

4 Winning Ways to Turn From Victim to Victor

I grew up in a very healthy home environment.

I never once questioned my parents' love for me, and I felt very safe in talking with them about anything I was going through.

Which is what makes my story somewhat atypical.

You see, I've lived with a broken area of my life that God has healed, but I've not publicly spoken about until now.

As I have been embracing my identity in Christ, I've realized that there are many women out there who need to hear my story of brokenness and healing, who need to know that their brokenness doesn't have to define them anymore.

I sat on the kitchen counter in my dorm room, it was late—very late—and I was the only one up. As I sat there weeping and begging forgiveness from my boyfriend for things long forgiven in my past, I didn't realize that this was only the first of such scenarios I'd endure in our relationship.

He had demanded that I give him details from my past relationships. I was hesitant because I knew he tended to be jealous, but he insisted, and slowly, I began to recite for him less-than-stellar moments.

To be sure, I hadn't ever gone all the way in any relationship, but I'd gone far enough ... and what ensued was a flood of words: "disgusting," "immoral" and more.

I wept and wept that night, begging his forgiveness and pleading with him not to break up with me. He wouldn't promise anything, but as it turned out, he didn't break up with me.

It would have been better if he had.

It would have been even better had I possessed even a shred of self-respect and realized that what I had just endured with him that night were the first signs of the psychological abuse that would leave deep wounds in my mind and heart.

But for some reason, my self-respect was blinded by his tall, lanky form, the quintessential cowboy. The Dr. Jekyll I had fallen for blinded the Mr. Hyde who would show his face more and more often.

Controlling every aspect of my life:

What I ate.

What I wore.

Where I went.

With whom I spoke.

What music I listened to.

And when I didn't do things his way, he'd lash out with anger—then withdraw and not speak to me for days.

Against my father's wishes, we got engaged one snowy December night. Yes, my dad gave his reluctant blessing because he knew that it was what I wanted, but he had very serious reservations about the man I'd chosen.

From that night, things only went downhill, and what should have been the happiest time of my life was a nightmare.

I was so terrified of my fiancé's anger that I would begin each day resolute that I'd not do anything to make him angry.

All day long, I'd second-guess even the smallest things—such as whether I was bending from the waist or the knees—because even this small thing could send him on a tirade.

At night, I'd lie in bed and rehearse every moment of the day in detail, picking through every little thing I'd done to be

sure that any information relayed to him about my day wouldn't make him angry with me.

It was a horrid cycle of fear, anxiety, begging forgiveness when I "failed" and working to calm my hysteria with resolutions to do better next time.

The horrible thing about abuse is that once the physical wounds heal, the psychological scars remain. And they can fester for years!

Four months before our wedding I gathered what courage I had—with the strong support of my parents—and ended our engagement.

I thank God that He rescued me that night, because after he walked out our door for the final time, more and more information began to surface about my ex-fiance that left me with a mixture of incredible relief and terror at what I'd almost committed myself to for life.

Over the next several years, God would slowly and lovingly heal the wounds in my heart and undo the psychological damage done to my mind.

He replaced the horrible names with a new name written in glory.

He replaced fear with an assurance that I was loved just as I am.

It has been 15 years since the day I walked away from that abuse and into a life of freedom and true love. God has given me a man who truly cherishes me.

He has allowed me to share with him about the things I endured—but the glory of that is that, even as I write about it today, it's as if I'm recounting someone else's story.

And truly I am!

I'm Not an Abuse Victim

I'm a new creation in Jesus Christ. He took that pain, the terror, the second-guessing my worth and value, all of that garbage from the pit of hell and replaced it with healing, love and assurance of my worth and value as a daughter of the King of all kings.

... and all of the riches of heaven!

4 Ways to Turn From Victim to Victor

If we are going to truly walk in our new identity in Christ, we have to realize that our past doesn't have to dictate who we are today.

We don't identify with the traumas in our past, we identify with Jesus' work on the cross.

I don't identify with #metoo, even though I have had sexual advances made to me by a co-worker, because I have an identity that is more powerful than that—and I don't have to bear the pain or shame of the things that were said to me that day.

I don't identify with the painful rejection I endured as a child, because the powerful love of Christ I feel erases those painful moments of my childhood.

I am who I choose to identify with.

I can continue to identify with my messy past—or let God turn it into a message.

I can continue to identify with the victim I was in that moment when that person stole my innocence, my self-respect or my sense of security, or I can rise up in the strength of God, embrace His grace and become a victor!

1. Fill your mind with the Word of God.

Each day we live we accumulate information, and what we choose

to fill our minds with shapes our world view.

If you want to replace negative self-talk, a damaged soul, a wounded heart, a mind filled with fear and pain, you need to start by filling your mind with God's Word.

Here are some articles about how to read the Bible effectively.

2. Meditate on God's Word.

Meditation takes the Scripture we've filled our minds with and plants it down deep.

The biblical term for meditation means to mumble under your breath, repeating God's Word to yourself over and over.

This begins to reshape the concept we have of ourselves and our identity until our concept begins to agree with God's Word.

Here are some articles on how to memorize and how to meditate.

3. Speak truth to yourself.

The worst thing we do is speak lies to ourselves; and we do it so often and in so many ways. Negative self-talk is so destructive to our identity in Jesus Christ!

The Bible says, "Whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy—meditate on these things" (Phil. 4:8, NKJV).

These are the things we need to speak to ourselves. But let me caution that these things need to be things from the Word of God.

Speak the truth of Scripture to your heart, because it has the power to change.

4. Replace old defaults with new patterns.

The Bible calls this renewing the mind.

When we begin walking in our new identity, it is easy to default back to old patterns when stuff goes wrong. When someone is critical of us, it is easy to default back to anxiety, fear, insecurity, or anger.

Whenever we see those old defaults creep back, we need to replace them with new patterns from Scripture, reminding ourselves that this old default is the old man trying to be resurrected, but that is not who we are anymore.

We are a new creation, we have a new identity, a new name!

Here are some articles on renewing the mind.

And as I've practiced these four things over the past 15 years, it has made me a completely new person, so much so that I don't even relate to that girl so long ago cowered in the corner in fear and intimidation.

My pain has become a platform for my testimony!

I stand before you today sharing my story for the first time in a public forum, not because I feel everyone needs to know that I was once a victim of the enemy's evil plan but so that you can know this one thing: You can be free!

You can live as a new creation!

You don't have be a victim any longer!

You can be so free that you can look back on today and say, "I can't believe that was me! I am so different now!"

Do you want to live free from your past?

Do you want to live free from your pain?

Do you want to live free from intimidation and fear?

Do you want to live free in your mind from the negative thoughts and self-talk?

Do you want a new identity?

My parents played an integral role in my journey, not just because they were there for me in the darkest moment of my life, but they lovingly pointed me back to what God's Word says about me.

My dad has gathered these words into a three-part series called "The Freedom Series," which includes "Discovering True Identity" and "Agape." He has written the third volume, which will be launching this week. {eoa}

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