

Serenity

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EXCERPT FROM *LIFE WITHOUT ED*

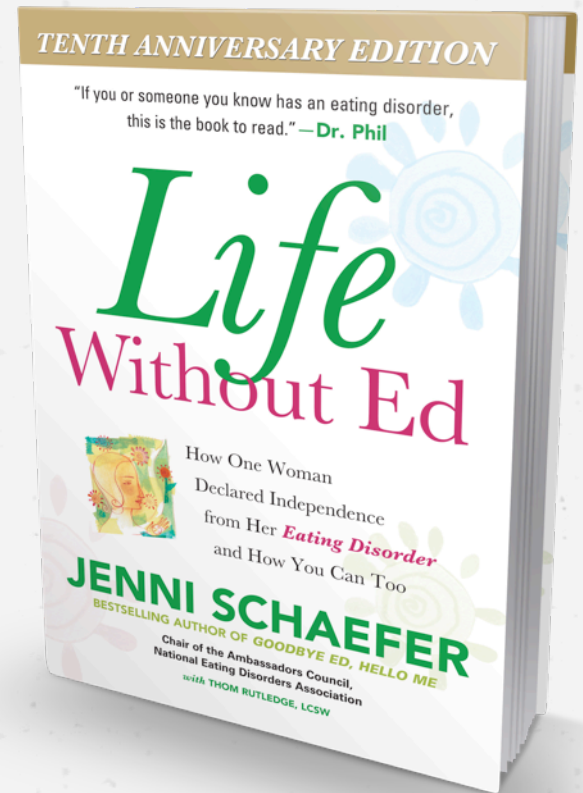
Within the walls of my support group, I often heard the word serenity. I always wondered, “Does serenity really exist?” Because Ed used to sit on my lap during group therapy sessions, he would quickly answer my question: “Sure. You experience that thing all of the time. Remember your binge last night? Just think of how numb you felt. You didn’t have a care in the world. And, today, as soon as that starvation high kicks in, you’ll be floating in the sky.”

After years in recovery, I finally found true serenity right here on the ground - not up in the clouds with Ed. It is truly amazing, and I thank God for it daily. What is serenity? I will begin by describing what it is not.

It is not obsessing about dinner before even eating breakfast. It is not scrambling for food in order to fill a bottomless hunger. It is not sitting on my kitchen floor feeling guilty and depressed after what I have just done. It is not staring down a toilet with tears streaming down my face. It is not giving all of my food away to a friend and making a promise to myself to never eat again. It is not feeling guilty for taking care of myself. It is not people pleasing. It is not Ms. Perfectionist. It is not Ed.

So, what is serenity? It is actually eating on Thanksgiving Day. It is enjoying myself at a cookout. It is being alone in my apartment without being afraid. It is having the energy to walk around the block. It is letting go. It is letting people get close to me and my boundaries. It is honesty. It is being able to say no. It is the ability to focus. It is the passion to pursue my dreams. It is having so much more time for living. It is me. And it can be you, too.

Jenni Schaefer is a singer/songwriter, speaker, and author of *Life Without Ed* 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 www.JenniSchaefer.com. Connect with her at www.facebook.com/LifeWithoutEd and www.twitter.com/JenniSchaefer.



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