

# EATING DISORDERS AWARENESS WEEK “LOOKING AT MY PAST FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF RECOVERY”

BY: ERIC DORSA | ED RECOVERY ADVOCATE

## I NEVER WOULD HAVE IMAGINED THIS

When I first entered recovery, I could not imagine what life would look like on the other side of my eating disorder.

Every version of the future I pictured was filtered through my eating disorder. Even recovery itself felt like something my illness was interpreting for me. I thought recovery meant surviving, managing, and containing something shameful. I did not know it would mean living.

More than a decade later, I can say something I never thought I would be able to say:

I no longer look at recovery from the perspective of my disease.

I look at my disease from the perspective of my recovery.

Not A Single Moment

This life I am living now is not the result of one breakthrough moment. It is the result of all of it.

Every return to treatment.

**EVERY SETBACK.**

**EVERY TRIUMPH.**

EVERY ORDINARY DAY OF CHOOSING TO SHOW UP DIFFERENTLY.

There was no single decision that brought me here. No perfect turning point. Though there were many times in my journey where I thought this was the truth. It was the accumulation of moments. Of willingness. Of grace.

When I began this journey, I was fighting for survival. Today, I am building a life. I never would have imagined that recovery would expand my world instead and simplify it all at the same time.

Always Beginning In so many ways, I am always beginning. Recovery is not static. The version of me who first walked into treatment needed structure, vigilance, and protection. That version of me wore battle gear because they had to. They were fighting for their life.

**BUT THIS VERSION OF ME NOW IS NOT AT WAR.**

It would not make sense to wear this same battle gear to the park, or the grocery store, or a birthday party.

There is a grief in moving on from the version of myself who fought so hard to survive. That version challenged impossible beliefs. Faced painful truths.

Endured what felt unendurable. They made my life today possible.

There is grief in moving forward from recovering to recovered.

Where I Began When I first began recovery, I did not come to treatment believing I was worthy of a full life. I wanted to live. I just did not know how.

**I FELT FLAWED. BROKEN. DAMAGED. DANGEROUS.**

**I BELIEVED I WAS A PROBLEM THAT NEEDED TO BE FIXED.**

I was trying to survive a worldview that did not affirm my body, my identity, or my worth. My eating disorder made sense in that context. It felt protective. It felt necessary.

What shifted everything was not sudden confidence. It was exposure to other people's stories.

**OTHER PEOPLE WHO SPOKE ABOUT RECOVERY AS POSSIBLE.**

**OTHER PEOPLE WHO BELIEVED IN A LIFE BIGGER THAN SHAME.**

Hope was not something I generated on my own. Hope was an invitation. Someone else's belief became a bridge I could walk across. That is why we need each other.

**ENDINGS AND BEGINNINGS AT THE SAME TIME**

You can be at an ending and a beginning at the same time.

There is no single moment that determines recovery. No one way to arrive. No perfect answer. It is all of it.

The fear.

The courage.

The relapse.

The return.

The grief. The joy.

All of it was necessary to bring me here.

