones building in my blood system, and this would make me vomit. I would feel much better after I vomited because my stomach would no longer be stretch to maximum capacity. I felt relief. This new method of getting rid of food was such a great solution. I didn't have to sit uncomfortable for hours waiting for all the food to digest.

As I leaned over the toilet throwing up, it finally clicked in my head that I no longer needed to wait for my blood sugars to get so high to vomit, I could just make myself do it. At that point bulimia became my new friend, and with two great friends of insulin manipulation and bulimia I had finally found the perfect diet.

Chapter 6

“A Fine Line Between Denial and Acceptance”

Recovery. What does that mean? I'm sitting in IHOP right now getting ready to order breakfast. I've already had a banana, large bowl of cereal, an apple, two slices of toast with jam, and a peanut butter sandwich. Now I just ordered a large Belgium waffle with strawberries and whip cream. Recovery? Doesn't that mean that I'm supposed to stop the eating disordered behaviors?

I'd finally gotten to the place in my life where I no longer wanted an eating disorder, I just wanted it to go away. At night I would kneel on my hands and knees praying God! Please take it away. I just want to wake up in the morning and it will be gone. Please God, I don't want to go through this anymore.

I was now living in California at my grandparents house along with my mom and dad. I thought that by moving home my problems would just go away. That if I were back home I would no longer binge and purge and my feelings of self worthlessness would go away. I believed that mom and dad could and would make everything in my life okay again. I believed that they could fix me and make me better.

The harder I prayed that it would just go away, I began to realize that no it wasn't going to. God was telling me that I had to step out of this darkness and tell someone what was going on, and it had to start with my parents. I told God you're crazy, they are the last people I could tell. The shame, sadness, and darkness gnawed on my heart each and every night.

I didn't believe I was ready to tell my mom and dad. I had been denying their questions of “are you vomiting at night.” My grandparents bathroom was wall to wall with mine and at night I was unaware that they could hear me purging into the toilet. Every time I was questioned if this was going on, I denied it.

Now I had to admit that I was not only a liar, but yes I had an eating disorder. The

more I thought about wanting to get over “it“, the more I knew that yes, I did have to tell my parents. How was I going to do this? I knew trying to tell them face to face would be too difficult. I didn’t think I could get the words out so I decided to write them in a letter. I remember sitting in bed at midnight one night writing them a letter. I wrote everything, I revealed all that had been going on, from the insulin manipulation starting in the 11th grade, to the beginning of my bulimia while away at college. I apologized for lying and pleaded for help. I no longer want this in my life. Please help me!

After I finished my letter I went and taped it to their bathroom mirror, it was 4am. I knew my dad usually got up at this time, so I stood in the hallway, waiting for the light switch to come on, waiting for my secret to be out.

Recovery: Remember the binge I just told you I was on at IHOP. I just went into the restroom and purged it up. I become so frustrated because I don't want this in my life, yet I hold onto it, afraid to let it go. It is been part of me for so long. I don't remember what its like to be well.

Chapter 7

“True Friends”

Since moving to California, I began going to the church I had had grown up in until the age of 10, then my family moved to Washington State. I began making such awesome friends. Friends that just one year previously, I would have never given the time of day. I had such high qualifications on people in order for them to be friends with me. They had to first be popular, good looking, funny, cool, have money, have lots of friends, and just all around look good. There were the values I had on having friendships. Popularity was most important because if my friends looked good, it meant that I looked good. It was always about me.

These new friends I was getting to know at church were different from who I would normally hang out with, but at the same time they extended a type of friendship I had never know before. They truly wanted to know me, hang out with me, just because I was me, and I liked this.

I still believed that I had to act a certain way, do certain things, and be just like them in order for them to like me though. Even though I loved hanging out with them I always wore my “happy face.” The one that says “Oh, I’m perfect, everything is okay, nothings ever wrong with me, and I would never do anything to make you not like me.”

We all would go on mountain bike rides together, go hiking, hang out at people’s houses, and we just had fun being with one another. I began to love them.

Still after hanging out all day and having a great time, having a part of Kelie come alive that had been buried for so long, I would still return home at night and binge and purge. I would go from having a great day, not thinking about eating disordered behavior, to coming home where it awaited me, and I always gave in.

I believed in someway that I just wanted to pretend it didn’t exist, and that it would still go away on its own. I thought that if I acted happy enough, if I made myself busy enough, if I stopped thinking about it, then it would go away. But it didn’t, the cycle continued and trying to act the part of everything in my life is just great got harder and

harder to keep up. I would be with my friends and just space out, tears were always welding up in my eyes and smiling was now such a difficult task. Pretending was becoming more and more of a challenge.

Chapter 8

“The Contract”

Morning finally came and I knew that my dad had gotten the letter. As I got ready for church the anticipation of talking to my parents about it was very high. How were they going to react, what were they going to do. Fortunately my dad taught a Sabbath school class so he had to leave before he thought that I was awake, but my mom decided to stay behind so that she could ride with me to church. Oh the dreaded car ride.

Mom and I got in my car and we drove to church, about half way there is when she finally spoke up saying, Kelie, we got your letter last night. Silence. I let her do most of the talking and I just listened. I knew that as soon as we got to church we, mom, dad, and I were going to have a little family meeting and that is what happened.

We sat in one of the church rooms and my dad told me how concerned they were, but sure enough they did know that it had been going on for quite a while, but since I always denied it, they didn't know how to help me. I listened and was surprised that my parents were not mad, but they wanted to help. Immediately a plan of action went into place. My dad's solution was, well just stop. Start testing your blood sugars and just stop binge and purging. It's that simple.

Since I believed my parents knew everything and they had always been right in the past, I truly believed my dad when he said that I could just stop. So I did.

This lasted for about one day. I tested my blood sugars and didn't purge the entire day. “Wow,” I thought, “I am better.” It was so simple, dad was right. Unfortunately, the next day my eating disorder was back and now even more shame had come. I didn't want to let my parents down for they had so much faith in me. So I hide it, I was more secretive, more careful, and told more lies, not only to myself but to everyone else. I told myself that I could stop at anytime if I really wanted to and I brought “back the happy face.” Yes, everything was going to be just fine.

Four weeks later I got home late from work. I was greeted by my parents, with the “we need to talk” faces. I could feel the tension in the room. I could feel that something

was wrong, I knew something was going to come out, and the last thing that I expected was that they knew I was still partaking in my eating disorder.

This time their concern was not so gentle. I believe from my parents own fear of losing their daughter that they reacted in the way that they did. You see, when my dad was 17 years old, his dad died in his arms after church on the lawn. His dad had also been a type 1 diabetic since the age of 7, and over my dad's years of childhood and early teenager years, he had to watch his own father be eaten away by this terrible disease, so to believe that he was going to have to watch his own daughter suffer the same way scared him, and he was willing to do anything to stop it. Unfortunately, the way he reacted was the last thing I needed. My dad wrote out a contract that I have included here as follows:

THE CONTRACT

This contract is written for the benefit of Kelie Gardner and for the peace of mind of her parents, Tom and Alaine Gardner:

Kelie acknowledges the fact that she is diabetic. In order to have good health, she must test her blood on a regular basis and take the proper amount of insulin proportional to her food intake. Along with other good health habits and practices, this is the minimum she must do.

Kelie also acknowledges that she has not been doing the minimum that a diabetic must do in order to have good health. Instead, she has been overeating to the point of gorging herself and then vomiting to obtain relief. In addition, she has been maintaining high blood sugar levels as a method of weight control.

Her Parents see this lifestyle as extremely detrimental that will eventually end in disaster. However, they are limited as to what they can do to change the natural result of such behavior. They obviously will do what they can to help, but the change in lifestyle must come from Kelie.

Because Kelie's parents do not want to see their daughter self-destruct, they are not willing to let her continue this behavior in the same household.

Therefore, under the terms of this contract, Kelie agrees to the following:

1. She will test her blood on a regular basis in order to maintain blood sugar levels in the range prescribed by Dr. Treece. This must

be done at least three times per day.

2. She will not maintain high blood sugar levels as a method of weight control.
3. She will not vomit in order to obtain relief from overeating.
4. She will seek professional advice, if needed, in order to do these three requirements.
5. Her parents agree to support her in her efforts to follow these requirements.

Kelie's parents want more than anything for their daughter to live a happy and healthy life, and succeed in what she intends to do in life. At present, however, she is living a harmful life and this behavior must not continue.

If Kelie fails to follow the terms of this contract as stated, she agrees to move out so her parents do not witness her demise.

These terms are non-negotiable.

I agree to these terms:

_____ Date: _____

Kelie Gardner

_____ Date: _____

Tom Gardner

_____ Date: _____

Alaine Gardner

When I read this contract and saw that my dad was the only one who had signed it, I felt betrayed. What did they mean, that if I didn't stop having my eating disorder, I could no longer live with them. This isn't what families do to one another, families stay together. Especially my family, we love each other, we're a Christian family and we stay together no matter what.

Something inside of me spoke up, and for the first time I stood up to my dad. I looked at that contract and I said no, I will not sign that. If I sign that contract that means that I will just try harder to hide it from you, meaning that I will continue to lie and second of all, if I sign that contract, that means that I will be getting well for you, and I don't need to get well for you, I need to get well for me.

My mom did not say much, she tried to make suggestions for other solutions. She brought in the idea of seeing a counselor. My dad quickly dismissed that idea thinking that

I didn't need to see a counselors, I just needed to stop and he was either going to fix it or just make it stop himself. I left their room that night confused, hurt, angry, and not know what to do. I felt betrayed and didn't understand why my family was acting like this, but at the same time I was proud that I stood up for myself and knew that the only way that I was going to get well was if I wanted it for myself. That I had to want it for myself and nobody else. I couldn't want to do it for my mom or dad, for friends, or anyone, just myself.

Chapter 9

“Counseling”

“Kelie, God loves you just because you exist.” These were the words that my counselor Erma spoke to me. In my mind I was thinking yes, but I have to do something thing, I have to act a certain way, I have to clean up my life, I have to be perfect in order for God to love me. How could God love me just because I exist?

One of the first miracles (although there are so many that I am not even aware of) that I can remember on this journey of healing is walking into Erma’s office. I didn’t know what to expect, going to a therapist. I was at such a low place in my life and desperate for change. I was so vulnerable that I would listed to anything the counselor told me to do. I didn’t trust myself anymore, I didn’t know what was truth anymore and I was willing to do anything she told me.

God knew this about me. I believe that God led me to Erma. I started going to a therapy center which is a place for interns do their internship before they start their own practice. I live in an area where God is not a popular person to know or to talk about and this place where I was going was not a Christian organization. I didn’t know what to expect, and at the same time I was just like tell me what to do, and I’ll do it. In my first few sessions of therapy I talked about what had been going on in my life, events leading up to having an eating disorder, and most of all my faith in God. Not after many sessions did Erma reveal to me that she too was a Christian, and not only a Christian, she also had her Masters in Divinity and was now working on obtaining her Marriage and Family therapy license. Erma also at one point in time had had an eating disorder herself. Since this center was a community center, the topic of Christianity was not a welcome subject and discussing our faith would not be appropriate.

I knew that the only way to heal from what I was going through would only be through the power of God. It wasn’t too long before I realized that this was not just an eating disorder, this was truly a spiritual battle.

At one point in my recovery process I found a book called “Mercy for Eating

Disorders.” This was the first book I had read that made sense to me about the truth of eating disorders. I had read all the psychological books on the facts, signs, and symptoms that caused eating disorders, but this book started with several girls personal testimonies. Sharing their thoughts and feelings of where their eating disorders may have come from.

Finally my eating disorder started to make sense. I understood what these girls were saying. I connected to their emotions and thought patterns and I began to have clarity. It just wasn't me who had these same thoughts.

Mercy Ministries provides an eating disorder treatment program that offers healing through the promise of Christ's healing the dark hole that eating disorders create. I applied for the program and sent in my application. Then I forgot about it.

A few months later as I still rode the roller coaster of my eating disorder, I began to see Nancy Alchorn, who is the founder of Mercy, everywhere. In magazines, on TV, and at a music concert I attended. It was like God was telling me “Kelie, make a decision about your recovery. I didn't end up going to Mercy, but it was still an important part of my journey.

The more friends I shared my struggle with the more I realized that people didn't turn away from me, in fact they supported me and loved me. They understood the pain I was going through. One of my closest friends Marisa, who was the first person after my parents, who I told I had an eating disorder extended such unconditional love and support. The more I shared with her the closer we became. As I started to become real with people, stripping off the happy face, and just being who I truly was helped me discover and become more comfortable with who I was.

One night I was over at Marisa's house and I was having a really hard time. I was discouraged thinking that I'm never going to get better. I was still angry with God, not understanding why He still was not healing me. I was doing all the right things and still I had this eating disorder. I told Marisa how I just didn't want to deal with it all anymore. I just wanted to get in my car and drive away. I didn't know where I would go all I knew as that I wanted to run, run away from it all. I couldn't take it anymore, I was done. Marisa listened to me and then she looked right at me as said, “Kelie, Satan is trying to kill you. He is not happy that you are giving your life to God.” Marisa and I prayed together and I left that night reassured that God was on my side and He was carrying me down the

pathway of healing. Even when I didn't feel His presence or believe He was there, the truth was and is, that He is always right beside me.

Chapter 10

“Rainbow in the Sky”

I walked along the trail. Each step my heart grew more heavy. “Where are you God?” I questioned. Doubts began to fill in my mind as to if God even cared about me anymore. I sat down by the pond and looked up into the sky. I prayed “God, please show me a rainbow in the sky, let me know that you care about me, let me know that everything is going to be alright. Please, just let me know that You are there.” I looked up into the sky. It was a cloudy drizzly day, I was giving God an advantage, “it would be easy to show a rainbow today,” I thought to myself.

I sat there staring into the sky for 15 minutes. Praying and pleading. I just needed to know that God loved me.

No rainbow came. I sat up and walked back to my car, wondering why God hadn’t shown me a rainbow, but still believing in my heart that He did care about me.

Two days later I was on another hike, this time I stopped at a park bench overlooking my hometown of Petaluma, CA. It was yet again another rainy day. I still felt hopeless and sad inside, so I prayed once again. “God please show me a rainbow. Please let me know that You are thinking about me, that everything is going to be okay.”

Again, I looked up into the sky, searching and searching for my rainbow. For thirty minutes I sat there, praying, pleading “God Please!”

I realized I wasn’t going to see my rainbow so I started my trip home. Not understanding why, but knowing God was there and He had His own reasons for not showing me my rainbow.

Arriving back home I went and sat at my computer. I began checking my email and saw a message from one of my really good friends who used to be my youth pastor. I read through his email, updated on life and plans for the future. He signed his name, Tyler, and then right there in his P.S. closing statement read this:

“Kelie, God may never show you a rainbow in the sky, but what He wants from you is your motives, then you can be the best God glorifying, people serving, phlebotomist,

pastor... that you want to be.”

I sat there reading this in amazement. You see, I never told Tyler anything about praying for a rain bow, I never told anyone.

God gave me my rainbow, it was just in the form of an email, and it came with great words of wisdom.

Sometimes I question “what are my motives?” When I focus on what I can gain out of a situation, or how I can receive praise, this takes away from the true glory that belongs to God.

As I said from the beginning, my story isn’t about my failure, but about the deliverance God has brought me. This is His glory, not mine. If it were mine, this book would be full of pages that had no hope, no value, and full of self-pity.

As I continued to seek healing my bulimia and insulin manipulation remained the same. The expectations that I was placing on myself kept failing. I was nothing but a failure and I’m never going to get well. I’ll just try harder I told myself. I’ll make myself more busy, I’ll get more involved in church, I’ll make myself good, that way I won’t have time for eating disorder behavior and since I am doing God’s work, then He has to heal me. So I did. I worked more, took more classes at school, got more involved in church and filled every part of my life up so there was no room for this eating disorder in my life.

Chapter 11

“A New Realization”

I was getting ready for church. I went into the kitchen for breakfast. I had a bowl of oatmeal, then another, and another. I continued to eat and eat, the binge was in full effect, I couldn't stop myself. My stomach was bursting and as I walked hunched over to the bathroom in pain from having so much food in my stomach, I peered into the toilet bowl in my reflection, I saw my blood shot eyes, my hair a mess, my swollen cheeks. I looked at the dirty water, the mold, and previous vomit stuck to the sides of the porcelain walls. I began to gag myself. I was very good, my skills were great, just a few gags and the gates of purging began. I heaved all that I had consumed back up. Relief was what I felt, the more I purged, the better I felt. When I was done, shame overcame me. Thoughts of how can I go to church today, I am nothing, I am disgusting. All I do is gorge and vomit. I pretend that everything in my life is great. I'm a liar. I'm no good.

I crawled from my bathroom floor back over to my bed. I pulled the covers over my head and laid there not wanting to face the world. It was then I heard a voice say “Kelie, get up. Get up and go to church.” I said no, I can't. Then I heard it again “Kelie get up, get up and go to church. You cannot continue to lie there and wallow in your self pity, you must pick up your mat and walk, you must keep moving forward if you are ever going to get well. If you continue to focus on what you have done you will never get well, you must choose to pick up your mat and walk toward healing, Kelie, go to church.” The voice had such conviction that I did get up, I got dressed and went to church.

I walked into church that Sabbath day. It was a special Sabbath, a day of communion. I was able to wash someone's feet and they washed mine, all in forgiveness of sin. We prayed and took part in breaking bread and drinking the wine (representing the blood of Jesus). God knew that I needed to be there that day. He reminded me that He loves me no matter what, and He forgives me. God also revealed to me that when I hurt, He hurts. When I am crying, He is crying right there beside me. God doesn't want to see me sick, He want to see me well, but I had to choose to walk toward wellness, and not wallow

in my shame.

I began to see that God was changing my life and I continually asked Him to do so. At the age of 12 I had been baptized because my friends had done so. I did it because that was just what 12 year olds did. I did it out of a tradition. Now at the age of 23 I realized what baptism truly meant. I realized that to be baptized by emersion that I was making a commit to God that yes, I am a sinner and Yes, I accept that you have sent your son who died to save me from my sins. I want to make a public statement saying that “You are Lord of my life and IT IS FINISHED,” the words that Jesus said as He died on the cross. I recognized that yes I am a sinner but I want to commit my life to God and being baptized was the commitment I wanted to make. I believe that in being baptized we receive the Holy Spirit. I believed the lie that I had to clean myself up before I could come to Jesus for too long.

I sat at Aroma’s Coffee shop thinking about my baptism and also preparing to give my testimony for Youth Church afterward. I prayed to God, “what do you want me to share.” My life is yuck, I am filth. That is why I am coming to you, because you have taken all my shame and all my sin and still have loved me. This is all about You God, I just want to serve you.

God spoke to my heart and reminded me of the morning of my binge before church. I was reminded of Him calling me to get up and walk, to talk up my mat and keep walking to Him. I then felt led to turn in my Bible to John chapter 5, and this is what I found, and this is what I wrote and shared:

John 5:1-14 THE HEALING AT THE POOL

Question I ask: is healing a choice?

When I read this story I think of myself as the man who laid by the pool, waiting to be healed. Many times I depend on others to encourage me or opposite, I allow them to discourage me to the point of giving up, I then find myself back in a binge where I shut down, hide, and comfort myself with food.

I keep waiting and waiting to be healed. My hopes are that I’ll one day no longer even have the desire to binge and throw up.

Looking at the man in the story I see the he waited by this pool for years, making excuses for why he couldn't be healed. Other people were always getting there first, no one was focusing on just him to help him become healed. I imagine he looked at that water longingly, fantasizing, on how, if only I could get in that water, all my troubles would be gone, everything would be just great in my life.

I see myself looking at, if only I were well, if only I were no longer bulimic, everything would be okay, my life would be just right. I spend a lot of time focusing on the if only, instead of who I am right now.

The story then turns to Jesus is walking by and sees the man sitting by this pool, Jesus learns of this man's condition and then asks him "Do you want to get well?"

I stop here in the story and place myself again asking what excesses am I making that aren't allowing Jesus to heal me? I think of days when I go without throwing up, but still am focusing on myself by having lingering thoughts of becoming fat. I refocus on my diabetes and how poorly I take care of it. I think about all my failures in life, dreaming about who I want to be then seeing who I really am (or who I think I am as a failure) and I give up on myself, returning to the dark pit here I can wallow in my self-petty for disappointing myself. Sometimes I wait there until someone encourages me to get back up and try again or I finally realize that being in the wallowing hole doesn't do any good. I spend time focusing on what I have done and punish myself for it, instead of who I am and who I can be and go for it.

Returning to the story, Jesus says to the man: "Get up! Pick up your mat and walk." At once the man was cured, he picked up his mat and walked!

Wow! Amazing, this man's healing was as simple as picking up his mat and walking. He believed in what Jesus told him to do. The man didn't lie there and make excuses for why he couldn't pick up his mat and walk, he just simply said "Okay, Jesus, I will."

I am already healed, I am already forgiven. Now I just need to pick up my mat and walk! Keep moving forward, keep running to Jesus, no turning back, no turning back.

* Luke 9:62 says: "No one who puts his hand to the plow and looks back, is fit for the service in the kingdom of God"

* Ellen White wrote in Steps to Christ that "what ever we do not overcome, will overcome us, and lead to our demise."

My heart cries out to follow Jesus and at the same time I see myself as Lot's wife who turned back to look at her home and all her belongings, in doing so she turned into a pillar of salt.

If I keep looking back at my former life, I will continue to fail, but if I look upward to Jesus Christ and see Him lifted high on the cross and remember He died for me, I will keep moving forward.

To answer my question: "Is healing a choice" I believe the answer is yes, I must choose to pick up my mat and walk. Jesus has already won, He already has victory. When Jesus was hanging on the cross, just before He died, He said "IT IS FINISHED" I believe that when turning away from sin, it has to be a complete 180, for when I even look back for a glance I find myself running back to my sinful nature. I look at the sentence where Jesus says "See, you are well again" and I am so thankful for those "agains," again and again Jesus forgives me. I choose to pick up my mat and continue to keep walking toward Jesus. Amen!

God began to reveal many truths about His love for me through His Bible. I remember being at a Christian women's retreat. I was so touched by many of the talks that had been given over the course of the weekend. On Sunday, the day we were to leave I took a walk. I needed some time to think, time to talk to God and lay what was on my heart. I found a clearing in the woods and I sat down on a tree stump. I cried out "God I need to hear your voice! I need you to speak to me audibly, I need to know that you do exist and that you can hear me!" I sat there and I heard a voice in my heart say, "my child, I do speak to you, I speak to you through my Word, pick it up and read it. Stop trying to pave your own pathway to me. I have already paved the way. Pick up my Bible and read it." I walked back to camp knowing what was spoken to me was true.

Chapter 12

“True Beauty”

“Beauty in a woman does not come from the way she adorns her body or fixes her hair, or from the gold jewelry or fine clothes she wears. Real beauty in a woman comes from within, that enduring charm of a gentle, tender spirit which in God’s sight is priceless.”

1 Peter 3: 3-4 Clear Word version

I began to see that it was not the way that I looked that made me beautiful. It never did, and it never will. I began to see that it was and always is God who makes me beautiful. The more I realized it was what was on the inside me that became attractive, the more I wanted God to come in and purify me, to change me. I no longer wanted things done my way. I wanted God to come into my heart and shine in all the darkness, breaking it all up. I wanted His light to shine through me.

I began to read and study my Bible more. God continued (and still continues) to reveal so much truth to me. I began to recognize what life was truly about.

“The harvest is great, but the laborers are so few”

-Matthew 9:37 Clear Word version

I read this text and my heart cried out “I want to be your worker God” I want to help prepare your kingdom. Please choose me to be a worker for you. I contacted our Churches Youth Pastor and asked Tracy, “what can I do to help out in this church” okay that is not a question you want to ask your pastor if you are really not ready to get involved. Immediately he started listing off so many of the things in the church that needed help with. So many ministries. Nothing seemed to fit just right, until he mentioned the youth. There was much male leadership, but no female leadership. With my experience of life as a teenage girl and the things I had and am dealing with, I had a burden on my heart to get

involved. I remain involved today. The blessing works both ways because as I build a relationship with the youth, they build relationship with me. I can share what I have gone through and they accept me. I never truly felt accepted by girls, especially that age. It was always so competitive about who looked the best. I feel like I have been given a second chance to heal that part of my life. The biggest message I hope to portray is don't believe that you are only worth what you look like. God loves you so very much. He created each of us authentically. Love yourself, just as God loves you.

Praying the prayer "God, use me where you need me" is a prayer that gets answered real fast. Before long I was involved with everything. People were asking me to do stuff, the more I said yes, the more offers came my way. I was working real hard. God was teaching me a new lesson here. While I thought "the more I do, the better I will get" the fact is that it didn't work that way. I began to build resentment, because I was trying so hard, I was working so hard, but I was still struggling with my eating disorder, and wanting to look attractive, I felt the desire of wanting to be so attractive lessen, and I began to realize that I had a lot of feelings inside of me that were now wanting to come out. I noticed that now my bingeing and purging was not longer much about how I looked, but about wanting to not feel anything. I noticed that when something angered me, made me sad, hurt, or I wanted to avoid it, I would turn to a binge where I could "numb out" instead of deal with my feelings and emotions. I didn't want to deal, I just wanted to keep working, keep moving forward, not focusing on what was going on inside of me. I wasn't sleeping at night, I was getting up early in the morning for work, and binge and purging more and more. I was so frustrated because I thought "God, I'm doing all this work for You, when are you going to heal for me?"

I ended up in the hospital in December of 2005. I went to bed one night, knowing that my pump was low on insulin, but too tired from a binge and thinking that "oh well my blood sugar runs high all the time anyway, this won't hurt me." I woke up in the morning and went to work. That afternoon I felt so sick I knew that I was in Diabetic Ketoacidosis. I drove myself to the ER and was admitted for two nights, one of which I spent in the ICU.

This was my wake up call. I began smacking my head against the bottom, over and over. I am done. I can't do this. I have tried all the right things. I go to counseling, I pray, I work for God, why am I not getting better. I have tried so hard. I have been working for

over two years and I am only getting worse. I cannot function and I am going to die.

Fortunately God has provided an awesome medical staff who have been on my case. My counselor got in touch with my doctor and they both agreed that something more need to take place for me to get well. My counselor look for an outpatient eating disorder treatment program, where I could still have my daily life activities but have more intensive treatment.

This is how good God is. Erma got in touch with the program and discovered that the program director not only had an eating disorder at one time in her life. (There is something about being able to work with someone who has been there, that connection that is made. An intimate understand.) She, the program director, also was working on her dissertation. Her dissertation is guess what.... About the correlation between diabetes and eating disorders. That is how big God is.

You see there is not a lot of information on diabetes and eating disorders together. I've done numerous searches but there is just not a lot of information out there. I know that God brought this opportunity into my life. Currently I am in this outpatient eating disorder program. I am learning about how eating disorder are not just about the food, as I thought for so long, I thought that if I just would eat smaller portions and not throw up then my eating disorder would be gone. I am learning that in fact eating disorders are about feelings and the inability to express them. I have denied my feelings for so long. Denied myself for so long, just bottling everything inside, not wanting to deal with emotions. I learned this from an early age to just not feel, it is to painful.

Chapter 13

“Conclusion”

I think about everything that has happened in my life and I am so thankful. Thankful for the trials, thankful for my struggles. God has brought people into my life who have helped me along the way. God never wants us to do it alone. We were created to live in community. When Jesus, our shepherd, goes and looks for the lost sheep, us, He scoops us up in his arms and carries us back to safety, back to the herd.

Satan does the exact opposite. He like to take us into isolation, where he can poke and prod at us. He brings up feelings of shame, guilt, and fear. Isolation is his best tool to keep us from overcoming and keeping us believing the lies that we are worthless, and how could God love such a sinner as our self.

The night I cried out “God please just take this away, please God take it away!” was a night I thought I would wake up in the morning and be healed, but God wanted me to step out of the darkness and speak, to share, and build relationships through all of my struggles. God is healing me each and everyday. He has used a community as a huge part of my healing process.

I don't believe that it is any person's fault that I am were I am today. No one caused my eating disorder. The fact is that we live here in a sinful world. Satan attacks us where we are most vulnerable. My desires in life were to be popular, beautiful, and accepted. I thought that by my appearance, as this society tells us, that I would have all these things. This has been the biggest battle for my life, but if you were to ask me if I would trade it for a life that I didn't have to deal with all this, I would say no. I am the person I am today because of what I have had to walk through. As my pastor put it one Sabbath, “we all have to go through character camp” and that is where I am right now, I am going through character camp.

I recently was at a national 10 Commandments seminar and God revealed to me truth that so often gets left out. Right in the very first commandment God says “I am the Lord your God, who has brought you out of Egypt, out of a land of slavery and bondage,

you shall have no other Gods before me.” We each have our own “Egypt” we must be delivered from.

God promises to deliver me from the bondage that I am in. I am in character camp, and when He says “thou shall have no other Gods before me” this means that yes, removing myself, and the worship of my own image, the concerns of what I look like to other people, making myself a God, has to be done away with in order to have God as the center of my life.

This is my story, this is my journey to truth. This is where I am at right now, but I know I’ll continue to grow for God promises in Jeremiah 29:11-13:

“I already know the plans I have for you. I will help you, not hurt you. I will give you a future and a hope. You will call on me and I will answer. You will talk to me and I will listen. You will seek me and find me as you search for me with all your heart.”