

THOU SHALT NOT SPEAK OUT...

INTRO:

My name is Dale and I was raised in Illinois, in a poor family. I grew up in the religious sect called The Way. I have two brothers and a sister older than me, and a younger sister.

My parents had a weird relationship as they did not sleep in the same room and they did not believe the same way. As far back as I can remember my dad Professed but my mom did not, so you can imagine all the ridicule and harassment both of them received from the Workers and other Friends. My mother never went to conventions, but she did go to meetings on some Sunday mornings. All my aunts on my dad side, grandparents on his side, great grand parents on his side, cousins on his dad side, not sure of uncles - I know three did... and one of my brothers and myself all professed. I will never know how my dad got to be in the group with the Workers - as they knew everything he ever did to us kids and my mom.

All of us kids were physically, emotionally and mentally abused by my dad and so was my mom. We were put in closets with no food. We were locked up in the cellar. We were beaten with belts, belt buckles, the wire end of the fly swatter, with fists, tree limbs (which we had to pick our self) and extension cords.

My mom too was emotionally and physically abusive towards us kids. I was called *retarded, stupid, ugly, no good, you will never amount to nothing*, and *you were a mistake*. Myself and my eldest sister were sexually abused by my dad. I will only talk about my own abuse.

THE ABUSE

It started when I was 2 years old with just touching and then graduated into full blown sex when I turned 6. Now this was supposed to be our secret and I was told "*never to tell anyone*". He would buy me things like toys, candy and ice cream. I did tell my mom as I was so scared when I saw the blood. My mom said since I didn't bleed much he must have not penetrated me all the way. She went into his room and said "*if you touch any of my daughters again I will kill you*". Well that fell on deaf ears as it continued until I was 18 when my mom died of cancer. Thank God that my dad had gotten a vasectomy because I could have gotten pregnant many times.

My brother started to sexually abuse me when I was 9 and he was 13. It also started out as touching and then went full blown to sex when I turned 16...I told my mom what happened and she told my dad. So we had a meeting with my dad, mom, brother and myself. My dad began to tell us how wrong it was and that we "*needed to keep this a secret*" and were sworn to secrecy... I began saying to myself, "*well if it is so wrong then why are you doing it???*" I did not dare ask that question out loud. We were never allowed to question his authority as you would likely get knocked across the room. As a child we never knew what kind of mood my dad would be in so we put on layers of clothes as he would beat us for no reason. My brother moved out of home after that meeting.

My older sister who was sexually abused by my dad ran away when she was 13 and told the police what was happening. She was brought back home by the police and they talked to me and my sister about the abuse. We told them everything. The Head Worker for our area was also there. After getting our stories, the police said that DCFS (Department Children Family Services) would pay us a visit and a decision would be made then as to what was going to happen. Well DCFS never showed up. To this day I believe the Head Worker got my dad off, I truly believe that.

I also broke the silence when I was at a convention. I told this Sister Worker – Vella – who I was pretty close to about what was happening to me. She then went to the Head Worker for the Sisters and the Head Worker for the men. The next day I was called out on the red carpet by Charles (Overseer), and the head lady worker – Virginia. I was told *“this is not something that should be discussed here. It was our family secret and it needed to stay that way”* and I was told never to say anything about it again. I was very heart-broken to say the least. As there it was again, rejection and man I can't describe where my mind was as I had no idea what they were doing to me was wrong. I mean no one helped me, not one person stood up for me. So I thought what they were doing was okay.

In school I was never allowed to take sex education. When the topic came up in any class I had to go to the school library and just sit there - I could not read any books per my parents and they sent the note to school saying just that. I guess they didn't want me to find out about what sex was all about... I started my menstrual cycle when I was nine and was never told what it was. We were never told about the birds and the bees.

Sorry I am going all over the place but I understand now that every area may not be as strict with their rules as others. We had to wear our hair up, no make-up, no pants, no TV's, no radios. We were not allowed to have outside friends for fear they may lead us down the path to hell. We were taught that The Way was the one and true way and if we didn't Profess we were going to hell. They would always tell that to my mom and I hated that. Looking back I can see none of us had any control over our lives - it was all dictated by the Workers. They would even tell the parents how to discipline their children and that you better do what they say especially if it was at a meeting, or convention.

I professed at the age of 12 and I had no idea what I was doing as I was forced into it. My dad told me I had to join and the look on his face was one I better obey. I didn't even get the Workers so called teachings.

Now with all the abuse I had already faced and just being so messed up from it all I never dreamed that it would happen with the Workers as well. Both times I was abused by workers – it happened at 2 different conventions.

The first time I was 15 years old. I was walking by myself when this male Worker who I had never seen before asked me if he could walk with me, I said yes. We had walked so far that we were in the woods out of sight. When I got very tired and my feet were hurting I had to take a break. As we did he bent down and took off my shoes and began to rub my feet and then proceeded up my legs by this point I couldn't move, scream or do anything but freeze. He then touched my private areas and kissed

me on the lips. When we heard a noise he stopped and I ran back to the camp site. I never said a thing - besides they wouldn't believe me or do anything about it so I thought it was best to keep it a secret. This man is one of their own. They can do no wrong so I didn't dare say a word.

The next time it happened I was walking taking in the sun when this male Worker grabbed my hand and said come with and let me show you around...We wound up in the woods near a small stream when all of a sudden he told me to lay down and pull up my dress. The way he looked and spoke, I thought I had better listen as I had no doubt he would physically harm me in a serious way. He went all the way. I never felt a thing as I left my body and my eyes were closed. I kept asking myself, "*What is wrong with me that all these people are taking advantage of me and doing all these awful things to me???*" Thank God I did not get pregnant. He also swore me to secrecy and boy I never did say a word.

A third worker started emotionally abusing me. He would make fun of my testimonies and would smirk every time I went by him for some reason. I got the vibe he didn't like me. I was slow at reading and I did give the best I could on my testimonies but he made a comment to my brother that I better do better or I would not be able to share anymore.

I began to think it was my fault. I am still working on that issue in my counseling sessions.

Through all this abuse I suffered as a child and teenager, I am surprised I am still alive today. I wanted to kill myself so bad but thank God for my dear friends who I call "Mom and Dad," as they helped me through that difficult time.

I still feel some shame, I still have anger which I am working on through counseling, and at times I do get suicidal. So as I get free, I feel they have less control over me. I still struggle with the belief system of knowing what is true and not true.

Except to share my story now, no one knows in my family to this day what happened, nor do the Workers.

I stopped professing at the age of 18 when my mom died of cancer. Just after mom died, my dad asked me to pretend that I was mom and go to the bank with him - sign my mom's name and get all her money out of the bank and give it to him. So while he was at work I called my moms friend and told her what my dad wanted me to do. She did not hesitate to come and get me.

I was working at a place for the handicapped people. This is also where my fiancé worked... The Workers showed up at my work place telling me that I "*belonged to them and I must go with them now*"... I went inside and called my fiancé and told him what they were here for. He came down and told them they needed to leave the property before he called the police. They left.

We got married in 1985 when I was 18 and my husband was 28. He knew going into our marriage what kind of background I came from. See, when we moved here where we live now the Workers must have followed us because no one in my family knew

our address. Two Workers showed up at our door step and my mother-in-law, my husband and myself went to the door as we didn't know these people. They introduced themselves but for the life of me I can't remember their names. They talked to us for a few minutes and then proceeded to tell us why they here. They said I needed to come back with them as I "*belonged to their group and their meetings*", and before they could get any further my husband stepped in front of me and said "*over my dead body and if you know what is good for you, you better get off this property before I call the police*" and with that they left. This happened just one other time and they never got any where before my husband would step in.

I want to share this story about my friend April who was professing in Illinois. She came from a family of 13 - that includes her parents. All but one had a nervous breakdown. My friend took her little niece on a ride - when she got to her home she shot her niece and then turned and shot herself. They both died on the scene. She left a note saying she didn't want her niece to grow up in this sect and in the same way she was raised. This just goes to show you what measures people will go to get out.

Everybody I ever knew who was professing suffered emotional and mental abuse of some kind. I saw so many people having nervous breakdowns. When you are mentally down and depressed the Workers love it because that gives them more control over you.

There has got to be a way to expose this sect for who they are. So many people are getting hurt and if we knew the numbers it would be staggering. If my story helps in doing that then my mission for this task would be complete.

THE AFTER-AFFECTS

I still to this day struggle in what I was told growing up that was "true" and what I have now found is not. I still to this day do not wear make-up. I find myself going back in my memories from time to time. I am currently being treated for SLE Lupus, Major Depression and several other things.

Because of all the sexual abuse, I had to have a complete hysterectomy at the age of 35. We did manage to have one healthy boy and we lost the other three. He is now 20 years old. There are areas in our marriage where I struggle - especially the sexual side of our relationship. I am just so blessed to have a husband who is so caring and understands where I am coming from. I am getting better - it just takes time.

I thank God that I have the TRUE God in my life. See when we moved to where we are now I got involved in another cult - Harvest International. I didn't think it was a cult at the time but I was in denial. They had some of the same rules. Man - there was so much mind control! I mean you had to do every thing they told you to do. The Pastor even said he was the only one who had the Apostolic gift and if the message did not come from him then it was not from God... They had a whole book of rules that we had to follow. You were not allowed to talk to the Pastor or question his authority because if we did we were considered being rebellious. I was in this cult for 11 years. My husband has never been involved in any Church.

There is much more I can say but I won't. Now I am involved in a Baptist Church where I live and have been for 6 years...

I know I said before I am currently in counseling and the longer I am in there I am feeling all the control they have over me leave. I can't wait until that day comes when I am completely free and by telling my story - that has helped me tremendously. I am committed to that freedom. I hope my story helps many people.

Dale R.

PROGRESS REPORT:

COUNSELING:	Dale is currently receiving counselling at her own cost
APOLOGIES:	None offered
CHARGES:	Statute of limitations expired
CONVICTIONS:	Statute of limitations expired
REACTIONS:	When some of the family child sex abuse was reported to the workers – the workers decided that it was a family issue and should be sorted out within the family
OFFENDER:	Unknown
VICTIM:	Dale was abused from both her family and some brother workers. Child Sex Abuse has a long lasting affect on the victim. Dale is now attending a Baptist Church and receiving counselling for the abuse that she endured as a child.
QUOTABLE QUOTE:	<i>“this is not something that should be discussed here. It was our family secret and it needed to stay that way”</i> – By Charles the overseer in regards to the sexual abuse occurring.