

**ENG 100: First Place**

Anorexia Tendencies

by Christina Ann Liber

2014–Lovely Bones

Collarbones so defined that the crevice of the collarbone could hold water. Cheekbones so sharp they could cut someone's soul. Doctors love saying, "once you get restored to your ideal body weight you will be able to think clearly." Personally, I don't think I will ever get better; my disorder gives me security and makes me feel complete. Anorexia Nervosa is a term for my disorder, but I don't like telling people that I have this because it usually scares them away.

The darkness behind this disorder is like no other: every day eating a bagel during school, then going to work out at the gym for about four hours, followed by going home to do homework, and lying to parents saying that you ate dinner at school so you can go to your room and do more sit-ups to get tired for bed. Although sit-ups never made me tired; the only thing that made me tired was after I self-harmed, which wasn't ideal, obviously, but no one needed to know I was flawed, and that was my way of taking it out on my imperfections.

I wanted everything to be perfect. I would study for all my classes until my eyes wouldn't focus anymore, but see that's what was normal and what I expected from myself to have my ideal grades. My first semester of high school I had a perfect 4.0 GPA. I accomplished my goal, but it wasn't enough for my liking; I needed to do more, so I began singing instead of getting my bagel. I let singing be my escape, so I started eating only goldfish here and there so I didn't pass out; however, there were many times I passed out in the practice rooms for choir. From the choir

practice rooms, I would go back to my usual workout routine in the gym of our high school, but I had to cut it down to three hours because I was singing.

### 2015–The Dreams Of Horror

A month into my second semester at school and my mom realized the money that she put on my card started to not be used like it was in grammar school. I came home from school that day and she told me she knew I wasn't eating like I said I was; in that moment, I knew I was in trouble and she was going to see the dark side I didn't want her to see.

The following day, after this horrible discussion of me not eating and working out, my parents took me to a facility called "Linden Oaks," which sounded quite scary at the time. I went for an evaluation, which sounded dreadful. When we arrived at Linden Oaks, I begged my parents to not make me go inside and promised that I would start eating. They knew I was lying and wouldn't start eating that easily when I had been restricting my intake for so long. The first step to my evaluation was stepping on the scale and getting my blood pressure taken. I remember hearing my parents start to cry when the lady said, "Darling, you weigh forty-five pounds, and that's not ideal for a fourteen year old." In my mind I thought, "Wow, I'm still not where I wanna be after all this time; I was still over by five pounds." While my blood pressure was being taken, the machine started going off halfway through the reading because my heart was beating irregularly. Now, most people would think this is when I would have realized something was wrong, but nope, I still thought I was healthy and at my ideal weight at this moment in time. I went into the mental evaluation and this is when the behavioral licensed counselor sat down with me; we discussed my feelings of sadness, hatred, and my desire to be as thin as a model, and we

discussed how I get along with my parents. After the evaluation, I had to wait an hour to have them contact the psychiatrist on duty to see if they wanted to put me in an inpatient or an outpatient program or in nothing at all. After the psychiatrist and behavioral licensed counselor discussed it, they decided I should start in inpatient this evening, which meant eating meals and going to school and group therapy instead of actual school. I was upset with this decision; it meant no more working out at the high school gym, but most importantly it meant no more actual school until I got better; I had an hour of school instead of the normal six hours. This was when I knew my perfect GPA and grades were not going to stay where I ideally wanted them to due to getting treatment for my disorder.

#### 2016–Fighting Urges Day In and Day Out

The doctors keep telling me, “If you don’t act on urges, they will go away.” Well, that’s not true; it’s almost been a whole year clean from self-harm and I’m still having the urges. It’s been six months in Anorexia Nervosa treatment and I still want to restrict my calorie intake and increase my daily exercise. I have urges day in and day out: all I want to do is stand in the shower with a razor blade in my hand rubbing it back and forth on my arms until I’m bleeding so much that it won’t stop even with pressure. Working out until I pass out; the people around me tell me this isn’t normal. Well, I guess I’m not normal then. I am one with my disorder and I can’t leave my disorder; it is the security I crave.

Treatment is supposed to help make everything perfect and back to normal prior to your disorder, right? Wrong; treatment only helps one start to see that there can be light at the end of the tunnel if you want it to be there. I’m wanting that light at the end of the tunnel to be my end

result as soon as possible. I want to be happy, have self confidence, enjoy my life, and share my past experiences with others so they can know that anything is possible when you put hard work into your treatment.

It's been two months since I have seen my counselor and dietitian; it's the start of summer again, and I am so excited to start going out to the pool and experience the sun touching my skin while I'm in the refreshing pool water. I'm hoping this will be the last summer I will need to be watching out for my eating disorder triggers; it's starting to get better and I just want it to get to the point where I can help others with the same struggles I have faced.

#### 2018–Success Without Ana

I know you're probably reading this like, there is no way she's recovered and fully successful without Anorexia Nervosa. Well, the truth is I really am recovered. I don't restrict my meals or work out in extreme measures anymore. I know I used to think this stage was not able to be conquered, but guess what? I am now here and currently loving my healthy new lifestyle. Smiling is my way of moving from the dark past to the new uplifting future that stands ahead of me. My life tends to be more joyful and exciting than during my disorder. Since parting with Anorexia Nervosa, I have been able to meet my amazing boyfriend, leave my hometown to go to college, relate with others who struggle with mental health, and use my prior knowledge from being in the hospital to understand medical terms for my career.

My life has gotten to the turning point where there's nothing holding me back; my decisions on what to do and what not to do are fully made with my conscious mind. My decisions since parting ways with Anorexia Nervosa have been some of the best decisions I've

ever made. For example, when I was completely engulfed in Anorexia Nervosa it looked like the only college chance I would have would be to go to community college and then do online classes. However, now I'm on a four year campus working towards my bachelor's degree which will be followed by my master's degree. It's amazing how when you're engulfed in Anorexia Nervosa you think you're the best form of yourself healthwise and academic-wise; however, that's not close to true at all. The main takeaway that I have learned since parting ways with Anorexia Nervosa is that life gets tough and that if I go back into old Anorexia Nervosa behaviors all I will do is cause myself to fail faster in the current situation.

Life is like no other; things happen to good amazing people. I am proof that it's possible to recover from Anorexia Nervosa with dedication to therapy and dedication to dealing with the feelings associated with recovering. Some days come along and my mind tries tricking me back into my disorder but I never let that happen. I know the moment I allow my mind to be engulfed back into Anorexia Nervosa, it will be the start of the complications I faced in the past, which I never want to experience ever again in my lifetime. Yes, it's possible to part ways with Anorexia Nervosa, but one must remember to always watch out for the warning signs or you will spiral out of control. Anorexia Nervosa has caused me to lose a lot of important things in my life; however, I now know that if I choose to not give Anorexia Nervosa the power in my life, my life will be more successful than ever seen before, which is the goal to maintain a healthy lifestyle without Anorexia Nervosa playing a role.