

Women Trading Ashes for Beauty This Week at World Women's Wholeness Summit

None of us is given a life free of pain and suffering. Challenges and scars are what make us human, but with hard work, the right tools, faith and God's unconditional love pushing us forward, we can turn our challenges into positive change, and turn our scars into superpowers.

Women all over the world, in all walks of life, carry burdens of brokenness. Whether it is in their finances, relationships, their work life, fertility and loss, mental health, or because of abuse or addictions, brokenness can lead to a felt sense of unworthiness, a lack of whole living. These dark places, these broken places in body and spirit, often lead to anxiety, depression, fear, loneliness or overwhelm.

Whatever form the destructive fire in a woman's life has taken—loss, trauma, deep disappointment, rejection or neglect—I fully believe in her ability to rise, like a Phoenix, through the ashes and be reborn with resurrection power. I have been fortunate to witness women make these powerful transformations every day. Over and over, I have witnessed women rise through the ashes of life's devastations and the enemy's ploys and watched them emerge to embrace their passions and live their fullest lives, overflowing with hope and purpose in the Lord.

I have walked through the ashes of devastating childhood abuse myself. I've seen what's possible. I know that every woman can carry her whole story into the present and use it to create a whole self, in a way God always intended. Every hurting woman really can have a different life! What's more, the world is aching for women to fulfill those desires and uncover their

unique gifts.

It is time for women to clear the wreckage of the past and step center stage into their lavish God-ordained callings.

What Is Wholeness?

The Bible is replete with gifts of wisdom and promises of God's redeeming love and power. Isaiah 43:19 (ESV) says, "Behold, I am doing a new thing; now it springs forth, do you not perceive it? I will make a way in the wilderness and rivers in the desert." Nothing is wasted with God. Not even the low places, the broken hearts or the barren moments are useless. And in 1 Thessalonians 5:23 (MEV) we read, "May the very God of peace sanctify you completely. And I pray to God that your whole spirit, soul, and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ." There is a promise for peace and redemption! God wants women *whole* so they can walk in *legacy* that will impact the generations to come.

Merriam-Webster defines *whole* as "not lacking any part or member that properly belongs to it," "enjoying health and vigor," and "not divided or scattered among several areas of interest or concern." Wholeness is the "state of forming a complete and harmonious whole, unity" and the "state of being unbroken or undamaged" as in mind and body. Synonyms for "whole" are complete, full, unbroken and intact.

We crave wholeness, because we were made for it (John 10:10). Becoming more whole is a process that requires intentionality and active participation. Achieving personal wholeness is a lifelong adventure and pursuit, and it is the will of God (Phil. 2:12-13). Wholeness in the areas of psychological, physical, behavioral, spiritual, relational well-being and purpose builds an essential foundation for a joyful, satisfying life.

A psychologically whole woman seeks wholeness in her mind, her will and emotions. She is mentally alert, has clarity in her

thinking, and is not confused but is able to confront the mental challenges of work and relationships with wisdom and a cognitive understanding. She is able to use her will and choice in ways that are helpful. A whole woman also cares for her emotional self. She listens to her emotions but does not live by them. She lives from her values and God's Word. Mental wholeness involves choosing positivity over negativity toward the self, others, life and the future (Phil. 4:8). Positive psychology indicates that we thrive with a 3 to 1 ratio of positive to negative emotions (Fredrickson, 2001).

Behavioral wholeness involves choosing behaviors that are helpful for a thriving life such as budgeting, managing time and, when possible, increasing energy-giving activities and decreasing energy-draining activities. In addition, behavioral wholeness involves coping with stress in healthy ways.

A physically whole woman possesses a healthy body image, gets adequate sleep and rest, eats well and focuses on good nutrition, and she participates in a healthy amount of movement. Those with chronic illness and physical limitations nonetheless experience a sense of empowerment to achieve the best level of wholeness possible amidst health challenges.

Spiritual wholeness recognizes that we are spiritual beings with a need for a personal relationship with God through the Lord Jesus Christ. We also need fellowship and growth opportunities inherent within a healthy community of faith. We grow in spiritual wholeness as we do life with others who are also growing spiritually.

Relational wholeness includes the skills needed to thrive in relationships with family, friends, co-workers and even relationship with self. Relational wholeness includes navigating relationships skillfully, choosing relationships with safe others and setting healthy boundaries.

"Wholeness in purpose" answers the question "Why?": Why was I

created? Why am I here? Wholeness in purpose requires definition, a purpose statement that succinctly identifies your reason for being and why you can uniquely impact the world. As my friend, Lynette Lewis—TEDx speaker and purpose coach—says, “Your purpose statement becomes like a GPS pointing you to the work, people and environments that allow you to reach your fullest potential, impact others, and experience lasting joy and fulfillment.”

Wholeness for All Women

There are many events and crises in life that lead to brokenness and lack of a sense of wholeness: addiction, betrayal, losses of all kinds, financial concerns, grief, fertility, identity, relationships, abuse, neglect, broken childhood—the list is painfully long!

God longs to reclaim and restore the age-old broken places in women’s lives, to turn the broken places into grace-filled spaces. Isaiah 55:1 (ESV) calls us to “Come, everyone who thirsts, come to the waters; and he who has no money, come, buy and eat!” The whole chapter speaks to a call from God to all people of the earth to come and receive what is needed. His Spirit transforms the broken places into wholeness.

The journey to finding wholeness has many paths. An upcoming opportunity for women to exchange brokenness for wholeness is the *free* online World Women’s Wholeness Summit 2020, March 6-8, at <https://www.wholenesssummit.com/>. Seventy-four world class leaders in wholeness will share their pain and triumph through Christ to find greater wholeness in their bodies, souls, spirits, relationships and purpose/work.

Through Christ, I have seen women transform their baggage into a badge of honor. I’ve seen what’s possible. Women can carry their whole story into the present and use it to create a whole self, in a way God always intended. You’re not who you are in spite of what you’ve gone through. You’re who you are

because of it. God is calling you to transform your vulnerability into power, your burdens into blessings. Become who you are meant to be! {eoa}

Dr. Barbara Lowe is a licensed psychologist, founder and owner of Greenleaf Psychological Services, somatic experience practitioner, EMDR practitioner, board certified life coach, educator, lay minister and author. As a gifted international speaker, her audiences are left with the feeling that they have been seen, that their pain has been witnessed and that their hope for a better life has been renewed. She and her husband Tim are founders of the World Women's Wholeness Summit 2020 ([link](#)), a free, three-day (March 6-8, 2020), international online conference dedicated to unity with diversity, legacy and women's wholeness in Christ.