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The Abused, Steps To Healing

This is a sensitive subject and each child, each abuse, is unique; there is no “One size fits all” answer. The time it takes to walk through these steps is for the abused to decide. Without a strong support base a child has little chance to deal with the abuse, confront those that have abused them, little chance to heal. Ultimately it should be their decision alone what steps, if any they will take.

We must be prepared with unconditional love, to stand with these souls as they work their way through these steps. It is our responsibility to provide a safe and loving environment all through this process.

The adults involved need to set aside the self-pity / guilt feelings that you are experiencing associated with the abuse; focus on the child, embrace the abuse, and do all you can to support them. These steps are for the abused, not you. It is important that the abused child/adult sees this, feels this.

For the abused child/adult:

BE OPEN

It is important that you find someone that you can trust. Someone that is willing to listen, that can help you, someone that you feel safe to disclose to.

If you choose someone that is not receptive, someone that is not acting on what you have told them, do not give up, find another safe person. A teacher, School Counselor, police officer, religious individual, again someone that you feel is safe. Stay with it until you find someone that shows they care, someone of action.

When you are disclosing to a counselor, child agency, law enforcement, medical personal, it is important that you let it all out; that you do your best to make them

clearly understand what has happened to you. The more information they have the more opportunity for them to help you. The more power it gives them to hold the one that hurt you accountable and to keep you safe. Keep it simple and stick to the facts.

Be Courageous

Courage – the strength / ability to confront your pain, fear, humiliation, for the betterment of yourself and or others.

Although it would seem to be less painful to be silent and keep the hurt someone has caused you, to yourself; dealing with it head on is the way to true healing. Fully embrace the truth of the abuse, truth of the pain associated with the abuse.

To look at it in simple terms, compare your abuse to a cut and broken finger. A cut finger left unattended will continue to bleed and the unattended broken bone has no chance to heal right. If the cut is severe enough, unattended one could bleed to death. Even if the bleeding stops on its own, the scar will be worse and the unset broken bone is sure to never heal correctly. It will forever be painful.

Getting all of the right people together to address the injured finger, cleaning of the wound, stitching the wound closed, setting the bone and putting it into a splint; the wound tended to correctly is once again fully functional and healthy.

It is much the same in dealing with the injuries associated with being abused. You must surround yourself with those willing to give you positive reinforcement, as you find the courage to confront the pain of your abuse and all that were a part of it. Address all of it so that you give yourself the best chance to heal as well as to prevent others from being hurt.

It is important that we hold those accountable that have caused the abuse; that they face the consequences of their actions. That we have in place real solutions for those that hurt children.

Bad things will happen to us throughout our lifetime, the more we learn to be courageous and compassionate when we are faced with bad stuff, the quicker we can deal with it and get back to the good things in our life.

Be Forgiving / Let It Go

This was the hardest one for me to understand, yet today for me, it is so simple. The reason I had such a hard time understanding what it means to forgive, was because I never really dealt with the situation that caused the pain in the first place. Not until I held my abuser accountable for what he had done, not until I did all I could do to ensure he would not hurt others, only then was the door starting to open to the possibility of forgiveness.

I thought that it was a weak act to forgive. I thought it gave the abuser a free pass to hurt others in the future, lets them off the hook for what they have done. What I came to realize is that to be able to truly forgive someone for something they have done to you, they must first be held fully accountable for their wrongdoings.

Forgiving someone is the last thing you do in your process of healing. People preaching forgiveness before holding the perpetrator fully accountable, before letting the process take its course, are supporting the abuser and disrespecting the abused.

Once you have had the time to go through all one goes through as the result of being abused, what do you do with all of the hate and pain? The bottom line is you let it go. You make the decision to no longer carry this burden; you leave it all with the abuser and God.

Forgiveness for the abused has nothing to do with the abuser. It is about doing all you can do, letting the process take its course, and then you letting go of the betrayal and the pain. You understanding that it is no longer yours to bear.

You do not need to confront your abuser to forgive them.

It is between you and God to forgive, as you leave the consequences / burden of their actions on them, so you can move on with your life and get back on a positive path.

Most of us will be faced with difficult and painful experiences. Just as we embrace the good things in life, we should embrace the painful ones as well. Embracing the pain will start the healing of the wounds associated with the abuse.

Making good decisions on your behalf, leaning on those that are there to help you along the way, will strengthen your soul, and allow you to live a healthy happy life.