

How to Heal From the Sexual Abuse You Don't Want to Talk About

In counseling men for the last 30 years, I've discovered they're often confronted by battlefronts. Battlefronts are common areas that can keep men from finding victory in the area of sexuality. One of those battlefront arenas is abuse. If this applies to you, I encourage you to attack it so you can have healing and true success in your life.

I've experienced this particular battlefront myself. I not only am aware of the validity of the pain and distraction, but I also know the way back to becoming focused and successful.

To be whole, your soul must be healed from past pain as much as possible. I was one of those very wounded souls. I've never met my biological father. My legal father was an alcoholic, and my mother likely suffered from her own sexual issues. She placed her children in foster homes, and I also experienced abuse as a teenager.

I know what it is to be abused, but I'm in no way whining about my past. I fervently believe in accepting personal responsibility for the healing of any wounding one has received. This is the way I explain it to my clients: If someone shot me with a bullet, I would know it was not my fault that I was shot. However, now that I have a bullet inside of me, I have the responsibility to get the bullet out and to do any physical therapy necessary to regain full physical health. Although I definitely didn't create the wound, it's still my job to heal from it.

Sexual trauma affects approximately 15 percent of the male population in America. Most occurs at the hands of older men, older boys or male peers. A smaller percentage of victims are

sexually traumatized by older women, babysitters or relatives. Regardless of the gender of your perpetrator or the age difference, the following exercise will help tremendously in overcoming sexual trauma and will help give you closure to past painful events. In case you need more help than afforded by these two exercises, seek the assistance of a professional counselor who specializes in sexual trauma. The process I outline is found in the Scripture where Jesus cleanses the temple by identifying the sin, expressing His anger and once again, the temple is cleansed and restored (Luke 19:45-48).

I know people who whine and ruminate about their past, and that's not me! My idea of healing from the past is to identify your wounds and start cleaning them up so you can become the most fulfilled, life-giving Christian man you can be.

As I talk about abuse, you'll be able to identify whether you experienced any abuse. If you don't have a vague memory of it happening, then it didn't happen. If you did experience sexual, emotional or physical abuse, you probably followed the male code of never telling anyone that it happened. I don't think I talked about any of my trauma until I was in my 20s.

A child can suffer abuse or neglect at the hands of Dad, Mom, strangers, relatives or neighbors. Verbal abuse and shaming can be an ongoing event comprising of a parent or guardian repeatedly attacking the child's soul with verbal assaults.

As these assaults occur, they insert bullets inside this soul. As means of self-protection, the child may choose not to trust others anymore, and may pull away and isolate emotionally and spiritually from others. Most likely he won't develop skills for interpersonal relationships. He will become walled off from others because he believes that the truth of the matter is, "All relationships behold pain." Think of all of his future relationships that will become strained because of this abuse: parent-child, employer-employee, teacher-student, husband-wife and so on. He may conclude, "Why should I fall in

love? Why should I fully give myself to any relationship?"

The second choice that victims sometimes pick is to become perfectly wonderful. They will become so smart, handsome, strong or financially successful that nobody would ever suspect that their soul is wounded. After all, when they see how wonderful you are, they can't imagine that you were ever injured or taken advantage of. These types look great on the outside; they often have picture-perfect-looking relationships. However, they often can't connect spiritually or emotionally in an intimate relationship.

With these men, everything looks great on the outside—the car, the house and a beautiful wife. But their wives tell another story about the lack of intimacy. These individuals will stay mostly in object-type relationships with all people. Such men generally can talk football and work, but they are incapable of delving into the deep issues of relationships.

Realize that when you experienced trauma, you were affected. Even if you didn't want to be, you were. You can experience emotional, physical, sexual or even spiritual trauma.

As this person continues to protect his soul from anticipated pain, over time, he becomes less and less able to be intimate. The wounds become the beams that hold up his wall, and less and less of his soul is engaged. The less soul that is available in all areas of your life, the less satisfaction you can experience with intimacy your wife. The more your soul is available, the more intimate satisfaction will result

Regardless of your past, your future can be satisfying and fulfilling. For those of you who have past wounds, the process will involve a little more work, but a better life is worth it!

On Friday, I'll cover how to resolve the wounds trauma has left in your life. {eo}

Doug Weiss, Ph.D., is a nationally-known author, speaker and licensed psychologist. He is the executive director of Heart to Heart Counseling Center in Colorado Springs, Colorado, and the author of several books including, *Sex, Men and God*. You may contact Dr. Weiss via his website, or on his Facebook, by phone at 719-278-3708 or through email at heart2heart@.