

# DESPERATELY SEEKING SELF

*2nd  
Edition*

AN INNER GUIDEBOOK FOR PEOPLE  
WITH EATING PROBLEMS

Viola Fodor



TURNER  
PUBLISHING COMPANY

# PRAISE FOR VIOLA FODOR AND *DESPERATELY SEEKING SELF*

## KATIE

In her deeply rich book about life, hope, and healing, Viola shares how we can look beyond the symptoms of an eating disorder to explore who we are, what we need, and how we can create lasting change for ourselves.

—Katie Dunnigan, M.A. (C Psyc),  
Registered Psychotherapist

## ARYNE

As someone who has fully healed from an eating disorder, I have shared this book with many people, both sufferers and would-be therapists. Instead of diagnosing and categorizing, *Desperately Seeking Self* understands eating disorders from a wider perspective. Readers will gain new insights and learn how suffering can help us grow and gain wisdom that might not have arisen otherwise.

## Cheryl

Viola has written an important book that addresses the deep need within each of us to heal psychologically, physically and spiritually. Through practical ways, Viola engages the reader so that long term healing can happen. It was such a relief to find a book that gives us a way not to abandon the true self in the journey to wellness.

—The Reverend Cheryl Baker

## GRACE

Viola deftly takes readers through a remarkable journey of self discovery, explaining how the strategies they have been using to help themselves are actually hurting them and what to do instead. For those with the courage to look compassionately and unflinchingly within, and to act on what they see, this book will lead you to freedom. It is a bold yet gentle invitation to know thyself.

—Grace Yogaretnam, human  
rights lawyer and yogini

## AMY

This book has a special place in my heart. It brought comfort and hope at a time when I needed them most. *Desperately Seeking Self* is for anyone who wants to understand the deeper and real reasons for eating problems. What sets this book apart is the viewpoint that true healing and inner freedom are possible. The wisdom and positive message shared in this book make it a timeless classic.

—Amy Smith, M.A., Registered  
Psychotherapist

## JANET

*Desperately Seeking Self* helped me stop blaming myself and others for not having a perfect life, or a perfect body, or a perfect job, or a perfect relationship, or a perfect family, etc. These unrealistic expectations caused me to constantly berate and sabotage myself. *Desperately Seeking Self* showed me how to take responsibility for my life and free myself of my unrealistic, unhealthy, and crippling expectations. It offers profound insights and practical wisdom for bringing you back to who you are on the deepest level. And I know that you too will like what you find!

—Janet Lovegrove, Reg. Nurse,  
MSc, Health and Wellness  
Consultant and trained Life Process  
Transformation™ Facilitator

## WENDY

As a university professor, I see firsthand the struggles that students and teachers experience with issues of mental health, wellness, and academic success. *Desperately Seeking Self* is a resource I have used with pre-service and experienced teachers, and I have found it to be an effective guide for educators, guidance counsellors and academic advisors. The book introduces key issues of self, awareness and quiet time, in an empathetic and approachable way. I highly recommend this innovative book, and the author Viola Fodor, for leading the way; inspiring educators to talk openly and compassionately about the critical importance of learning self-acceptance and self-care.

—Dr. Wendy Barber, Associate Professor,  
Faculty of Education, University of  
Ontario Institute of Technology

## JEAN

In her book *Desperately Seeking Self*, Psychotherapist and educator, Viola Fodor, provides a pathway to healing for those ready to free themselves from a disordered relationship with food. With her expert guidance and personal wisdom, Viola gently guides readers to a place of true recovery.

—Jean LaMantia, Registered  
Dietitian, Toronto, Canada

## CRYSTAL

The moment I attended Viola's introductory workshop about eating disorders, healing and wellness based on *Desperately Seeking Self*, I felt it was for me. Listening to Viola inform the class of her life experiences and how similar it was to what I was going through on a daily basis, changed my life. While reading *Desperately Seeking Self*, the book touched my soul and I could relate to every page, every word, validating my life and confirming that there was hope. Acknowledging my needs and knowing that "Quiet Time" was always there for me and gave me a way to mentor and care for myself. Viola's process will always be a part of me and for this, I am forever grateful.

—Crystal Farmer, Assistant Chief, Six  
Nations Fire & Emergency Services

## CHRISTINA

I was given this special book at a time where I was desperate to find inner peace. Little did I know that each page of *Desperately Seeking Self* would invite me into a deeper understanding of my pain, and that still to this day, it brings up new insights and opens my perspective as I apply the teachings in my life. As someone who once felt silenced and unheard, reading Viola's message felt as if, for the first time, I was being understood and my experiences captured; my pain and struggle felt valid and yet her message awakened me to recognize my own capacity to heal. It gave me hope. Now as a social worker and researcher in the field of eating disorders, I refer to this book and Viola's teachings in hopes of continuing to spread her compassionate and humane message—that healing is possible, and that inner silence can allow for a true sense of our self to shine through in such meaningful ways! Enjoy!

—Christina Hyland RSW, MSW

## JOCELYN

*Desperately Seeking Self* is as relevant today as it was the first time I read it fifteen years ago while in the height of my bulimia. Now, fully recovered, and a practising psychotherapist, I still see Viola's approach as the missing component in modern counselling and therapy.

—Jocelyn Proctor, Naturopathic  
Nutritional Therapist and  
Psychotherapist

## PAMELA

After 12 years of struggling with anorexia/bulimia, and after trying every technique, workshop, program and expert available, I finally found Viola Fodor. I was desperate, resigned, near suicidal by then and she was my last hope. She taught me how to live from my center—what she'd call, the True Self—and *Desperately Seeking Self* became my "bible." It's a special book that gave me guidance and support through my healing transformation.

—Pamela Tames, certified Life Process  
Transformation™ Facilitator

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## A CONVERSATION

*For years I've been struggling with an eating problem. In the beginning, my bingeing and purging seemed to serve a purpose. I could eat whatever I wanted and still stay slim. Now this behavior has taken on frightening dimensions. My day consists of going crazy with food and trying so hard to stay sane. I hate being like this, but I don't see any way out. Still, something inside me won't let me give up. That is what brought me to you. I need help.*

It can't be easy to bare your soul, to be vulnerable, to trust in someone enough to share a dark part of you. Thank you for opening up to me. Please be assured that you have brought your concerns to a safe place.

You seem lost in your efforts to help yourself. You are wise not to try to deal with this problem alone. You need someone to assist you in the process of helping and

healing yourself, someone who is skilled at the inner guiding process.



*What makes this problem so hard for me to figure out by myself? I'm bright. I try hard. I've read all kinds of self-help books.*

Let me respond to your question by sharing my experience. I struggled with bulimia for more than a decade. Each day I woke up determined to normalize my eating, once and for all. Each time I failed miserably. I did not realize that I had to learn more about me before I could help myself.

Remarkably, I came to some insights about my true nature before it was too late. Deep down, I began to sense that I had intrinsic value, that I had a wealth of inner resources, and that I could choose to be well. This self-knowledge came just in time for me to save my life.



*Your story is inspiring, but maybe you're special. I find it hard to believe that I can do what you've done.*

Don't lose sight of the fact that once I was where you are now. Perhaps I was even more downtrodden. Today I

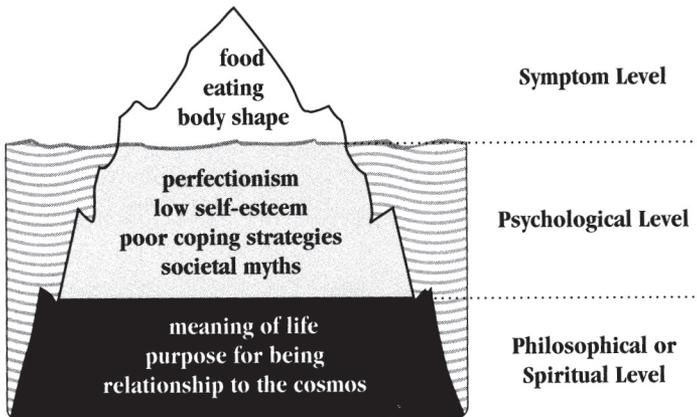
am well. My role as your counselor or guide is not to save or to fix you, but to help you to see that you are your greatest healing resource.



*All I need is willpower so that I can control what I eat.*

You are so caught up in your eating that you see it as the source of all your troubles in life. You see fixing it on your own terms as the cure, but your eating difficulties are only a manifestation of something much bigger.

Let me explain using the analogy of an iceberg:



From your perspective now, you can see only the tip of the iceberg—the symptom level. Your real issues appear to be related to food, eating, and body shape.