

## Overcoming Eating Disorder Took Faith, Love & Support

by Kaitlyn Dykstra, Administrative Staff



When I was in 5<sup>th</sup> grade I was diagnosed with Epilepsy and continued to struggle with it for many years. I was in and out of the hospital, on and off medications trying to find one that would work for me. Because of my illness, I needed to be home-schooled a good portion of 7<sup>th</sup> grade and was made fun of by kids who had no idea what was really going on. It hurt more than I could ever express and really affected my self-esteem. I had always struggled with the way I looked, what people thought of me and often questioned in my own mind if I “measured up” and was “good enough.” I continually sought approval from everyone else.

As a sophomore in high school, I began cutting and started bingeing and purging. It was something I felt I had control over since I didn’t have any control of my epilepsy or what other people thought of me. It was somewhat of a release of anger and hurt. Once I would do these hurtful things to my body I would regret it, get upset again, but do it for the “high” all over again. Cutting, bingeing and purging became my way of dealing with my emotions so I could face the next day and put a big smile on my face. It was a way to express my pain and hurt.

The night my mom saw some cuts on my arm was a night I will never forget. It was that night that I really started turning to God and asking for help. My parents expressed to me over and over how much they loved me and decided to send me to a Christian counselor. It was the greatest thing they could have done. It was something I never really knew anything about, but soon discovered what an awesome gift and healing process it was.

I saw my therapist for four months about once a week. She helped me realize how I was beautiful inside and out, made in God’s image, and that He loved me no matter what I was going through. She helped me better understand that my body was “a temple of the Holy Spirit” (1 Cor. 6:19), and she also made me see more clearly that what I was doing was not only affecting me, but also my relationships with those closest to me.

Now that I look back on my past, I realize that God has had me in His arms the whole time and carried me through those difficult times. I give thanks for my Christian parents who helped me through the hardest part of my life and loved me unconditionally. I also thank the Christian therapist who helped me realize my worth was not based on what others thought of me.

Seeking counseling was one of the greatest decisions my parents could have made for me. I am sharing my story to help raise awareness of those who struggle with their body image and self-esteem. The pressure kids feel from sports competition, family, homework, friends and media is unbelievably intense. Eating disorders and cutting are dangerous and harmful not only to the person, but also hurt the people they care about most. I am proof that I lived through the battle and won through the strength of Jesus Christ. (*“I can do all this through Him who gives me strength.” Phil. 4:13*)

I am now a wife to Steve, and a mother to 15-month old daughter, Mikayla. I have been seizure-free for more than 2 years and give all the glory to God.

I have such a passion for New Leaf Resources and its mission because of my experiences. If you are or know of anyone struggling with an eating disorder or practicing self-harming behaviors, please seek help. Do not hesitate to reach out for the hope and healing it can bring. Our God is powerful, wants the best for His children, and works in amazing ways.

Find Eating Disorder resources at:  
[www.newleafresources.org](http://www.newleafresources.org).



For more information, call  
**708-895-7310 or**  
**219-226-1810**



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