

A STORY ABOUT FREEDOM

by

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I was just a teenager. My life was simple and ordinary. School, friends, evening classes. Normal stuff. But I didn't have a boyfriend. To be precise, I didn't have the boyfriend I wanted. I was really insecure about my body then. I have always been a chubby kid but being a teenager made me familiar with the concept of a "nice body." One day I read something in a magazine. There was this girl that was in need of help because she had started vomiting in order to lose weight and now she couldn't stop. As I was reading, I was disgusted, though I couldn't help but noticing that this method brought results. *"I have lost weight now, but I can't stop."* I was actually processing the idea, and, I'm telling you, it doesn't take much for an insecure person to go over the edge and take a free fall. It only takes a few glimpses of the boy you like with someone else.

So, bulimia started for me.

Then, I perceived it not as a sickness but as a temporary and necessary procedure. Anytime I was feeling like eating a whole cake by myself, I would just go for it. Then I would go to the bathroom. And then I would just lie numb on my bed, feeling and caressing my tummy trying to figure out if it had got any bigger.

After a couple of years of being a bulimic, I had started to feel really suspicious towards this habit of mine. I hadn't told anybody. But I was in need of help, so I decided to come clean.

One day I went to the kitchen where I knew I would find my mum. I had to get it out. She was sitting by the table reading a newspaper and eating an apple. I sat next to her.

"Mum? Can I talk to you? Can I tell you something? I need to tell you something."

My mother looked at me over the newspaper with that look I knew by then. *"Then don't tell me any bad news, I had a rough day look."*

"Ok... Here it goes..."

I started crying.

It's weird how the people that love you the most are the toughest judges. I was hurting myself, but I just couldn't do that to my mother as well. I stood up.

"Now, it's not the time. I'll tell you when I'm ready."

I knew that "when I'm ready" meant "never." It was just something that I had to live with. A burden that would never leave my shoulders.

Right after that moment, I knew I had to stop.

So, I started trying. Radically. At first, my body was willing, but my brain had other plans. This illness is not just physical. It's actually mostly psychosomatic. But if my

brain was unwilling to cooperate, so was I. I would get it done my way. I started working out and embraced a healthier diet. I was determined to get control of my body again.

Now, after five years, I take care of my body. It took a lot of effort and pain and self-pity, but that period of imprisonment in my own body and mind was over. I work out and have a healthy diet, with the regular chocolate or pizza, but I'm in control. I don't push myself to the limits with large portions of fattening food, and I have a normal weight now. I'm still ashamed of what I put myself into, and even though I have left all this far behind me, it still stings a bit. At least now I know that if someone compliments my body it's thanks to my healthy way of life. This time, I'm really proud of it. These compliments have a different meaning to me.

If you were to ask me about one thing I'm proud of myself, this is it. I did it all on my own. I helped myself up. My will was stronger than I took it for. One day I was in deep, but the next I was again on my feet. I was liberated. The prison we put ourselves into it's the worst kind, and it may seem impossible to escape; you may feel incapable but it's like any other prison; there *is* a way out. If you have the will, you'll always be free.
