

## What Is Anti-Anorexia/Bulimia?

By Eva Wisdom (1998)

What is anti-anorexia? How is it to be defined? We cannot appeal to a dictionary to find its definition. It is a term that has as many interpretations as those who externalize anorexia and by doing so, venture on the beginning of an anti-anorexic life.

Externalizing anorexia is a two-stage process. The first stage requires being able to 'see' it as separate from you. This involves your mind in coming to understand it as being a separate identity to yourself. The second stage is to engage your heart in KNOWING anorexia's separateness from yourself. This is essential to sustaining your anti-anorexic venture. Aren't 'seeing' and 'knowing' the same? No. For isn't it possible to 'see' something and understand that it exists without necessarily 'knowing' about it? Anorexia is no exception. Reaching the place of 'seeing' it as separate to you does not involve your heart in being able to feel that separateness and without that, there is a lack of power and control. By merely 'seeing' anorexia, that does not annihilate it. It can continue, albeit at times slyly, to exert its control over you. There will be times when an anti-anorexic life venture seems promising but lacking what I have referred to as 'heart knowing' of anorexia's separateness from yourself, it remains impossible to sustain your anti-anorexia. For with such 'knowing', there comes control and with control, there is power.

Your anti-anorexic voice will be what contends with the voice of anorexia. However, be under no illusion. Because anti-anorexia's tangibility comes from your interpretation of it, there is a high probability that at times of vulnerability, anorexia will again vie for control of you. It would seem that once anorexia has enslaved you in its torment, anti-anorexia needs to be an integral part of your life.

By giving anorexia a separate identity outside of yourself, it is then possible to engage in the characteristic anti-anorexic/anorexic dialogue in which anorexia can, at long last, be confronted. Without such a separation, anorexia can well become so entwined with yourself that for all intents and purposes, you consider it to be an integral part of your being. Thereby, its voice becomes yours and you become its voice. Anorexia would have the person believe that it is their own voice speaking. This can have tragic consequences.

Anti-anorexia, however, is all about freedom - freedom to make your own decisions and choosing your own appetites, desires and wants. Anti-anorexia can be anything that your imagination, desires and appetites wish it to be. There is no course to study, nor rules to follow. However, be not deluded. Anorexia will not relent without a fight and at times, full-scale warfare. Anorexia harbours you in isolation; anti-anorexia will free you to know again the enrichment to be had from contact with others. Always keep in mind that anorexia would have you silenced so that it can speak through you without impediment. Most importantly, it is your anti-anorexia that will unshackle you from the unrelenting torment of anorexia.

Postscript 1: When you reach the first stage of 'seeing' anorexia as separate from yourself, anorexia will try to tantalize you with its sham of compromising. This is an abominable trick of anorexia to deceive you into believing that anorexia is now separate from you. This delusion is soon dispelled once anorexia demands uncompromising and unrelenting control again. Remaining in this stage can result in you being repeatedly tormented by these false 'freedoms'. Anorexia's only intention is to annihilate your body, mind and soul/spirit and ultimately your death. Not reaching the place of 'heart knowing' anorexia as separate from yourself may tragically only be stalling off your own death. Hard words? Yes. But anorexia is a ruthless murderer without any scruples. Your next venture is on to the second stage of an anti-anorexic life.

'Heart Knowing' involves your feelings which could well sound scary for anyone enslaved by anorexia (also known as bulimia). For anorexia/bulimia may very well have anaesthetized your feelings for many years. The practice of 'heart-knowing'; is about pursuing anti-anorexic/bulimic activities/strategies, or in the words of Wally McKenzie, "guilt-defying acts". Being forearmed is forewarned as anorexia would have you feeling guilty for pursuing anything that is in opposition to it - enjoyment, fun, pleasure, self-fulfillment, etc. 'Heart knowing' gives you the necessary strength of conviction. Guilt can at times engulf you and ensnare you back in anorexia. However, as you make a practice of 'guilt-defying acts', the tangibility of your anti-anorexia is first confirmed and further substantiated.

Anorexia would have its captives believe its lies (that is the opposite of what(ever) is true). By pursuing your 'heart-knowing' anti-anorexic practice, it becomes possible to speak with conviction your own anti-anorexic 'truth' to anorexia and by doing so sustain it. You may well decide to make up your life anti-anorexically by choosing anti-anorexia. However be under no delusion that anorexia will protest overtly or covertly. In having come to a 'heart knowing' of anorexia as separate to yourself, may I therefore encourage you to make a practice of telling anorexia your anti-anorexic truth - the opposite of whatever lies in which it would attempt to ensnare you.