

SHARON'S STORY - WHAT CHILDREN DO TO KEEP BODY AND SOUL TOGETHER

Child abuse walks on a child's development with golf shoe spikes in the areas of Physical - Sexual - Social - Emotional - Spiritual and Intellectual development. Child abuse generates: Fear, Confusion, Lack Of Trust, Rage, Denial, Isolation, Rigidity, Secretiveness, Sadness, Guilt, Withdrawal, Seductiveness & Self-Abuse.

Dear (sister) Mary, I have been doing some therapy with Lewis in a group and individual setting. I want to share my recollections and observations with you. My purpose for doing this so that we may have a close sister relationship and heal the hurts that both of us have. To talk about what it was like for each of us without any blame.

1. Being the whipping boy.

One of my positions in our family was to take the heat when emotions got to flared. You know how volatile both mom and dad were. I think that they needed to beat on me so they wouldn't kill each other. I didn't mind much at first because I thought it would keep the family together. I took it on so good that I would hurt myself to divert the energy.

I remember being very young, about 2 years old, propping myself up on the couch with my feet and legs on the glass coffee table and proceeding to kick the glass in and hurt myself because the folks were fighting. Remember the story dad used to tell about his ashtray on the edge of the table, just about little face high. At about 18 months old I would look right at dad, take a deep breath, he would say no, I would blow, he would hit me, I would wipe it off, and he would hit me again and again until I responded to his anger. The folks would always seem a lot nicer after a major blow-up like that. I learned very young that that was the kind of attention I was going to have. As a kid I hated myself and never really knew why. I wasn't all that bad but I sure knew what to do to trigger the correct reaction. I hurt a lot, physically and emotionally. I would cry in my bed and think about how there must be another kid in this world that was worse off than I, that was comfort for me. That and having you in the bed next to me. I am very sad we went through this.

Mom and dad discounted both of us in many ways. They discounted us by ignoring our basic needs. In a hypnotic regression I did with Lewis many years ago, I saw myself in the crib crying from starvation. But the starvation was not from lack of food but from lack of contact and love and affection, the basics that kids need. That I needed, that you needed.

I got attention from mom by making life so bad for her that she could not ignore me. Like screaming and kicking in the kitchen where she was until she had to recognize that I was there and deal with me. Like slashing my arms with a knife until I was bleeding so badly she could no longer ignore me because I was making a mess. She hated noise and messes. Do you remember how she always used to say "there's an outside for that" whenever we would get loud? She was very good at ignoring that we even existed.

I loved spending time with dad especially when he was fixing something and I could just hang out and hand him tools. Or when he was developing pictures I could be his little helper. One of my fond memories is the smell of developer.

I believe the older I got the easier it got for dad to hit me with less guilt and I am sure that I also got better at provoking his anger for attention and diversion. I got numb to the pain and it took longer for me to react, prolonging the hitting and therefore prolonging the attention I got. When I would finally hurt enough to respond, dad seemed to snap out of whatever trance he was in and stop.

2. Aunt Catherine threatens:

It wasn't until dad broke my jaw when I was 7 years old that anyone stepped in to stop the escalation of abuse. I wonder whether all the other big folks were. I had lots of bruising on my face, arms, and legs, broken ribs, broken wrist and finally a broken jaw. I have grown up believing I was accident-prone and spent my life duplicating bruising and broken bones. And during periods of extreme self-hatred I could easily find someone else to inflict physical abuse on me. I still have feelings of shame about that.

Aunt Catherine told dad that if he didn't stop hurting me that she would turn him in to some agency that would make him stop. I remember feeling a great deal of fear from dad after that conversation with Catherine. His child got caught and big do-do was going to happen affecting everyone's life.

This was a blessing and a curse for me. My most intense contact with my dad was being threatened. I hurt more emotionally about the withdrawal of attention than I was happy about the hitting stopping. I felt abandoned, yet again, by the withdrawal of dad's energy, interest, affection and of course his anger.

3. Dad becoming sneaky:

With at least one person now on the watch, dad did not have the usual outlet for whatever went on inside for him. Sexual abuse doesn't show as much outwardly to others as hitting.

Dad took me out of the house on a fishing trip when I was 7 and a half, and I knew that something bad was going to happen. I could tell that Dad was explosive and yet detached and I feared for my life. I often wished that I had died then. Dad attempted to sexually abuse me but I fought with him and he stopped. The fishing trip was over, and I knew that that was also the end of any last hope for anything with dad.

I am so sorry that he turned to you and I suffer from guilt about that. I truly tried to divert the energy back to me but dad was done with me. You were now in so much pain I didn't exist to you. I felt I didn't exist to anyone and I fell more and more into myself and my pain, becoming untouchable and unaffected by anything. Again, I am so sorry for not being, doing more for you then.

This is just a start. I want to share and talk to you about what it was like for you and me in our family. I hope these subjects are not off limits for you. My desire is to be free of pain by confronting these very painful issues and who better to be free with than my sister. Love Sharon

Written by "Sharon" of her childhood exploitation - neglect of love - and trust betrayed.

**OPINIONS AND FEELINGS ARE FREQUENTLY A PERSONAL TRIUMPH OVER GOOD THINKING
YOU DEFINE REALITY BY WHAT YOU KNOW, WHAT YOU BELIEVE, AND WHAT YOU DO ABOUT IT.**

