

On this 13th day of August 2008, I hereby declare that I choose to say my final good-byes to my childhood system, its rules and patterns that were imposed on me.

I am by no means coerced into making these declarations, it is of my own free will that I choose to live my life as God intended, to regain my identity, uniqueness in character, and everything that was lost due to the lifestyle imposed on me.

Good-bye to all the verbal abuse. Those feelings that my thoughts and opinions were not good enough and that I was not smart enough. Good-bye to how that has affected me all of my life. Good-bye to feelings that everyone who had a different opinion would reject me. Hello to words that bring love, encouragement, life and peace! Hello to expressing my opinion and not ever fearing conflict or rejection again.

Good-bye to feelings that I can never measure up, that I am worthless. Good-bye to feelings that I cannot share more intimate or emotional details of my life, that I need to be superficial, thereby perfect. Good-bye forever to wanting to receive everyone's approval ... and to want to be more like them for acceptance. Hello to being imperfect ... it's OK to be transparent. Hello to trusting people and feeling the freedom to just be me, not what I think others would like me to be. Hello to truth and honesty always. Hello to identifying my wants, needs, thoughts, feelings, and speaking them out.

Good-bye to fears of being fat, chubby, and overweight. Good-bye to false voices that tell me lies, trying to deceive me into believing that I am really fat, chubby, overweight and ugly. Goodbye to the feeling that I have to hide when I want to eat something with a lot of calories. Good-bye to hiding. Good-bye to bingeing. Good-bye to yo-yo dieting and emotional eating. Good-bye to water pills. Good-bye to measuring my day on how much the scale tells me I weigh. Good-bye to fat jeans, skinny jeans, and any other measuring tool. And a good-bye to comparing my body to anyone else's! Hello to the real me. Hello to the beautiful girl who loves to exercise because it makes her feel good – that's a good thing. Hello to the girl who wants to take care of God's holy temple – that's a good thing. Hello to healthy eating patterns and saying "no more" when you are full. Hello to the girl in the mirror – see her through God's eyes. Hello to you in all the photos – that really is you, and it is good to love yourself.

Good-bye to unhealthy relationships. Good-bye to the loss of emotional and physical absence by my Dad and the low self-esteem it caused. Good-bye to promiscuity, and medicating yourself with drugs and alcohol. That was never who you were meant to be. Hello to self-respect. Hello to loving relationships. Hello to seeing that I have a lot to offer in those relationships. Hello to allowing others to love me.

Good-bye to emotional distance I had with my mother and to the effects it has caused on being in touch with my true self. Good-bye to the close relationship we never had. Good-bye to superficial conversations. Hello to joy and laughter, hello to sadness and crying, hello to anger. When properly expressed, they are all very healthy emotions. Hello to sharing real life in my conversations.

Good-bye to perfectionism, continually striving to find my worth in the things I accomplished. Good-bye to feeling that I must be task-oriented instead of just being still. Hello to being realistic and accepting my mistakes. Hello to sometimes stay in my pajamas all day because I can. Hello to take breathers and just sit and read when I want instead of going, going, going.

Good-bye to loneliness and all the relationships that abandoned me. Good-bye to lack of trust, and being skeptical. Good-bye to the wall I have put between myself and others to protect me. Hello to deep connected fellowship, joy-filled relationships, and never having to feel on guard again.

Good-bye to legalistic religion. Hello to grace and an ever-growing, ever-deepening relationship with God!

Good-bye to not learning about Christianity and the regrets it has caused. Good-bye to the loss of growth from the lack of accountability. Hello to seeing the qualities that Christ has placed within me. Hello to taking responsibility to nurture and develop the woman that God has called me to be. Hello to facing the truth about myself, accepting the past, and loving the person I have been, I am and I am becoming.