

Compare and Despair

EXCERPT FROM *LIFE WITHOUT ED*

Have you ever felt as if there were a Thin Person Convention in town? No matter where you look—the lady in front of you in the grocery store line, the guy crossing the street at Fifth and Broadway, the woman pumping gas at the corner market—everyone is thinner than you. Not only were you not aware that this convention was taking place, but you know that your invitation was not just lost in the mail. You know that you were not invited, and all of a sudden, you see the world through a whole new set of eyes.

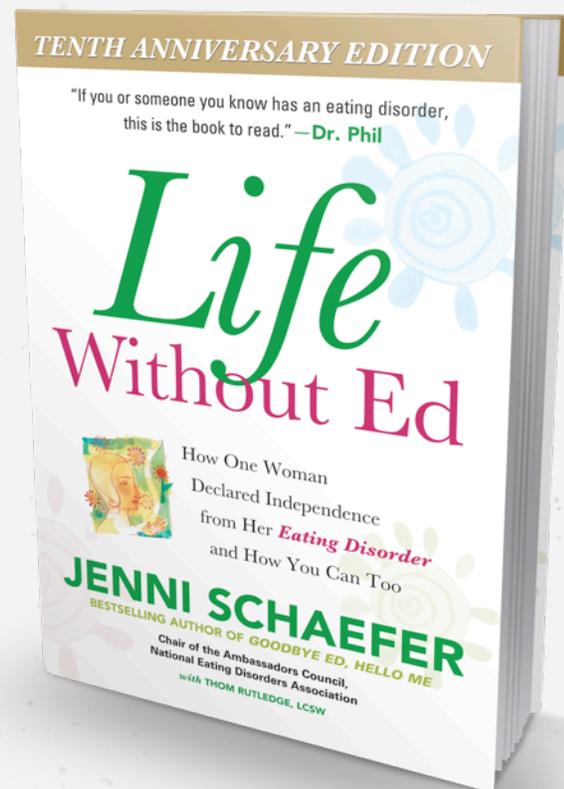
On days like this, I think of a phrase that I learned in therapy: “Compare and despair.” The fact is that when it comes to body image, I know that I cannot see straight—my vision is literally distorted. So comparing myself to anyone else is just setting myself up for disappointment. There are some days when, regardless of who enters the room and their size, I am going to think that they are thinner than I am. On days when it seems like the thin people are invading, I just think, “Compare and despair,” and I shift my focus from them to me.

This simple phrase has been integrated into other areas of my life, too. Now, whenever my town hosts conventions for the National Smart Persons League or the Society of Beautiful Women, I think of those two little words. My happiness no longer depends on the characteristics of those around me. “Compare and despair” has opened my eyes to a new world in which I am free.

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Jenni Schaefer is a singer/songwriter, speaker, and author of *Life Without Ed* (now available as an audiobook!) and *Goodbye Ed, Hello Me*. She is the co-author of *Almost Anorexic: Is My (or My Loved One's) Relationship with Food a Problem?* (released by Harvard Health Publications and Hazelden). For more recovery resources as well as information about Jenni's work, visit JenniSchaefer.com. Connect at [Facebook.com/LifeWithoutEd](https://www.facebook.com/LifeWithoutEd) & [Twitter.com/JenniSchaefer](https://twitter.com/JenniSchaefer).



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