

Video transcript of Rose Ann reading a letter to herself about recovery.

Rose Ann: So for my selfie I've decided to read a letter that I wrote to my younger self, when I was in the depths of my eating disorder. It's really an encouragement to prove that now in my position, it's worth fighting the eating disorder, it's worth going through recovery. So I hope this letter can also be of help to anyone struggling with any type of mental illness, not just an eating disorder. So here we go.

Dear friend, firstly I want you to know that you will get the help you need, and things will get better. Please don't give up because this illness isn't going to take over your whole life. It's also important that you know this isn't your fault, and you do deserve to be free. I know you're struggling at the moment, even though you won't personally admit it, but just remember that so many people out there care about you, and the only person you're being dishonest with, is yourself.

Don't allow the illness to torture you, and then pretend everything is fine because deep down you know that it isn't. This is going to be a tough journey but you are strong enough to battle through it. You'll learn to allow yourself to feel the anxiety and to not avoid the situations which trigger the feelings. I know at this moment in time you see no way out, and it seems like your eating disorder is your only hope. But please realise that it's lying to you, it will not make you happier, you won't be satisfied with your next target weight and it certainly won't resolve your problems. You'll also no longer have any control because your eating disorder will have taken that from you as well.

So all I am going to say is that your sheer determination is what will help you in your recovery. It will take a long time to fully recover, and you will have blips along the way. But one bad day doesn't mean you're relapsing, it just that means you're living a normal life. And although today isn't great, tomorrow can be better. Recovery is what you make it to be.

Although it would be great to have no intrusive thoughts around body image and food, that may not necessarily be the case. However learning to manage these thoughts is the key to living a happy and healthy life, and a life that you value. So please don't give up. You're allowed to be kind to yourself and realise that once you're on the road to recovery, you can do so much more. Everything just seems more fun and enjoyable. And

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trust me, it's worth all of the anxiety you have to endure in order to get your life back. At times when you are finding things difficult, please read this letter to assure you that you can and will get through this difficult time. Onwards and upwards, Rose Ann.

So, I hope that letter helps people to see that when you are really struggling, you don't see a way out and you don't see a future beyond mental illness. Because there is such a thing. And yeah, I hope that it just encourages people to keep going and keep fighting because you can do it. It takes a lot of time and effort but it's possible. So yeah, thank you for watching my mental health selfie. Bye.