

Writer's Memo: "How Skinny Feels: My Experience with an Eating Disorder"

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I wrote "How Skinny Feels" as a personal memoir project in my Writing in Women's studies class the spring semester of my freshman year at UF. Before that assignment, I hadn't written an English paper in first person since middle school. I knew how to write literary analysis of existing works. I knew how to write news articles about outside events and people. But this assignment was different. Not only did I have to communicate my own feelings, I had to do some soul-searching to find out what those feelings were. There was no word count and no rubric to follow. The only guideline was that our memoir must center around an event that "rocked us to our cores." I sat down to write and the words flowed out. It was cathartic and painful all at once.

When I was recovering, my dad found, printed and gave me a blog article written by a college-aged girl who had struggled with anorexia in high school. She wrote about the story of her anorexia: how it had arisen, how it had shaped her, and how she overcame it. The article ended with a current picture of her in college. I read that blog over and over. The happy expression on her face in the final photo gave me hope that recovery was not only possible, but a positive outcome.

When my wonderful teacher Dr Carolyn Kelley told me my essay could help other people experiencing the same battle and suggested I submit it for publishing, I immediately thought back to that blog post. I hope my story can encourage others to choose recovery in the same way that blog did for me.