

Healing Soul Scars With 4 Jesus-Centered Tools

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.

This 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 spoke 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: whore, 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 if I possessed even a shred of self-respect and realized that what I had just endured with him that night was the first sign 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.

He controlled every aspect of my life: what I ate, what I wore, where I went, with whom I spoke and what music I listened to.

And when I didn't do things his way, he'd lash out with anger and 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 his 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 lay 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 my ex-fiance walked out our door for the final time, more and more information began to surface about him 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 this man about the things I endured—but the glory of that is, even as I write about it today, it’s as if I’m recounting someone else’s story.

And truly I am!

You see, 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 along with all of the riches of heaven!

Here are 4 things I am doing to walk in that new identity in Christ:

1. Fill my mind with the Word of God. Each day we live, we accumulate information, and what we choose to fill our minds with shapes our worldview. If you want to replace negative self-talk, a damaged soul, a wounded heart or a mind filled with fear and pain, you need to start by filling your mind with God's Word.

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.

3. Speak truth to myself. 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, "Finally, brothers, whatever things are true, whatever things are honest, 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 any praise, think on these things" (Phil. 4:8).

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 is what has the power to change!

4. Replace old defaults with new patterns. 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. We must remind 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!

And as I've done this these 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 who cowered in the corner in fear and intimidation!

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 also because they lovingly pointed me back to what God's Word says about me. {eo}

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fall evening. Her passion for writing led her to author her best-selling book The Missional Handbook. At A Little R & R she encourages women to find contentment in what God created them to be. You can also find her at Missional Call where she shares her passion for local and global missions. She can also be found at on a regular basis. You can follow her on Facebook, Pinterest and Google +.