

Restoration from Abuse and Relationship Addiction – Anonymous

This testimony was written by a graduate from our 2008 session of Living Waters, who is currently a leader in training. Her husband has been a faithful member of our Living Waters leadership team since 2005. All of the names have been changed..

Lord God, when your children, the Israelites, were defeated in battle, You revealed yourself to them that they were hanging on to something that did not belong to them. You said, “You cannot stand against your enemies until you remove it” (Joshua 7:13)

Father God, I earnestly ask You to reveal anything in my life that could be hindering victory, then give me courage to release it to You.

That’s what our Living Waters small group times and homework was for – to allow God to be found true, to release our ugliness, strongholds and sinful nature to him. Francis Frangipane in his book, *The Three Battlefields*, writes, “Satan dines on what we withhold from God.”

As a young child, I was forced into a situation that caused me severe pain, stress and anxiety. Many of us have come to a crossroad, when God called us to “Stop doing wrong, learn to do right” (Isaiah 1:16-17). That was His invitation to us, when He asked us to join Him at Living Waters. The ugliness of my childhood has followed me all of my life up until the day I found God true. I had to make a decision and I decided what I was going to live for.



I grew up in a family of 7 brothers and 2 sisters. As a young elementary girl, my uncle sexually molested me. I could still see his leering eyes, and hear the profanities he liberally voiced while satisfying his own desires. I did not know how to escape the manipulation of my uncle. All I remember is feeling helpless, incredibly lonely and severely depressed. My sexual drive was awakened too early. My uncle he had already shown me what masturbation could do, so in my pain I mimicked him. It made me feel better for a short time, but it was immediately overshadowed by shame, regret and frustration.

At the age of 15 I was easy prey for my first boyfriend, and became pregnant at 16. When I was 5½ months pregnant I miscarried my little baby girl. At 17 I crossed paths with my first husband, Paul. He was 21. With him I learned to be even more compliant. I wanted to fit in, so once again I did all the wrong things. He drank and did drugs – so did I. He moved from Germany to the United States – so did I. Five years into our marriage, when I was six months pregnant, I miscarried a beautiful baby boy and a beautiful baby girl. Once again, I found myself steeped in despair, lonely, depressed, unworthy and beating myself up because this “had to be my fault”. Later on God in His mercy would grant me two children, Noah (now 22), and Jackie, (now 20). Paul and my marriage went down hill from there. He continued in pornography and drugs. I felt so unloved by my husband and found myself in promiscuous relationships at work. One man was fun, attentive, and made me feel special. I found another man who spoke German with whom I thought I could relate. I asked Paul to move out, and soon found myself unable to support my children. I packed our bags and flew back home to Germany. I realized that my adulterous behavior with Carl was not real love and that much like Paul, Carl had a problem. His was alcohol. I broke off my relationship with him. Paul and I started talking again and he moved back to Germany to work on our marriage. After 3 ½ years, we moved back to Michigan and Paul immediately went back to his old addictive habits. Labor Day weekend 1997, Paul told me he was moving out.

I was angry and frustrated and wanted nothing to do with the opposite sex, but I was too “needy”. With the purchase of a computer came a completely new perspective on life. I was able to hide my

true self, from others. I found myself in an online phone sex friendship, then a long distant sexual relationship. I was introduced to the idea of having a female join a sexual encounter, and found myself viewing the same sex differently. Scared, but intrigued, I never pursued or allowed myself to indulge in this area. I was totally distraught at my behavior – hooked on online porn with little or no self control, and entangled in masturbation. God had opened my eyes to my brokenness. I fell to my knees, crying, pleading and praying to God to rescue me... He did... but I let him down once again.

In June of 1999, I met John, my second husband, online. He was kind, gentle, seemed religious, and had two boys about the age of my own children. He appeared safe. John and I ended up having sex pretty early in our relationship. We continued to go to church together and pretended not to be sexually active. Satan had us right where he wanted us, but God was working on my heart. I gave my life to Christ on January 16, 2000. John and I got married on December 1, 2001 after a rollercoaster ride of promiscuity and deception which continued into our marriage. I found out that John was still using pornography and forwarded his stuff to our small group leader Mark. At first, he denied everything, but with the evidence in Mark's hand he had nowhere to go. Secretly I was as guilty of using porn as John.

John finally took the advice of his Christian brother and contacted Reconciliation Ministries and he attended his first Living Waters in 2004. God had softened John's heart but our past had caught up with us. The pain and shame we caused the congregation hindered any participation for John within the church and he grew more and more disheartened. My daughter, Jackie, moved to Seattle with her lesbian partner. My new manager at work was very controlling and triggered my childhood memories to come back full force. My emotional status and responses reflected the emotions and panic I felt when I was the little girl being molested by my uncle. I hit rock bottom myself, but God was right there with me. I found out that in order to keep my job; I would have to go to an employee assistance counselor. I also began attending Living Waters which provided a safe environment for me. I learned that I needed to take ownership in my sinful lifestyle. I needed to stop blaming others for what has happened. I needed to be forgiven and needed to give forgiveness. Most of all I needed to get back to the basics of life – a heart securely grounded in Christ. This past Living Water session, God allowed me to lay my sins at his feet by speaking them out loud and allowing me to pour out my tears before Him. It is true – the truth shall set you free. I thank God that He is with me. I did not lose my job, and my relationships with my manager and co-workers is getting better everyday. I finally started to participate in life, instead of letting life pass me by. This time, I was participating in life in a healthy way.



God placed John and me in a new Church home. We are actively serving God, and are enjoying many activities in the church. We are fully emerged in a couple's small group and are enjoying our newest study. John and I are getting closer to God and therefore are growing closer to each other. With God at the head of our relationship, we are finally able to trust again.

Call Reconciliation Ministries at 586.739.5114 for more information about our next session of Living Waters. There is hope and healing in the presence of Jesus Christ.

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