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Behind Pro-Anorexia Sites

By Tia Scott

Behind Pro-Anorexia Sites

by: **Tia Scott**

Anorexia effects thousands of people each year, most whom are females ranging from the ages of 15-25.

With the boom of pro-anorexia sites, the media has portrayed its negative exploration of these such sites. With names such as "Love You to the Bones" and "Stick Thin Pixies" , these pro-anorexia sites provide a safe haven for people that live with anorexia.

Some of these sites display logo's such as "Anorexia-A Lifestyle, Not A Disease." and "Fatness Equals Imperfection" Clearly stating and signifying their proudness of being anorexic.

We were aloud to go behind the scenes at a few of these sites and study the need for these girls to attend pro-anorexia sites. Many of them say they go to these sites for the support of their peers that are in a similar situation such as theirs.

Below are a few interviews that were conducted by us to some of the girls that attend these sites. Please note that we do not promote anorexia in any way, shape, or form. We felt that instead of negativity, as the media has done, that these girls should have a chance as everyone else to speak their minds about the situation. We were going to edit the interviews into one article, but the girls' opinions and situations were so strong that we decided to include their whole interviews.

Anonymous – Story One

1- What is your age?

14

2- How long have you been trying to lose weight?

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Seriously trying, about 5 months now

3- How much do you weight?

A disgusting 139 (down from 165 though)

4- What is your goal weight?

Around 90 pounds, but I want to someday get down to 75.

5- What has influenced you the most on trying to lose weight?

Probably fashion industry. I'd like to fit into those cute little clothes that they make just for skinny people.

6- Do you think the media and "stardom" plays a role with how you feel about your body?

I think if you have the pre-disposition, yes it can be a factor

7- What has been the hardest for you trying to lose weight?

When you stop eating normally, you either don't eat enough or eat too much (bingeing). You lose a sense of 'in the middle'; one extreme or the other. I have to deal with the bingeing.

8- How do you feel about the term "anorexia?"

Many would disagree, but I think it is a disease for some people, but for others (like me), we are *choosing* to do/continue with it.

9- How do you view anorexia?

If it progresses to a point, a disease, in the early stages, I view it as a lifestyle, something we should be allowed to continue with out harassment.

10- Do you see yourself as having low self esteem?

Yes, I do.

11- Do you attend "pro-anorexia" sites?

Yes and I run one too.

12- If yes, why do you attend "pro-anorexia" sites?

Behind Pro-Anorexia Sites

To feel less alone, that there are other people out there too that struggle with the same things I do.

13- Is there any words you would like to say that could convince people that anorexia should be accepted as a lifestyle and not a disease?

If the affected person doesn't want help, who are you to say they have to get it? Yes it might be best for them, but you have no right to make that choice. If I want to view anorexia as a lifestyle, I can do that and you have no right/responsibility to change my mind for me.

14- Finally, if you had the chance to say how you felt about the media's negative exploitation of pro-anorexic sites, what would you say to them?

You say we lure people into this so-called life style. We do not and the fact that in some of your articles you list pro-anorexic web sites makes you no better than us. You say we are selfish and yet to get more readers you name off pro-anorexic groups and publish pictures off of our sites. You are no better than what you say we are. Pro-anorexia sites exist because we are tired of feeling alone and worthless. They are here to let people have the strength to get out of bed in the morning. You can put a anorexic in a hospital, threaten to tube feed them, but do you really think they will get better if *they*

don't want to themselves? These sites keep people going emotionally and if they choose to get help, we support them 110%.

Darcy's Story

1- What is your age?

15

2- How long have you been trying to lose weight?

Its only become a 'priority' in the last year or so. And the pro-ana is also only a very recent thing; I want to lose it fast.now

3- How much do you weight?

I honestly don't know, haven't stepped on a scale in 6 years. BUT I do know I'm over-weight, and this isn't a 'anorexic mind set here' people often say "you're a big girl". Yuck.

4- What is your goal weight?

I don't have one... but I do know I want to be sexy not skinny.... (maybe a little of both?) its more of a looking in the mirror than it is stepping on the scales thing...

5- What has influenced you the most on trying to lose weight?

Behind Pro-Anorexia Sites

Probably looking at my gorgeous friends every day.... it makes me hate my body...

6- Do you think the media and "stardom" plays a role with how you feel about your body?

Possibly... but I don't go in for crowd following/star worshipping....

7- What has been the hardest for you trying to lose weight?

I comfort eat BIG time, and I'm depressed, which means I have alot to comfort eat about! Sometimes I wonder if I have binge eating disorder.... anyway, that's it....

8- How do you feel about the term "anorexia?"

I actually think its one of the few terms that still holds meaning and hasn't been abused when it comes to 'mental illness' (not that I'm saying its a mental illness)

9- How do you view anorexia?

I'll be honest, I think I know what I'm getting into is kind of risky. There is a part of me screaming out "why do you want this disease". I'm not stupid. I KNOW it KILLS. I think maybe I'm relying on the fact that I have no self-control, to win out before it gets too much.. maybe I'm in denial.... There are

borderline-anorexics who can live the life style, while still managing to go on, maintaining enough weight not to be hospitalized. I guess that's a life style. But when it goes to full out, bones showing, passing out, I'm not sure.... Sorry for the evasive answer...

10- Do you see yourself as having low self esteem?

Yes. I used to be full of confidence but then I got heavily depressed and it all went out the window. 'low self esteem' isn't the right word. I actively HATE myself.

11- Do you attend "pro-anorexia" sites?

Yes all the time.

12- If yes, why do you attend "pro-anorexia" sites?

To pass the 'not eating' time. To know I'm not alone. To find tips and tricks.

13- Is there any words you would like to say that could convince people that anorexia should be accepted as a lifestyle and not a disease?

I'm not saying that it should, many people with it are sick, and need help. But there are others, who believe in what they're doing, who CHOOSE to live like that. It is their free right to that choice, and however much you may disagree, please PLEASE don't judge, and try to understand us.

14- Finally, if you had the chance to say how you felt about the media's negative exploitation of pro-anorexic sites, what would you say to them?

Not alot..... I mean, we're still going strong, its not a big deal to us.... but it does kinda isolate us y'know? its like "them and us", maybe pushing us back further into our own underground world. The things they say are ridiculous, laughable really. I mean, they haven't looked at the sites in any other way but the 'judgmental worried mother' eyes they know their readers want. really, all these shock stories are not needed for a relatively harmless thing.

15- Additional Comments:

For me, this isn't mainly about weight. Its alot about control. I feel so out of control in the rest of my life, this is something I need to do to show myself I can. I also self-injure, and starving myself is a form of that. I'm not saying I'm 'pro' self injury too, but without it I'd be dead by now, so who knows?

Stefanie's Story

1- What is your age?

I am an 18 yr. old

2- How long have you been trying to lose weight?

Basically I first started having issues with my body image by fifth grade, I was limiting my food intake considerably and six grade was when I first started purging. For me it was never about bingeing it was just trying to throw up anything that might be inside of me ever sense then I have had long time periods of anorexia and when I have to eat is when I purge, so I would say I have had this problem for almost seven years.

3- How much do you weight?

Right now I'm currently at 92 lbs and 5'4.

4- What is your goal weight?

Right now my goal is maintaining this weight between 90 and 92 I don't want to see myself go above 95, but any more weight loss is welcomed.

5- What has influenced you the most on trying to lose weight?

Basically what I have discovered that contributed to me starting all of this was that I have A.D.H.D and a degree of dyslexia my problems came in academics and in the classroom I had absolutely no control over my performance there were just certain subjects such as math and science I could never grasp. I was very popular, I played volleyball, basketball when I was on the court playing I was in control. But when my grades started dropping and I couldn't play on school teams because of academic probation

and because of my math grade I lost that control, my grades caused enormous friction in my house with my parents I desperately needed to regain what I had lost so I turned to food, it was so easy to turn to something that I already felt so gross about even though I know I wasn't fat at the time I knew it could make me fat and I had to control that. So from then on when things in my life got out of my hands Food is what I have turned to by avoiding it at all costs even health. !

and once the cycle starts of not eating it takes over your life there is no stopping it no matter what every minute of every day I am dealing with it, the guilt, the shame, peoples opinions, my self view...it never goes away sometimes I wish I could just sleep for ever so it would leave my thoughts..

6- Do you think the media and "stardom" plays a role with how you feel about your body?

Oh most definitely, it doesn't matter why you start starving yourself once you have begun the cycle it does become all about weight because when you loose weight you have this amazing high and when you gain you have enormous shame and guilt that ways so heavy on you. just the other night I was watching prime-time Thursday and an interview of Carre Otis was on, the supermodel who gained weight and is now a "plus size model" I think that its great that she is proud of her body and helping other girls with self image in what she is doing but while I was listening to her story and she was talking about how she was praised for her starvation and how she could loose 10 lbs in two weeks, she was saying all these things about her weight and how she was expected to be skinny and I was just sitting there thinking in my head she doesn't realize what she just did.. she gave the justification girls are looking for the praise she got when she was starving herself, and I know millions of g!

irls who were watching that are now thinking if it worked for her for 17 yrs it can work for me. It doesn't matter what else she said in that interview all those girls heard was the praise. So yes, media plays an enormous role in girls suffering from an eating disorder, magazines, TV shows, award shows, basically anything and anyone in the media who has the so called "perfect body" at the time is triggering girls all

over to start dieting and some starvation. Also these talk shows such as Craig Kilborn who gloats about having the prettiest women on his show every week, girls watch those things and think ok I have to look like that for me to be pretty or oh she is skinny, I have to be skinny like that for a guy to view me that way it doesn't matter if she is already skinny and gorgeous if she doesn't see herself that way then anything will influence

7- What has been the hardest for you trying to lose weight?

The hardest thing I would say is hitting rock bottom, I am so over come with this disease sometimes that it affects every aspect of my life. I get so worn down with light headedness, nausea, and energy. Forget energy. Sometimes its all I can do to walk up my stairs and on top of that trying to cover up this huge secret that has literally taken over my life, its a 24-7 job covering my tracks and lying about what I eat and finding ways to not be around during meals and when I do eat immediately trying to find ways to get rid of the food I ate. It's a constant battle.

8- How do you feel about the term "anorexia?"

The term anorexia I understand to be the textbook name for an eating disorder that I am said to have. To me I don't have anorexia. I have a life long burden, a disease that takes control over everything in my life. It starts out with you believing you are in control but somewhere along the line you no longer control it, it controls you. I never see this leaving my life and the stress it gives me sometimes can be beyond unbearable

9- How do you view anorexia?

"Anorexia" for me is my lifestyle I mean when you deal with something for so many years its habit and habits that you have been doing and working so hard to perfect I see as being almost impossible to overcome. For me it is something that is often times scary and can be mind altering. It is a disease that I struggle with every minute of every hour of every day. It never leaves.

10- Do you see yourself as having low self esteem?

Yes. Sometimes when I look at pictures of celebrities I see myself as being less adequate than they are.. but at times where I have lost weight that I wanted to loose and I weigh myself and just feel such satisfaction that day for achieving what I feel I needed to, and when I get compliments it provokes me to keep achieving weight loss and when I go out and my pants are a little loose or my skirt is loose on my hips its a great unexplainable high.

11- Do you attend "pro-anorexia" sites?

Yes, I do.

12- If yes, why do you attend "pro-anorexia" sites?

I find it a release.. Here is a place I can go without being judged or looked at and have a forum to voice my feelings with people who are dealing with the exact same thing as me. I find encouragement and support.

13- Is there any words you would like to say that could convince people that anorexia should be

accepted as a lifestyle and not a disease?

I mean I just cant explain how hard it is to read and receive negativity from people who judge or comment rudely. You know anorexia is an incredibly hard thing to deal with and even harder to overcome no matter what I think that it is with you for life. And I feel that people shouldn't voice there opinions against something if they have never directly dealt with it. every day for me is a struggle and a battle.. and people who make fun of this disease are extremely ignorant. I mean it is obvious that Anorexia nervosa is a huge problem for woman and young girls in the united states today and I think that if people would stop for a second and try and educate themselves on why and what makes us feel the need to do this they would be less likely to criticize, and more willing to help and support.

14- Finally, if you had the chance to say how you felt about the media's negative exploitation of

pro-anorexic sites, what would you say to them?

I understand how some people could be enraged by coming across pro eating disorder web sites and finding girls are encouraging each other and supporting each other and sharing tips. But if a girl needs to come to this site to start starving herself then I don't believe she has the disease. I go to these websites because I know that the girls I post things with are all dealing with the same things as I am, we all know that its not going to change for us this is life so why not share ideas, stories ask questions give tips. It helps me feel that I am not AOL net doesn't matter what I read because I know I have this disease already and everything I read and all the tips that I see they are already things I already know and have tried. These sites don't provoke they create a community where girls like I can go freely and spill our emotions concerns and beliefs on the matter without fearing someone is judging me or oh I cant say that. I cant go to my friends and be like, "I didn't!

eat today I need a source of protein but I don't want to eat a slab of meet anyone have any ideas what I can eat without feeling guilty?" sites for pro-ed help in that area we all know we have a secret that we don't want friends and family knowing and here we can talk anonymously and get the feed back we need. I think the media needs to rethink there criticism and do more of what you are trying to do. explaining the real story. I mean the media needs to face it yes we have eating disorders this is just a new level of support groups, that is in demand and extremely needed.

Anonymous #2

1- What is your age?

19

2- How long have you been trying to lose weight?

Almost 2 years

3- How much do you weight?

No comment. Irrelevant. In fact, I do not know at the present. I am not weighing myself because it is too triggering. I'm trying to get better.

4- What is your goal weight?

LOWER, always far lower than the current weight. The goal is NEVER reached. When we reach a certain "goal", it isn't good enough, or low enough, and it is shifted once again

5- What has influenced you the most on trying to lose weight?

None of the superficial, external factors listed or commonly perceived to be the cause – it is about UNDERLYING issues, using anorexia as a coping mechanism, ironically. It is NEVER *really* about simply wanting to look like a supermodel or to impress. Certainly society's highly idealized body

images can trigger a nation full of dieters, but for THIS ALONE to cause one to transcend the world of dieting and enter the realm of eating disorders, is impossible. NO ONE would sacrifice their life just for the sake of looking a little more like Kate Moss. They would only sacrifice their lives because they couldn't live with being THEMSELVES.

6- Do you think the media and "stardom" plays a role with how you feel about your body?

answered above :)

7- What has been the hardest for you trying to lose weight?

Not quite sure what this means but if you are referring to the hardest part of suffering from anorexia..... It is the daily, relentless inward struggles, physical discomfort, feeling cold all the time, loss of menstruation, feeling weak, dizzy... The list could go on forever.

8- How do you feel about the term "anorexia?"

It's a clinical term. It's a label. It is usually equated with emaciated women, being deathly thin. But what many people don't realize is that anorexia is a psychological disease with physical symptoms. It is about the mindset. People have died from anorexia without being deathly thin, and at reasonable weights. Starvation or extreme restriction causes terrible and irreversible damage to your body.

9- How do you view anorexia?

Answered above... disease/sickness

10- Do you see yourself as having low self esteem?

Yes.

11- Do you attend "pro-anorexia" sites?

No, I do not.

13- Is there any words you would like to say that could convince people that anorexia should be accepted as a lifestyle and not a disease?

No way

14- Finally, if you had the chance to say how you felt about the media's negative exploitation of pro-anorexic sites, what would you say to them?

These pro sites are terrible. People should be aware of the potential damage they can cause.

Alice's Story

1- What is your age?

I'm 16.

2- How long have you been trying to lose weight?

My whole life. But really trying for the 5 months or so.

3- How much do you weight?

103-109, depending on what I've eaten that day

4- What is your goal weight?

90 or less

5- What has influenced you the most on trying to lose weight?

I just think being extremely thin is beautiful. Some models in the fashion industry are beautiful and thin, but I don't look at them and say "I have to be like that". that's crap...that's just what everyone wants to hear from us. Its not the media, its yourself. I think when you can see someone's ribs, its sexy and beautiful.

6- Do you think the media and "stardom" plays a role with how you feel about your body?

Not at all. Although, if I wanted to be famous, I'm pretty sure id have to be thin, because its hard to be fat and famous. Who likes obese people? Seriously. Think about it. Looks are important to everyone FIRST. No one says "Oh, that girl looks like she has a great personality. It doesn't matter that she's 300lbs." Everyone says "That girl is hot" or whatever.

7- What has been the hardest for you trying to lose weight?

My mom. If she would stay out of everything, I could get to 90lbs, and then be happy. I'm not happy with my body, but she thinks I should be. Its such a pain to hide it from her too. She should just let me. LET ME BE THIN.

8- How do you feel about the term "anorexia?"

Well, what else would I call it? Thin disease? I know what it means, I understand it. I am it

9- How do you view anorexia?

Its a lifestyle for me. Most people who are anorexic think of it that way, Unless they're some snobby person in an article who thinks she's hot stuff for "overcoming her disease". If you don't like it, don't do it moron. I LIKE it. it makes me feel good.

Behind Pro-Anorexia Sites

10- Do you see yourself as having low self esteem?

Not at all. I feel very loved usually. Plus, I don't care what people think. Most people don't believe that, because they think I'm trying to get thinner so "guys will like me" or some crap, but I'm doing it because I WANT TO be thinner. For myself. To love myself even more.

11- Do you attend "pro-anorexia" sites?

Oooh yes. I'm a member of every club there is. They give me tips, and they help, they give information on how to also stay healthy...they understand me like no one else does.

12- If yes, why do you attend "pro-anorexia" sites?

Same reasons as above. I hate it, just HATE it when Yahoo and other sites delete the pro-ana clubs because it promotes bad stuff, or whatever. Well, say the "anti-ana" sites OFFEND me. Will they delete them too? Nope.

13- Is there any words you would like to say that could convince people that anorexia should be accepted as a lifestyle and not a disease?

I don't even know how to put it into words. All people here all the time is about the people who got so thin they almost died, or the people who over came it and what not. They never ever hear about the girl in New York who was anorexic, got to 100lbs, and became famous and HAPPY because she was happy with herself. They don't know about it ever, BUT IT HAPPENS.

14- Finally, if you had the chance to say how you felt about the media's negative exploitation of pro-anorexic sites, what would you say to them?

They're corporate America, and that's all there is to it. They don't mean anything to me, but everyone else who comes home and glues themselves to the TV thinks that they're right. Well...they're not. And if you disagree, you know nothing. I will never be Miss Corporate America's child. You shouldn't be either.

"Ignore what other people think you like and listen to your heart, it's your passions in life no one can rightfully criticize."

Tia is CEO of Client Centers, LLC, an internet and graphic service business based in Florida since 2000.

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Hypnosis For Eating Disorders?

By Carl Graeber

Today, eating disorders such as Anorexia and Bulimia are running rapid. If a person intentionally starves him or herself yet believes they are overweight, they could very well be suffering from Anorexia Nervosa, which is a severe emotional disorder that needs serious intervention. With this, the diet is drastically restricted, coupled by excessive exercise. The result is dangerous weight loss that can cause serious damage to the body to include death.

Bulimia is a form of Anorexia, which is characterized by misuse of laxatives, diuretics, enemas, and/or vomiting to rid the body of food consumed during binge eating. In both cases, the body is put at great medical risk. The problem is that both Anorexia and Bulimia are not just serious but difficult to treat. In addition to the body needing intervention, the mind also needs intervention since the individual with the eating disorder sees him or herself as fat although they could easily be 50% of their normal weight.

These eating disorders typically begin in adolescents, which are seen most often around time of puberty. However, although rare, eating disorders can affect people over the age of 40, and again, both males and females although girls are in the highest risk category. If you have a child and you begin to notice things like infrequent or stopped menstrual cycle, dry skin, thinning hair, cold and/or swollen feet, or a bloated stomach while watching drastic weight loss, then you need to pay attention.

The psychological signs generally involve poor judgment, problem with memory and/or concentration, a distorted perception of the body, denial, obsessive–compulsive behavior, and depression; these could well be indications that an eating disorder is a problem. Treating eating disorders is a long process that addresses both physical and psychological. Many of the traditional treatment options include cognitive and behavioral therapy, antidepressants, and herbs. However, because the mind is involved, hypnosis has also been proven very beneficial for some people suffering from Anorexia or Bulimia.

Although the exact cause of Anorexia and Bulimia remains unknown, most experts believe it has to do with the individual trying to gain control over their life. For this reason, you see young girls who are trying to fit into school, dating, or coming from a difficult home life turning to an eating disorder to gain some type of semblance in their life. With hypnosis, the subconscious mind can be reached and taught to change the normal pattern of thinking. By working with a reputable and licensed hypnotherapist, the subconscious can receive positive suggestions that relate to things beyond the eating disorder.

Although that will be the primary reason for seeking hypnosis, the underlying issues that lead to the eating disorder in the first place are addressed. In this case, the depression and cause of depression is uncovered. The individual learns self–confidence, healthy control, and other positive tools that can be used to conquer the battle with Anorexia or Bulimia. Keep in mind that along with hypnosis, the individual with the eating disorder will need ongoing love and support by family and friends. By creating a positive environment, recovery is possible. When choosing the right hypnotherapist, you want someone who also believes and supports in the individual receiving other treatment and medication.

These factors together will provide the best chance for success. In fact, many medical doctors are now adding hypnosis to their practice for this very reason. Over the years, studies have shown that in some cases, such as severe eating disorders, the combination of traditional medical care with hypnosis greatly improves the resolution.

Warning: This information is to be taken lightly! It may lighten your thinking and BMI (body mass index). So: take 5 minutes, and check out the free website at

and

– end

your quest by learning how to conquer obesity the right and healthy way!

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