



Schaefer, Jenni and Thom Rutledge. *Life Without Ed*. New York: McGraw-Hills, 2004.

Life Without Ed by Jenni Schaefer is told, primarily, through the eyes of Jenni but contains insight from her psychotherapist Thom Rutledge. This book provides a unique method of examining and treating eating disorders. Rutledge considers an eating disorder, Ed, as a relationship to the individual, not a condition. With this concept, Jenni begins to identify her eating disorder, “Ed,” as a separate being from herself, one that has its own distinct way of thinking and a personality all its own. She describes the hardships of her relationship with Ed, her recovery, relapse, and how she is able to break away from Ed for good.

Part 1: Filing for Divorce: *Separating from Ed*

- Learning how to separate from Ed and realizing he has a distinct personality and mind from your own
- Distinguishing between Ed’s goals, rules, and values from your own in order to disagree and disobey him
- The importance of a support group and the awareness that recovery cannot be done alone
- Suggestions from Thom on how to have a conversation with Ed

Part 2: It’s Not About Food?!: *How Food Is Involved*

- How to sidestep the desire to purge and the feeling to need to eat food made “just for you”
- The value of a food plan and how to introduce previously forbidden foods back into the plan
- Reasons why Thom feels it is important to share your food plan with someone and understand your relationship with food

Part 3: Mirror, Mirror on the Wall: *Is Thin Really Everything?*

- Understanding there is no specific body shape for someone with an eating disorder
- How Ed ‘sizes you up’: the scale, the descriptions from others about you, and the comparison between you and others
- Tips from Thom on how to escape Ed’s hypnotic suggestions and get rid of ‘powerful’ clothes

Part 4: Merry-Go-Round: *The Nuts and Bolts of Recovery*

- Times when Ed jumps in to ‘save the day’ and the struggle between being faithful to him vs. rejecting him
- Telling the truth, getting passed the guilty phase, and realizing you and your behaviors are amazing
- How to remove the negative messages in your head
- Thom’s ways of how you can define your own recovery, get rid of

negative thoughts, and separate from Ed with the use of a dialogue

Part 5: Ed's Last Stand: *Surviving Relapse*

- The inevitable relapse and how you can react to it: take action quickly to prevent Ed's extended stay, call a support group friend, and talk to your therapist
- Realizing there will be multiple relapses and they can arise anywhere, anytime, and for any length of time
- Advice from Thom on how to interrupt and overcome a relapse

Part 6: The Hard Truth: *Getting Serious About Getting Better*

- Going to any length: What are you willing to do to truly separate from Ed
- Understanding Ed is selfish and how you can take charge by saying "I won't" to him instead of "I can't"
- Health dangers that can result from an eating disorder
- Suggestions from Thom on how to decide the good vs. bad parts of Ed, disobey him, and truly distinguish between his voice and your voice

Part 7: Believe It: *What It's All About*

- Learning to say Yes to recovery and No to anything that could put yourself in danger
- Understanding you are not perfect and you are not the chosen person destined to live with Ed
- Capturing serenity and living without Ed