

TENTH ANNIVERSARY EDITION

"If you or someone you know has an eating disorder,
this is the book to read." —**Dr. Phil**

Life

Without Ed



How One Woman
Declared Independence
from Her *Eating Disorder*
and How You Can Too

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Contents

Acknowledgments xiii
Foreword by Thom Rutledge xvii
Introduction xxi

1

Filing for Divorce — *Separating from Ed* 1

Declaration of Independence 3
Making the Split 7
Disagree and Disobey 9
Ed's Rules 12
Ms. Perfectionist 14
Enlist Support 17
Not Just Anyone 20
Ed's Other Brides 23
True Value System 25
Whatever It Takes 27
Thom's Turn 29

2

It's Not About Food?! — *How Food Is Involved* 33

Dinner 35
Be Real 37

Just for You	39
Food Plan	41
Cheeseburger, Please	43
The Weekend with the Cake	46
Holidays	48
Overcompensating	50
Add Fat?	52
Overboard	54
Food Accounting 101	56
Thom's Turn	57

3

Mirror, Mirror on the Wall — *Is Thin Really Everything?* 61

You Don't Look Like You Have an Eating Disorder	63
The Scale	65
Fat	67
My Private Platoon	69
Skinny Jenni	71
Impurities	73
Miss Anorexic	74
You Must Be Thin	76
Lindsey	78
Illusion	80
Thin	81
Vampire	83
Thom's Turn	84

4

Merry-Go-Round — *The Nuts and Bolts of Recovery* 87

- Ed's Defense Attorney 89
- I'm Mistaken 91
- Super Ed 93
- Faithful to Ed 95
- Tattletale 97
- Guilty Poster 99
- Guilty-Weird-Amazing 101
- Leaving It All up to Ed 103
- Compare and Despair 105
- Top Ten 106
- Too Recovered 108
- When Will He Stop? 110
- Thom's Turn 111

5

Ed's Last Stand — *Surviving Relapse* 115

- My Invisible Child 117
- Relapse 120
- The Next Right Thing 122
- Pick up the Phone 124
- Richard Simmons, Eat Your Heart Out 126
- Maybe It's Not Too Late 128
- The Plastic Bat 130

- Don't Figure It Out 132
- Research 134
- One Day 136
- Thom's Turn 138

6

The Hard Truth — *Getting Serious About Getting Better* 141

- Recovery First 143
- Going to Any Lengths 145
- Grieving the Good 146
- The Not-So-Fun Part 148
- How Can You? 150
- Won't vs. Can't 152
- Realistic 154
- The Minority Rule 156
- Duct Tape 159
- Bones 161
- Trapped 164
- Thom's Turn 167

7

Believe It — *What It's All About* 171

- I'm Not Perfect 173
- What Kept Me Going? 174
- No 175

Double Take at the Fridge	176
Dividing the Marital Property	178
The Chosen One	179
Don't Give Up	181
Serenity	183
Dreams	184
Life Without Ed	185

Afterword — *Ten Years Later* 187

Life After Ed	189
For Males	200
For Family, Friends, and Supporters	203
For Treatment Professionals	208
Divorce Decree from Ed	216
<i>"Life Without Ed"</i>	217
<i>Resources</i>	219

Life After Ed

ED WASN'T TOO happy that I wrote this book exposing the truth about his lies and manipulative tactics. In fact, it seemed as though my ex was so mad that he came back for retaliation after I turned the manuscript in to my publisher. Although this final fling with Ed was short-lived, it was also one of the most powerful—catapulting me into a newfound freedom that I never believed possible. At the time, unaware that this transformation was taking place, I was just very frustrated.

Saying that I felt like the biggest loser in the world is a major understatement. In the months while my publisher was working hard to turn my manuscript about recovery into an actual book that would be available in stores, I was dancing with Ed. I found it depressing and quite annoying when friends and family, who had read an early copy of the manuscript, suggested that I reread my own book. They said, “Jenni, you wrote a lot about falling down in *Life Without Ed*. You know what to do.”

I did know what to do, but I wasn't doing it. There were all kinds of reasons why. *It's hard. It hurts. I'm scared and tired (no, exhausted)*. And let's not forget one of the most powerful: *Maybe I can figure out a way to keep just a tiny itty bitsy piece of Ed and still be happy*. Wrong. Believing this was setting me up for a mediocre sort of recovery. One big problem with mediocre is that it doesn't have staying power but eventually leads back to the eating disorder each and every time. Not to mention, who wants to settle for mediocre when a complete recovery is possible? Yes, it is! I didn't know that when I originally wrote this book, but I am living it now.

For long-lasting independence from my eating disorder, Ed could no longer be an option for how I dealt with life. Of course,

the truth is that during those early years of recovery, Ed was, in fact, an option—a big one. Imagine a metaphorical restaurant menu that lists, rather than food, ways to cope with life. The “Self-Compassion Special,” “Meditation Medley,” and “Signature Support” entrees are all delicious selections for self-soothing, but the “Ed Deluxe” (one of those dishes that never quite comes out the way you order it) is also a choice. To get fully better, I came to terms with the fact that Ed is a forbidden menu item that I refuse to order. Sure, I *could* order it, but I *won't*. This is an appropriate use of restricting. I began to apply the same determination to recovery that, in the past, I had applied to limiting my food intake, trying to stay a certain size, and other eating disordered behaviors. It is amazing what can happen when you use your determination and intelligence for positive endeavors. (Just now, Ed might have chimed in, “Well, *you're* not intelligent,” but some research actually suggests that individuals with eating disorders are more intelligent than the average person.) Rather than restricting food, you can learn to wisely apply your talents to restricting the eating disorder out of existence.

Commit to giving recovery your all. That's what I had to do—no holding back. Based on this book so far, you may be thinking that I had already given recovery everything I had. That is absolutely true for that point in my life. But, as I became stronger over time, my ability to make strides in recovery became even greater. You might look at it this way: at the end of kindergarten, you surely were not in a place to begin second grade. But, at the end of first grade, you were probably more than ready. After I finished writing *Life Without Ed*, I had essentially graduated from first grade. It was time for me to move on to second. I was ready then, but not before.

Even still, I have to admit that I couldn't help but feel as though I had somehow slid backward as I reread my manuscript those many years ago (yes, I took the suggestion of my friends and family). The last part of this book talks about how amazing life is without Ed, and there I was with Ed. *How could I not have lost ground?*



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