

## Diary of an Anorexic (Part 1 of 2)

BY CLARE FITZGERALD | April 8, 2014

*Warning: If you are recovering or are a recovered anorexic, please be warned this article may be triggering.*

Writer's Note: Last week, I had the idea of writing a few diary entries from the point of view of someone with anorexia nervosa, an eating disorder characterized by the restriction of food. As someone who is currently recovering from anorexia, I have seen and heard pretty much all the stereotypes placed upon someone with it, and feel these entries might open some eyes and show readers the reality of the disorder. It's a two-part series, with each part focusing on a different journey: the first part on the disorder's development and part two on one's recovery from it.

### **Beginning:**

I'm starting this diary anew. I just picked up from the store and I can't wait to get writing – I have a lot to say tonight.

A few months ago I was hired on as a cashier at the local grocery store. At the time, I was preparing for university midterms and had a pretty busy social life. I knew I would experience some stress, but thought I could handle it. Wow, was I ever wrong. I'm feeling so overwhelmed at the moment and I don't even know what to do. My grades have slowly started to slip and I'm feeling that my boss has placed too much responsibility on my shoulders. I've been trying to balance both, but it's not working. I try to study in order to keep my grades up, but I'm too tired from work to stay focused. I've thought about quitting my job, but I need the money to pay for school. I can't win! Try to improve one aspect of my life and the other one goes to shambles. Notice how there's no mention of my current social life: that's because it's pretty much non-existent now. I'm just too busy to spend time with friends.

On top of all the stress I'm feeling I noticed that I've put on a few pounds. At first I didn't really care that much, seeing as everyone puts on a few pounds while at school. But over the past few weeks it's really started to bother me. Last week, I decided to cut my portion sizes and start eating healthier. I weighed myself yesterday and I've already lost five pounds! I never knew weight loss was this easy! I'm definitely going to continue with this because I think I could do to lose another ten pounds or so. Who knows, at the end of this, I might look the best I've ever looked! And on top of the weight loss, I've noticed that I have more energy. Eating healthy sure is cool.

However, I have noticed something since I started this healthy eating regime. It seems that I'm starting to feel what I believe to be anxiety around certain foods. For example, two days ago I was going to buy a chocolate bar from the convenience store and felt a knot in the pit of my stomach. At first I thought something was up, but I've come to the conclusion that it was my brain's way of saying I should pick a healthier option, so I'm not too worried. I guess I've hardwired my body to be the guiding light through this

journey and I'm definitely not complaining.

**At Its Worse (two and a half years after first entry):**

I'm so hungry. I want to eat, but I can't... I just can't. My brain won't let me. I don't know what to do. There's a cupcake in the refrigerator and it looks so good, but I feel like I'll gain ten pounds just by looking at it and I know I'll gain fifty if I actually eat it. I'm aware it all sounds irrational, but my brain keeps telling me it's true. I feel like crying, I'm so confused and miserable.

One of the reasons why I'm depriving myself of the cupcake is because I weighed myself this morning and saw I'm 0.5 pounds heavier than I was yesterday. After that, I decided I'm not going to eat lunch, let alone a cupcake. I mean, have you seen how many calories are in one of those? But really, who am I kidding? Even if I had lost weight I wouldn't touch that cupcake. Just the thought of it creates so much anxiety that I wish I could just disappear. In fact, that anxiety occurs pretty much whenever I think about food that isn't veggies or diet pop. Nothing can go wrong when you have diet pop and veggies – you can eat as much as you want with minimal caloric intake, which makes it the perfect meal. But sometimes, I cave and have a piece of bread or a handful of low-fat crackers. At the time it seems worth it, but the guilt and anxiety I have afterward is usually unbearable.

I'm so tired that I barely have the energy to think, let alone write this (I even had to take a year off school and quit my job because I didn't have the attention span to do either). But I've eaten today, so I need to think of a way to burn off the calories. I think I'll go for a walk, or better yet, a run – that'll burn more. Okay, time to get up... Whoa, almost blacked out there. Have to push through it though, there's work to be done. I'm flabby and need to look better. Everyone keeps telling me I'm thin, but I don't see it. I bet they're lying, secretly laughing at how huge I am, because whenever I peek at the mirror, I look about two-hundred pounds.

What day is it? How long has it been since I last ate a proper meal: one week, two months, a year? Who knows? Each day seems to blend into the next anyway. Jane invited me to her birthday party yesterday, but I declined. I'm surprised she did, seeing as I no longer talk to her or any of my other friends. I just don't have the strength to and they always want to meet in situations that involve food, which I can't handle. What if they want me to eat or drink something? I don't know how I'd react or what excuse I'd give in order not to. A part of me says I should feel bad about ignoring them, but I can't seem to feel anything. I'm numb to everything around me.

The days where I wish I could return to my old self are increasing in frequency. It seems that every day now I'm praying that someone will notice how sick I am, how fragile and sad I look, and offer me help. I know I should outright ask for it, but my brain won't let me. It keeps telling me that I'm not sick because I'm not skin and bone, so I continue along this path. The part of me that wants to get better is overthrown by the part that wants this all to continue, and that is the path I follow. But what I wouldn't give to have my old life back, to be the smiling, happy girl I once was. All I want is to be rescued.

*Make sure to check back next week for part two.*