

What Recovery Means to Me

By Beth Mayer, Executive Director, MEDA

I believe recovery is waking up every day and not having food or your body making decisions for you. It is making reasonable food choices and enjoying the foods that you eat. It is feeling strong in your body and feeling that your body has a purpose in this world. Recovery means that you can be fully present and engaged in your life and that neither food nor your body can distract you from building healthy meaningful relationships. Recovery means being able to be flexible and spontaneous in your food choices. Recovery helps you understand that perfection does not exist and that being “imperfect” is perfectly okay. Recovery means that you are trying to live an honest life rather than one filled with lies and deceit. It allows you to set limits and have confidence that those limits are acceptable. Recovery is hard, challenging and painful, but it is also amazing and helps you feel whole and real.

Many people may not be able to achieve all of these goals in their recovery. This is, however, what recovery means to me. I believe that people can fully recover from this horrible disease, but in order to do so, sacrifices have to be made. You must be willing to accept that you may not have the body you have always dreamed of. You need to recognize that wanting a certain type of body is often because you believe a “perfect” body will make you feel happy and secure. You need to understand that people come in all shapes and sizes, and that there is no one way to look or feel. You need to believe that you can experience a range of emotions and they will not destroy you. You need to accept discomfort rather than numb it away. You need to allow yourself to be vulnerable.

In order to fully recover, you need to truly believe that recovery is possible. For some, it may be a spiritual path. For others, it may be an emotional one. It does not matter how you get to recovery. All that matters is that you start.

Many people fear recovery. They wonder what their life will be like without their eating disorders. I have yet to meet anyone who is fully recovered and wishes they still had their eating disorder. Regardless of your age, when you recover, you have learned to successfully fight some of the harshest demons in your life. I believe that the coolest people are recovered. Recovery may be the hardest thing you will ever accomplish, but it is totally worth it!