



Priory Hospital Bristol

Rebecca's story

Rebecca*, a former eating disorder patient on Priory Hospital Bristol's Lotus Ward, writes a letter to her treatment team, thanking them for their support and the "new beginnings" it has inspired...

The moment has come for my departure. My chapter at Lotus is finally closing, so it's time for us to say our goodbyes as I embark on my next adventure; the pursuit of my purpose and reaffirming my autonomy as a healthy adult.

As I look back on the time our paths intersected and intertwined, I have had the fortune to co-exist alongside you for the duration we have occupied the walls of Lotus together. As I sit in a state of reflection and gratitude, I am reminded of our interactions that accumulated into meaningful memories, and aided my healing and growth.

But now it's time to take these memories away with me, as our trajectories go off in different directions, and we both continue journeying life, living on life's terms. As I do this, I hold within me all of the new knowledge, experiences and lessons that I've received from knowing you during my time at Lotus,



and the community that you cultivated around me. These opportunities of connection have allowed me to learn to trust, given me examples of how to be a healthy adult and given me a space to discover myself. As a result, I have finally embraced my authenticity due to the nurture, consistency, validation and encouragement you provided me to do so.

What you offered me is something that I've never had the opportunity to experience during my existence, due to the harsh realities of living my life in the circumstances I was born into. You showed me that people can be reliable and will show up. You showed me that people believe in me, and are proud of my existence and the actions I take each day. You showed me that I had worth and I deserve to remain in the land of the living. You allowed me to find the courage and strength to realise that I can and will heal. You have made an ever-lasting impression on me and I will always carry a piece of you somewhere within me. There will be moments in the future when I'll think of you and hold onto a fleeting moment where I connect to you again because I truly believe that a bond can never be broken; there will always be a link that binds us despite distance or time.

My time at Lotus has been the most profound experience of my 24 years of living. This year has felt like the rebirth of every aspect of my existence. It shifted the trajectory of my life and transformed every cell in my being, catalysing my personal growth. This year, I have had the fortune of experiencing the best year of my entire life and I'm so fortunate that this was alongside you.

Lotus and the people within it will always be the ground floor of the building that I continue to construct. I stand firmly on the foundation that was set here. I have the privilege to finally be fortified in my recovery today, due to a combination of actions from myself and others that have allowed me to leave here knowing I'm committed to my recovery. I have a determination and passion that ignites a fire within me, fuelling my ability to keep moving forwards with persistence.

This is the furthest I've ever travelled through the pain that's the result of evolving from who I once was, to the person that was always inside of me. The scared, vacant, hollow and defeated being that hid the person I was always destined to become. Thank you for seeing me; seeing more than the lost cause and revolving door patient I was often described as. Thank you for helping me see what you always saw.

Without you, I firmly believe that I wouldn't have survived. I would have been buried amongst the graveyard of things I had lost from years of suffering. Instead, I was able to find liberation and freedom. Instead, the graveyard now becomes the place of all the things I've chosen to leave behind, so I can surrender to all that's new and let go of all the things that no longer serve me. Instead of myself, I have laid to rest the old cognitions and behaviours that I will no longer let control me. This graveyard will not be one of grief and sorrow, but one that tells my story. The loss that gave way to life and the life that allows me to love.

You have taught me to be brave, be strong, to have hope, to simply be me. Today, I leave not as a patient, but as Rebecca. In this final sentence, I would like to introduce myself to you again as a person, a breathing, living, thriving human that exists in the same world as you.

Hi there, my name is Rebecca. I am alive and I will fully embrace life and truly live.

I make this promise to myself to honour all the people, including yourself, that allowed me to come back into being. I am finally the IN in beINg. Here she stands and she shines exquisitely. Here she is. Here I am.

With the deepest gratitude and abundance of kindness.



Find out more

To contact Priory's central team, please call **0330 137 3910** or to speak to someone at the hospital directly, please call **0117 952 5255**.

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