

Nichole's Story

Hello, here is my story. I was raised in "The Truth". On my dad's side, his mother was the one that found "The Truth" and my mother found it on her side. It was after my mother professed that she met Dad and shortly afterward they were married. I have an older sister. We moved several times while growing up. Meetings and workers were a part of our lives. For as long as I can remember I believed in God and I wanted to be with Him. When I was 13 I professed and 15 I was baptized. I went in the work when I was 22 and left at 24.

From just months old, I was being abused sexually. My mother took me to several Doctors trying to find out what was wrong as I was in pain every day. Back in the 60's/70's even doctors were not tuned into abuse when they saw it and they only prescribed medication that did not work, so Mom would take me to a different Doctor. It was not until I was 18 months old that I had surgery to repair the damage done by being anally raped as an infant.

This was only the beginning of abuse. Throughout my whole life growing up I was sexually abused by both male and female people in my life – some within "The Truth" and others not. The sexual abuse took various forms.

Growing up, meetings meant God and God was what saved me. I loved meetings and the workers. When they came over things calmed down at home. God was and is everything to me. By the time I was 10 years old I put words to what I had always felt – I wish I was never born. By the time I was 12 I knew I could do something about it. At that point I always had a plan and always had access to the plan. The only reason I never committed suicide is because I believed in God and God was the only reason to live. Even today there are times when I deal with these feelings, and still the only reason I live is God.

My whole life was about surviving from one day to the next. And sometimes from one moment to the next. With rage running rampant and not knowing when it will be next – Always this state of fear – Always a state of torment. Always after these rage filled events it was taken out on me sexually – I was the quiet one – The one safest – as I would not talk. This was partly because of my personality of being quiet and also because of repeatedly being told/shown how I would die if I did.

Growing up never once did I feel loved. I learned to hate myself and feel I was the worst horrible person there was. I began to believe that no matter what I did or any friends I had that I would make the situation bad. I felt that this hate and badness was an intrinsic part of me. I hated myself for being a strong person - my child reasoning was that if I wasn't strong that I wouldn't have to deal with the horrible things that happened.

I grew up feeling less than, inadequate, bad, hopeless. Always saying I am sorry to everyone for everything. Feeling that it is ALL my fault. I am to blame and I am responsible.

My only hope was to leave home. And I did this as soon as I graduated high school. This, I thought, would put it all behind me. I could create a life that I wanted – a Good life. For some reason I did not give up on this idea that out there somewhere there is this life that is a good life. And I wanted that. One thing I knew was that God was a part of that Good life.

Not surprising I went in The Work. I felt that God called me but also looking at it from a psychological stand point I would never have to marry and have a potential for being in a relationship that was anything like I knew growing up. What I found in the work was so much like growing up. I had no voice, could not be heard. I did not experience any sexual abuse in The Work. But in the homes of the friends we stayed at and dealt with their problems it brought all the unresolved issues up in my life. I thought that getting out of the situation was enough but soon learned that the issues stay with a person. That didn't just go away. The Work environment is also very controlling. You have to go along with your older companion – and most certainly the Overseer. In the work I had less freedom than I did as a teenager at home. Everything I did and when it was done was directed by someone else – and there was no say in any of it. Often things were kept from me as the younger companion until it was forced out in the open or some reason I absolutely had to know – even when this directly affected me.

I wrote this because it reflects how a person growing up in an abusive environment can get taken in by another one. This has been true in my life with friendships and work situations as well. I am probably over half way through my life and I am still learning what a good relationship is and a good healthy environment is. This has been a long learning process and it is far from over.

Once when I was about 7 years old, I did tell something to a teacher at school. Back in those days people believed the parents – So when the school was told that I simply had an over active imagination the school accepted that answer and that was the end of the matter. The only other time anyone reported anything was a counselor that my sister was required to see. He called CPS and they came to my school. At this time I was 9 – But had changed schools. At that time I was terrified of the person and afraid I was in trouble – So I didn't say anything. When I got home my mother was there and she wanted to know if someone had come talked with me – I said yes. Her response was “No one has the right to know anything that goes on in this home and I was never to talk to anyone.” In High school I almost went to the counseling office to tell them something was wrong – But what I remember at that time is that I didn't have the words to say anything. I knew what was going on was wrong – but under all the conditioning from a young child I could not talk. So I never said anything.

After leaving home and being in The Work I found out that many people knew something was wrong -But didn't know what. But some did suspect more – but did nothing. They only came to me after I was in The Work and wanted to find out if what they suspected was right. There was a time while I was in The Work that I was not dealing with the abuse as a child and was not able to tell them the truth. Now looking back on it I wonder why these people did not do more than sit back and wait until they could ask me what happened. These were professing people and they did nothing. Then years after I left The Work I was talking with a

worker who admitted she knew I was being molested as a child but that "Some things just have to be worked out on their own" This was her way of justifying herself for not doing anything.

Once I started therapy nearly 15 years ago, my therapist asked if I wanted to report the abuse. I didn't at that time because of how emotionally fragile I was and I could not face the abusers. It was a horrendous deal just to begin to talk about what really happened as a child in the setting of a therapist's office – Let alone facing those who hurt me so terribly and being raised in absolute fear. At the time I began counseling I had 2 companions. One who was very supportive, and the other who was not. The one that wasn't supportive also was not confidential. Unfortunately when a person is in The Work they do not get a choice as to who knows and who doesn't. This one who was not supportive told others in the field we were in about what I was dealing with – and that got the gossip mill going and I had people coming to me – some just simply wanting the gory details but coming in the guise of caring. Others with advice as to what I should and should not do or think. And a few – very few who truly were caring and compassionate, and to those I thank for their support and kindness. This spread of information to anyone where I did not have the right or voice in saying who I was comfortable in knowing and who I was not comfortable with knowing and how much I was comfortable or wanted anyone to know just added to the stress of beginning to face and deal and try to begin healing from these horrible wounds. Some of the Friends did not believe that I had been abused and came right out and said so – Saying that this was just a band wagon people got on.

Because I always believed in God and knew He is the only one I can implicitly trust – as I have confronted the reality of being abused and how that happened – and the affects that it still has on me today it has made me closer to God. It is he that truly understands me and what I went through. It is He that knows why I feel such ways and it is He that I can be truly open and honest with in my feelings and how I feel about thins. He already knows all anyhow and it is such a great comfort and help to have such a relationship with God.

I still am in therapy and will be for a while yet. I wish it didn't take so long - there have been twists and turns in my life some helpful to my healing and others not. I have come a long ways and I am not the person I was at the beginning – and yet I am not at the end of this journey. I know God will keep me through it and it is He who has brought the people in my life to help me when He has.

I have since left meetings and attend a mainstream Christian church. Various things took place to bring me to the place of leaving. I am thankful that I live in the arms of Jesus my savior as still today He is the reason I live.

28 April 2008

PROGRESS REPORT

CONVICTIONS: No charges/no convictions

REACTIONS: Mothers reaction to the CPS worker that came to talk with me at school. She stated "No one needs to know anything that happens in this home."

OFFENDER: 1 offender - deceased - Friend; 1 offender - deceased - non professing; 2 offenders living - do not have any contact - both Friends.

VICTIM: Two years ago, I left meeting and now attend a mainstream Christian church - Which I love. Still in the process of healing. Currently looking for work - and hoping to get a job soon.

QUOTABLE QUOTE: Years after leaving The Work, I was talking with a worker who admitted she knew I was being molested as a child but that "*Some things just have to be worked out on their own*" This was her way of justifying herself for not doing anything.