

1. Are you in recovery right now? Why or why not?

I am not due to fear of weight gain.

No, I'm in therapy and working towards maybe getting into recovery... but it really scares me.

No, because I want to lose weight.

No. I'm not strong enough to tell someone or to help myself.

Not in recovery. I am my ED, and can't imagine being this thin without it.

No. I don't feel like I'm sick enough to deserve recovery or help.

No, I do not currently have the financial resources to afford more than weekly therapy.

I am not in recovery because I do not have access to an appropriate level of care and have not been able to interrupt my behaviors on my own.

No, because I tried to recover and relapsed a year and some months ago, and I don't want to have to go through that again. I can't recover by myself, so I'm going to wait until I need a doctor to step in and help me.

I am not. I have a tumor on my thyroid that messes with my metabolism and my mood. I feel very unstable most days and sometimes death feels imminent. I don't want to put energy into recovery before I've finished radiation therapy and have a stable/completely removed thyroid. I'm afraid of my physical health declining because of the cancer and hitting rock bottom, ruining all my progress. So why even try right now?

I am not. It's extremely difficult for me ever to remember why I'm recovering in the first place, so I continue to starve.

No because I lack the support to do so and the thought of recovery is worse than anything else. I've been this way for so long, changing seems useless now.

Not currently. Stopped going to therapy after 4 months due to the biggest relapse since my ED started 5 years ago.

No, I don't even think I have an eating disorder, I'm not going to self-diagnose. But I do a lot of things that can associate with one and I experience many health issues from it.

No. About 6 months ago, after years of relapse, I found ground when I finally realised the reason why I was falling into my ED hole each time.

I honestly oscillate between wanting to get better and wanting to die on a day to day basis unfortunately. I think the main reason for my lack of dedication to recovery is due to the anxiety relief my disorder provides me.

Is there an in between... ? I want to lose weight, I don't want my brain to get all crazy anxious though, so... No.

Because I have multiple mental health diagnoses and continued ambivalence about my eating disorder, I hesitate to think of myself as in recovery or not. At this point I use overt eating disorder behaviors (restricting/binging/purging) way less than I used to, still engage in most extraneous eating disorder-related behaviors (body checking, comparisons, avoidance, etc.) as much as before, and still struggle with weight-related and size/shape-related negative body image. I think a big reason I am not working to change my lingering eating disorder symptoms at this point is that other aspects of my mental health are causing more urgent problems lately.

I am in recovery but on my own.

Yes.

Yes! Because I want my life back.

Yes, I am currently in an outpatient setting but am struggling greatly due to lack of support.

Yes, and because I am being forced into such by family/friends.

Yes, from relapsing on and off unknowingly.

Yes, pretty much. Why? Because... I want to live, and to have a life again, eventually, someday.

Yes. Because I know I can't have the life I want and deserve with an eating disorder.

Yes, because my eating disorder eventually made me so medically unstable that I really had to pick life or death over the course of a weekend. I wanted to kill myself, but I didn't want to die before finishing a degree/moving out of my parents'. Part of my behaviors were out of guilt of not accomplishing anything, so I wanted to do something to make my mom feel like raising me was worth *some* of her effort/hardships before I kill myself/allow my disorder to kill me. After a while of recovery efforts, relapsing became harder and harder to do, physically. I'm now at a point where I feel as though I don't really have a choice but to keep at it.

Yes. Because, simply, I want to live. I'm tired of making my parents cry and frankly it's about time I start fighting.

Partly by accident, but yes. I only actively engaged with treatment because I was accepted on to a funded training course, which I took as 'new start'. I had felt that I couldn't recover because the idea of weight gain etc. was too horrible, and seemed pointless. If I hadn't been accepted, I had planned to commit suicide instead. The relief that I felt when I found out that I wouldn't have to end my life is what helps me know now, and when I'm struggling, that I do want to recover.

Yes. Because I told my boyfriend and it worried him enough to make me see a doctor. And I don't appreciate living in restricted hell.

Yes, because my health deteriorated so much during the course of my eating disorder when it was 'active' that I couldn't even comfortably stand for more than a minute or so (and still have great difficulty with it).

Yes. Because I pushed my ED as far as I could and lost almost everything, and it has nothing to offer me anymore. My 7-year relationship was about to fall apart and I want a life with friends, love, happiness and food more than I need anorexia.

Yes because in some ways I find my life worth living. I have a lot I want to do with my life and I can't do them with an eating disorder. For the days I don't want it, I have a husband who loves me. I can't have both a husband and an eating disorder without trying to recover.

Yes, I would consider myself in recovery. My life is full of non-eating-disorder-related goodness.

Yes, because I don't have time to constantly be sick from laxative abuse. And my boyfriend and my mom would murder me if I relapsed again.

YES, I AM! Because I was tired of hating myself for eating. I was sick of the guilt and shame that came with every bite, so I decided to put an end to it.

I am in recovery because I know that I can't live my life controlled by my eating disorder, and wake up aged 40 realising I never achieved anything because my life was wasted avoiding chocolate.

Yes, because I am working towards a life of peace with food. I work with a therapist to set goals and make change so I can live a life free from calorie counting and enjoy all foods.

Technically yes. I've told my therapist but I'm still having a really hard time. I'm in recovery because I'm sick of being sick and I'm sick of worrying my partner.

Yes, because I recognise how I was before was part of an illness and that I cannot carry on being that way, I want to be free of the constraints my eating disorder and other mental health problems have placed onto me. In all honesty, recovery feels like the only option; even if I'm only managing to do the minimal, even if I'm 'stuck', I have to do it, have to try.

I am in recovery because I've finally come to two realizations: 1) I'm not actually ready to die yet, and 2) My career deserves more than I can give it when I'm sick.

Yes because I was unable to manage my eating disorder without severely impacting my quality of life. I was destroying my relationships, completely disconnected and disengaged due to depression and anxiety and all the ED related fears.

Yes, I no longer use any behaviors, and have been able to reach and maintain a healthy weight for almost a year.

Kind of: it's better than it was, and I've made the mental shift that I want to get better.

Not formally, I haven't come to anyone with my bulimia but I'm doing my best to stop it.

Yes but it is in a standstill. I'm not very motivated.

I guess I'm in recovery -- it's hard to be in day treatment and not consider yourself working on recovery. But at the same time, I don't really feel altogether motivated to change (hell, most of the time I don't even believe I have an eating disorder). I'm in treatment because it was that or more or less imminent death; I feel like I can't completely consider myself in recovery because I want and miss my ED.

I guess you could say I'm working at recovery, but am nowhere near recovered. I am in outpatient treatment, rarely acting on behaviors, but my intentions and thoughts are severely disordered. Ambivalence is a good description on how I feel about recovering.

I feel I am in pseudo-recovery; I eat well and my weight is normal, but I still feel huge every day and would rather not be eating. I have a lot of food rules that really control my life, and my self-image is the main determinant of how my day is going to go.

I'm unsure whether I would classify myself as in recovery. I do challenge myself to some degree, usually following prompting from my boyfriend or nurse therapist, but I usually stay within my comfort zone.

Sort of. I was and I wasn't and now I'm not trying to recover nor am I trying to relapse. Basically I'm trying to both sustain an unhealthy weight and no longer have an eating disorder, which never works.

Somewhere between relapse and recovery. I want to recover but don't have very much support or access to new/different coping mechanisms so I'm trying to do it on my own.

I am somewhere between recovery and relapse. That is to say I rarely engage in behaviours but am not necessarily making positive progress against my ED. I don't feel as though I have the resources (time, mental and emotional resources) to recover fully at this point.

Sort of. I have a health care team monitoring me and attend groups but I'm not doing well with recovering

2. (For those in recovery) What is the biggest challenge you are facing right now in recovery?

Disappointing myself.

Gaining weight, not freaking out and being able to *not* own a scale.

Having to take time off school and fear of weight gain.

Keeping away from destructive eating behaviours. Battling the demons in my head every day.

Lack of support.

Learning to be able to accept that I need to eat.

Making my own food. Stopping my thoughts about food/ the glorious scale.

My biggest challenge in recovery was accepting weight gain and changes in my body.

Not obsessing about food.

Seeing how disgustingly fat I've become.

The biggest challenge is not to binge when I'm in need of "comfort".

Weight fluctuations unrelated to disordered behaviors.

Letting go of secrets (diet pills, purging, anything).

Eating in a way that goes against my beliefs/makes me feel bad mentally. I followed the Primal Blueprint in the last year my disorder. I do believe a whole foods/non-processed diet is the most beneficial for my emotional health, but because I am anorexic I cannot follow any kind of food group "restrictive" diet without the "switch" being thrown and getting highs from the restriction, thus having a propensity to go unnaturally low carb for more of the high. But, when I eat processed food, to make socializing/cooking/etc. simple, my ADHD symptoms get horrible and I am far more depressed. I have a hard time coping with this. Second hardest is just maintaining the will to live, thus a will to eat food.

Believing that you deserve to eat, and that eating just one 'bad' item won't make you fat or ruin your progress.

Force of habit; having to keep remembering about my other triggers (being tired, working through lunch).

It's two-fold. I also have severe emetophobia (fear of vomiting) which means any teeny tiny instance of possible sick-feeling terrifies the hell out of me. . . and thus the usual gastric distress that goes along with the physiological recovery from AN is like a thousand times worse. And those gastric problems - stomach upset, gas, constipation, etc. - and not being able to eat more than about seven different foods and such just make it so damn hard to do the one thing I need to do, which is eat.

I've found that once I get into a routine (nothing strict, just approximate meal times and eating frequently enough) eating enough wasn't too difficult, and my difficulties have arisen more with body image, which I never felt like I struggled with too much when I was actively engaged in eating disordered behaviours. I feel awful about my body to the point where I often think that ill health is worth feeling more at ease in my own skin. This is complicated by the fact that I'm trans, and a large part of the reason I began to engage in disorder behaviours was to try to repress puberty and lessen my dysphoria.

I am fighting to let go of my eating disorder while still fighting to hold on. It is exhausting, frustrating, and confusing to have so many conflicting motives, desires, and thoughts. No matter what choices I make, I feel both proud of myself and horribly guilty.

Feeling fundamentally flawed ("I'll never get over this"), feeling worthless, feeling unable to cope with all of the emotions/memories/etc. recovery brings up.

Finding food that doesn't make me sick. As a result my house is stocked with like, 4 different types of bland cereal.

The only support group or eating disorder group therapy is eating disorders anonymous which isn't therapist led or started with any direction and since it's at an inpatient facility it often centers around very specific unhelpful topics for anyone outside of it, like fear of a meal plan being made. For someone outside, we want to talk about things like continuing recovery and interpersonal relationships. In general, finances makes therapy and alternative treatment options difficult. Thankfully I had my refund check from school but now that I used it all, I can't afford to continue therapy as much as would be liked, but thankfully I'm healthy enough to where it's ok.

Going from 'getting by in life with an eating disorder' to 'possibly doing very well without an ED'. I've reached a level where I can function, physically and mentally, and I struggle to see how my life would be any different if I stopped purging etc. altogether. I've fully accepted that I need to eat enough to stay healthy and do not try to restrict, but find this impossible without careful planning.

Dealing with physical gaining and learning not to channel emotional stress into restrictive behaviors.

It's really hard for me because I'm still overweight (250lbs). It took years for someone to even believe me, and I still have every doctor and human being telling me I need to lose weight to be "happy" or "healthy".

Coping with the past and my emotions without turning to other forms of self-harm, and I guess, perhaps adjusting to the fact that actually I am beginning to be ok with being a higher weight. I feel fairly ok with it and that in itself is hard to adjust it/ I find myself doubting and questioning the fact I feel OK. I feel like I shouldn't feel OK!

Trying to learn how to eat intuitively/somewhat 'normally' after almost a decade of restricting and bizarre food rituals.

Perfectionism. I've found that when I throw myself into my studies it is all I want to focus on, and my mind goes to places that seem very familiar to me (in a bad way). It is not easy to avoid over-exercising in particular when I am trying to quell my anxiety and perfectionism. There is also a very fine line between using exercise in a positive way and over-doing it, for me, while exercise can of course be a good way to mitigate anxiety and perfectionism, I struggle to not over-rely on it. This is much harder than continuing to eat because I know for sure that not eating will make me feel crummy whereas it is easy to convince myself that exercise could never make me feel crummy.

Body image is a bitch. It's so hard to have to physically face yourself and see your body go through changes.

Facing the emotional baggage that caused or perpetuated the ED and finding the courage to ask for help.

Growing out of my clothes and my "high" BMI. My eating disorder constantly tells me I was never thin enough and should shrink back down to the underweight category and be able to fit my size 4 clothes again.

Sticking to a meal plan/schedule. If I stray from it, even for a day, I feel the ED-related thoughts tend to increase.

The largest challenge I face is complacency. I am a highly functional anorexic and the automaticity of my eating disorder behaviors make it difficult to realize how much ED impacts my life and my relationships with others.

3. (For those currently *not* in recovery) What is the biggest challenge you are facing right now in getting to a place where you can begin (or resume) recovery?

Access to more treatment when I am not severely ill.

Ambivalence is my biggest obstacle to recovery.

Becoming comfortable enough with my body to recover.

Convincing myself that I deserve happiness.

Financial barriers to treatment.

Finishing school and finding time to devote to getting better.

Losing my identity and my best friend... if that makes sense.

Motivation to try harder on my own .

My own mind; I do not wish to recover. Ever.

Not wanting to gain weight.

Accepting that I deserve health, accepting that my self-worth is not intertwined with my weight.

I don't have anyone outside of the eating disorder/mental health bubble to talk to.

The fear of being fat again.

Because your body goes through such trauma, you get sick very easily, which can put you on hold with exercise - something that keeps you sane when recovering. That's the hardest, getting on a roll then getting sick.

I don't like the weight I am at. I feel I cannot stay at this weight and be okay. It feels like it will be wrong. Forever. At the same time, I know losing and at a lower weight will still probably suck and feel wrong.

The biggest challenge, since I've tried to "recover", would be having the proper control with my food intake and going along with what I plan. I would have a great and healthy meal plan for the day and lose complete control right when I start eating.

I am still struggling with the thought of gaining weight, which would mean regaining womanly curves and all that bullshit.

Well, I don't exactly want to recover at the moment. But, I definitely want to be recovered by the time I graduate from college, and I have a feeling it's going to be a long battle. The way things are going right now, I'll probably have all sorts of health complications, and I'm so stuck in the anorexia-type mindset that I can't even begin to imagine thinking like a "normal" person, and having a "normal" relationship with food.

Finding motivation to change. I feel like my "routine" works for me; I do well at university, I have a boyfriend etc. It's like some part of me tries to convince me that recovery won't make me feel any better, I'll still feel depressed because that's just who I am.

No motivation to recover. Perhaps denial as well. The usual "I'm not sick enough" thing. No one in my family or friends circle seems to think I need help either.

Coming to terms with gaining weight and the fact that my body will not healthily maintain at the size I consider ideal.

I make progress and feel better about myself and just when everything is okay I get a craving to binge and purge. Binging and purging make me feel like I have control over my body and what I do or don't gain. I know that isn't true though.

No one knows the truth how bad my eating disorder has gotten, and I don't want to tell them. I

also don't think I deserve recovery.

The fact that I will be accepting myself for what my body is naturally is what is stopping me from returning to recovery.

Getting full treatment on my tumor. I go to an out-of-state college and can't regularly go to the hospital. I also don't feel comfortable talking to any counselors or the health center on my campus, even though my boyfriend works there and assures me it's safe. Social anxiety is a huge factor in my choice to not recover.

4. (For those who have been/are in recovery) Was there something you thought would be very challenging but turned out to be fairly *easy* (or easier than you had expected)?

Facing my body. The first few months of changes which involved restoring an adequate amount of body fat for a female body was REALLY fucking hard, but once I accepted the fact that I need more than 5% body fat to function, the rest of the gain didn't bother me. My shape changed drastically in the first couple months and now I'm the same shape regardless of gain, which I was not expecting and has made it really easy to cope with.

After I decided to start the path to recovery it was easier than I thought to stay true to that decision and not want to go back.

I think that it's all been easier than I expected. . . or actually, I expected for the weight gain to be the hard part, and the psychological part to be easier and it has turned out to be the other way around. I've also found that eating 'fear' foods, although not easy, gets easier with time and is never as bad as I imagine, even the first time.

It was all as hard as I thought.

Not really it has all be hard.

Not really. Everything about recovery was overwhelmingly difficult for me, to be honest.

Everything I've experienced is challenging

No, it all sucked. . . and if it was "easy" at first, it then gave me guilt and anxiety over it being easy (making it not easy).

It's fairly easy for me to be happy. I never thought I could wake up and look in the mirror and say, "I am good, today is good, everything is good." I never thought I could be happy, and I am. I'm so grateful.

Previously (not this time around): Eating in treatment. Getting external permission to eat made is SO MUCH EASIER than I thought it would be.

Eating! I love food: shopping for it, cooking it, eating it. Being 'officially' in recovery gave me permission to do these things, which my eating disorder took away from me. Once I had this permission, eating became a lot easier.

Once I decided I really wanted recovery, it still took me years to actually force myself to eat more, because I was so terrified of the negative emotions. Once I did it, I realised it wasn't really as bad as

I thought. Scary and anxiety-provoking, yes, but not horrific.

Eating over 2000 calories a day. The encouraging recovery blogs on Tumblr who say you should eat 2500+ a day really motivate me to get the calories in and my metabolism sped up again so I can maintain my weight while eating lots of delicious food. Also accepting myself and my body; I no longer have a desire to be thin.

Eating out in restaurants, strangely. Maybe I just got used to it?

Once the initial shock of eating more was over, it was easier to keep eating regularly than I thought it would be.

Gaining weight has been too easy.

Following a weight gain meal plan without bingeing.

Getting emotional and financial support from my parents to seek treatment as an adult was easier than I expected it to be. We've all changed a lot since I first started dealing with my eating disorder as a teenager.

Grocery shopping.

Journaling.

Not purging was surprisingly easy. Digesting food, however, was difficult.

Well, initially in treatment I was there for anorexia, and started my recovery. I made a lot of behavioral changes and was doing really well, but ended up relapsing into purging disorder. I don't really consider myself in recovery from anorexia at this point, although I recognize that I have a very stereotypical anorexia personality, i.e. very controlled rigid inflexible perfectionistic, but it did think if I was to stop purging or even lessen it, it would be really challenging to not swing to the anorexia spectrum again. It turned out that by working in my purging, I wasn't tempted much to start restricting again and obsess over the scale. I thought I would entirely reverse but instead it's been consistent.

Stop weighing myself every time I went to the bathroom!

Giving up my scale at home. I really thought I'd lose my mind not being able to weigh myself, and only getting weighed when I see my doctor (usually every two weeks). . . but after the first couple of days, it barely even bothered me at all and I'm glad I did it.

Being honest with treatment providers.

Talking about it once I opened up.

I thought opening up to others in recovery (in groups, online. . .) would be hard and triggering but it's turned out to be the best part of recovery.

Discussing my struggles with a psychologist was not as challenging as I had anticipated. He was very understanding and non-judgmental.

Telling my partner! I thought it would be stressful to tell them because I've never had a partner who was understanding/not terrible but she's been fantastic and very supportive.

I guess the only thing that wasn't as challenging as I thought it would be was being completely

honest in treatment.

Yes, telling those close to me about my recovery and what I am doing to sustain it. I was anxious but they were and are so supportive.

Scaling back to a healthy level of exercise was easier than expected and almost a welcome change.

Tackling some fear foods

Fear foods! I just need to get the food in front of me and venture to eat a bite. They truly aren't dangerous. (If a bagel bites you back you know something's wrong.)

I thought fear foods would be more difficult to challenge. I had always heard of people crying when faced with whatever food they feared, and while I certainly got anxiety and struggled at times, it wasn't that emotional.

Eating foods I previously thought were scary - I always figured I would struggle with specific fear foods but have found that I have little anxiety relating to any food in particular.

Before residential treatment (even during and after for a while) I didn't think it would be possible to consistently eat foods that I didn't consider "safe". By forcing myself to be exposed to them, though, it became easier each time.

I thought facing fear foods would be more challenging, but I found that I was able to eat almost anything. However, my intake has become significantly more restrictive in this relapse, so re-introducing "real" foods may be more challenging in the future.

5. (For those who have been/are in recovery) What has been the *most challenging* part of recovery? Is there something you thought would be much easier than it turned out to be?

Admitting and accepting the fact that I do have an eating disorder.

Allowing others to hold me accountable.

Beginning it, and not lapsing during times of stress or bad body image.

Changing the way I think about myself, my body, and eating.

Dispelling fear foods, that never really went away.

Eating so much in one day. It's a lot more difficult than I anticipated.

Gaining weight and not relapsing was hard.

Giving up throwing up is just not something I will ever do.

Loving myself and working through tough times.

Most challenging is trying to eat more consistently, it's just overwhelming.

Reinventing a new life.

Removing yourself from the environment.

The most challenging part is knowing you're gaining weight and being unhappy in your body.

I thought I'd just be able to stop.

As I mentioned above, the whole "oops your digestive system forgot how to function" thing. So many foods I used to love, if I try to eat them now, it's like my stomach thinks I'm eating wood chips or poison or something. I had no idea about the extent of atrophy of your basic bodily functions. No one talks about that.

To eat junk food without feeling the need (or the duty) to restrict or burn it all in my workouts.

To start was very challenging. After a few days/weeks without purging I really wanted to show myself that I can do better and better, after every relapse.

Stopping exercise was much harder, and continues to be more of a struggle. Then again, I did expect that.

I thought gaining weight would be easier than it has turned out to be. The fear of the scale holds me back from eating enough to gain weight.

Not attributing recovery with weight. I always struggle to remind myself that my physical weight is not necessarily an absolute indication of how well I am. I can be in a good place physically and still be sick in my head.

I thought the actual eating would be a lot easier like 'oh you'll finally get to eat all the foods you used to love again' but I haven't hit the point where I can actually enjoy food yet, even the things I used to love I'm still having to force down.

The most challenging part is letting the bad thoughts pass. They come and they are there and they are difficult to ignore, but I'm learning to recognize them as valid and deal with them in a healthy way!

Gaining and accepting weight gain. Breaking out of really rigid patterns. Eating and gaining was too easy.

I thought committing myself to recovery and sticking to it would be easier. I'm normally so motivated and such a hard worker, so I thought once I decided I wanted to get better I'd just be able to stick to it and move forward. I wasn't anticipating relapse.

When I first started working on recovery, I naively thought that it would be easy to keep going with it. I didn't expect to never relapse, but I never thought I might have a relapse that would have my disorder get worse than it ever had been.

Actually stopping purging. With going back to treatment I really expected it to be very mapped out with DBT skills and a trajectory that made sense. DBT skills had really helped me to change my anorexia behaviors, but I never found anything to really stop my purging like I'd expected it to. More or less I found ways to be more aware of when the feelings were building up and how to try to prevent it, but once I want to purge, I never really found anything fool proof that really consistently helped.

Feeling confident about my body was the hardest thing I've ever tried to do. No matter what I did, the only thing I could think about was my stomach jiggling and my thighs rubbing up against each

other.

Gaining weight is the most challenging because of thoughts/feelings it brings up regarding my body and past sexual abuse. The more weight I have, the more aware I am of my body.

Simply eating more was a lot more challenging than I thought. In the beginning, every meal was an inner war because I was certainly hungry, but I was still pretty desperate to die (starving to death was something I was drawn to as if a survival instinct. It was like I was in a 'mode' to do it) so the feeling of having adequate calories in my system really threw me off. There was a lot of sobbing between bites. After that, reversing the digestive distress/gastroparesis took a LONG time and was a lot more painful than I expected. My tolerance of starch/sugar was so low that a single bite of pita or sip of milk had enough carbs to give me stabbing cramps and fever.

The rapid physical changes which occur, the feeling that 'no one understands' the immense challenge of what is such a mundane task for most: eating.

I think the most challenging part has been not using other forms of self-harm, not replacing restriction and weight loss with another way of harming myself. It's also been difficult to acknowledge parts of my eating disorder that are still a problem now I'm a healthy weight, I kind of think 'I'm a healthier weight now, so I can't have a problem' which leads to me not talking about or seeking help for problems I still have, or minimizing them. It's also been really hard to get my head around the fact that a minimal healthy weight may not be a weight that enables me to reach the place I want to be, and that my healthy weight may be higher than the minimum. For a long time I was adamant that I would get to the magical BMI number that takes me into healthy but would not step over it, at all, and I'm beginning to learn and accept that to have the healthy relationship with food I want, and to psychologically recover, I have to go higher. Another hard thing is seeing on the online community, people discussing 'real' recovery and feeling inadequate because of this.

The most challenging part for me was dealing with the intense emotions that came with resuming normal eating. I hadn't expected that to happen at all, so it was a challenge.

Everywhere you turn there are women with undiagnosed disorders. Giving up snacks and sugar for Lent, exercising until they get to minus calories, these people really trigger me and they are everywhere.

My mother. She's on a health kick right now and she doesn't seem to understand the whole "please don't tell me about calories" thing.

Nearly everything about recovery has been more difficult than I expected it to be. With this relapse, things went downhill so quickly that I assumed I could also turn them around quickly. I was pretty deep in denial when I started treatment. I am amazed by how hard my eating disorder fights back every time I make progress in recovery. It is absolutely relentless.

There are still some behaviors that I struggle with daily. For example, I have to use certain utensils when I'm eating at home. If someone else in my family sets the dinner table and they give me the "wrong" fork, I feel like I have to get the one I'm comfortable with.

The recovery process involves constantly working to maintain it, and sometimes that can be exhausting. For all of the days that I feel happier and healthier, there are just as many when I feel pretty awful.

Feeling comfortable in my body at a healthy weight. Appearance-wise, I can tolerate my weight/shape, but I am constantly aware of how bulky and heavy and lumpy I feel when I make any movement, still, after 2 years of being at this weight. Eating enough to maintain my weight. Stopping (binging-)purging. I was told many times that if I was weight restored and eating well that I wouldn't need/want to do this anymore. It happens a less, but very easily escalates to pre-recovery rates if I'm not careful. In nearly 3 years, I have only reduced the number binge/purge episodes per week by about 40%.
