

How You Know Your Wounded Emotions Are Really Healed

“When you can tell your story and it doesn’t make you cry, you know you have healed.” –David Avocado Wolfe

This quote popped up on my Facebook news feed a few days ago, it was credited to David (Avocado) Wolfe, so I’m going to go ahead and assume that the sentiment is his also, because you know, the Internet never lies, and all of us aren’t continually re-articulating, aka plagiarizing, the ideas and words of those around us, either intentionally or otherwise. I love David Avocado Wolfe. He’s a wise man, but on this occasion, I have to disagree with his stance. And not just for the sake of publicly disagreeing and sprouting my differing opinion to “stir the Internet pot,” but for the sake of you, the person who may have read the above quote and become discouraged from sharing your story.

Maybe you’ve begun to feel a stirring within your spirit, a longing or desire to open up to someone, to reveal snippets of your journey, maybe even with many “someones,” but have then wondered if you’re ready, if there’s enough distance between the pain and raw emotion to share effectively without dumping unprocessed junk onto others?

Know this: You’ll know. Huh? No really, you’ll know when you’re ready, but the sign may not come in the absence of wet eyes.

Your story is powerful.

Your story is unique.

Your story has the power to inspire change in others.

Your story has the power to inspire hope.

Your story has the power to make the lonely feel connected.

Your story has the power to empower the disempowered.

Your story has the power to cause someone else to say, "Hey, Me too! I've been there, I've felt that!" There's power in these shared experiences, painful and embarrassing as they may have been for us. There's power in the connection of vulnerability.

There's power in knowing that even though your vulnerability might not be reciprocated and may even be outright rejected, you were brave enough to risk rejection in the hope that it might help someone else.

I have had the privilege of sharing my story, my "testimony" for the evangelical folk among us, both in private and public, many times now, and I have to say it does get easier, but there are still times I cry.

Does this mean I'm unhealed? Perhaps on some level, for I believe we will be on a journey of wholeness until the day we depart this crazy beautiful world. But sometimes I think, at least for me personally, the moments when I choke up and lose composure, the moments I share the past life that God has redeemed me from; one of drug abuse, addiction, self-harm and a teen pregnancy, are the moments that I am once again undone by the power, the realness, the tangible manifestation of this perfect, undeserved, amazingly incomprehensible, divine grace.

There are times when I talk about being raped, and I don't shed a tear. My voice wavers not, it doesn't quake or shake and I confidently move right along to the next chapter. I believe I've been healed from the trauma that came from that rape, I really do. The remnant effects of that ordeal dissipate with each passing year, and yet sometimes the tears still fall. Again, in these moments, it's not for me a sense of being unhealed, it's more that in sharing I have stepped up and taken back more of the power that was lost in that moment of betrayal and pain, and in this there is even greater healing. I have reconnected with that girl, 18-year-old me, and remembered how lost I was, how out of control my life had

spiraled, how countless poor choices, those of my own making and the ones of those around me, had all culminated in one life-changing undoable moment!

I cry because I see that my audience is with me. I see their compassion, I see that they are holding my vulnerability and respectfully cradling my story with honoring hands and hearts. I cry because I'm grateful for this opportunity to connect. I cry because sometimes I spot a face in the crowd who is, just as I am, struggling to maintain composure. I see their pain, I see their "Me too!" moment, and I pray that God uses my words to instill hope deep into their soul. What a gift this is. Even greater the gift in seeing this hope fulfilled!

There is wisdom for sure in guarding your heart, in not putting your story out, your pearls before swine.

There is wisdom in discerning whether your audience, be it an audience of one or of many, is to be trusted with your story.

There is wisdom in knowing what parts of your story remain open fresh wounds, and what parts have now become scars.

Personally, when sharing publicly, I try only to speak from my scars, not from my wounds. My wounds I keep hidden, only to be shared with a very select few who reside within my circle of trust because they've proven they can pay the rent!

There are for sure consequences of speaking with great candor. People can be hurtful. People can twist your words, question your agenda, your heart, your motives, your alliance and your allegiance. It hurts. I won't try and deceive you by professing that it doesn't. I sometimes wonder if I'd known just how many people would read that porn article I wrote, how many people would react with disgust. I wonder if I would ever have posted it online.

O the courage one can summon from behind the safety of a screen and submit button!

Time after time, I can attest that when God has stirred me to speak, the reward of knowing I'm fulfilling exactly what it is that I was created to do, is greater than any drug-high I've ever felt! Stepping out in your purpose and giving fuel to someone else's is a gift that can't be repaid. It's part of that undeserved divine grace.

You may not be called to share your story publicly. Not many of us are. Phew! Did you exhale in relief? You're not off the hook yet.

I do believe that all of us are called to connect authentically with others. We have been created with community in mind, and true community, true communion, happens within the risk of vulnerability.

Maybe the first time you share a hidden part of yourself, something that's led you to the path you're on today, it will be clunky and awkward. That's OK.

Maybe you'll use up an entire box of tissues or the sleeve of your shirt, as you emit unattractive sobbing noises from a momentarily unattractive and tear-stained blotchy face. That's OK, gross but OK.

Maybe you'll get halfway through and feel you can't continue. That's OK too.

The point is this: Don't let sentiments, like the one depicted above, fill you with confusion or fear.

For some people, the recognition of inner healing may come with the cessation of tears. If so, yay you! I'm 100 percent for healing and wholeness. Just know that like our stories are unique, so is our path to healing and the way in which it manifests.

Ask God if it's the right time to share, and if you get the green light, take a long deep breath and be brave. Be bold. Be

vulnerable. Connect.

Then ... stand in awe as you observe what God can do with a story, your story, submitted to be used for hope!

Bek Curtis *is an Australia-based blogger.*