

UNCENSORED



A testimony of
childhood abuse
and God's power
to heal.

maranatha

Publisher's Note:

This booklet is published by the Maranatha Community. For obvious reasons its author must remain anonymous. Names have also been changed to protect the identity of all those involved. *It is printed without any amendment.* It is hoped that it will be an encouragement and inspiration for those who have experienced the trauma of abuse in their childhood. What follows is not appropriate reading for children.

First Published as
"Suffer the Little Children to Come Unto Me" - July 1995 ©

Reformatted & Retitled with permission – January 2017

Introduction

I have been inspired to write this testimony because of the evidence of the great healing power of God and the miracle He has performed in my life.

I would like to give thanks to God for blessing me with wonderful Christian friends and teachers and for the Maranatha Community who have been used by God to give me great healing.

I would also like to thank Sister Kathleen O'Sullivan for 'Light out of Darkness' and the deeper awareness of my own sin that it enabled me to find - also the profound and beautiful awareness of my relationship with God that it enabled me to deepen.

To anyone reading this booklet, I know that God has led you to read it - as He led me to write it - and I can only ask you to open your heart to the Lord and let Him in, surrender your life fully to Him and allow him to heal and mould you, and you will find peace.

This is the story of my journey from darkness into light.

May God bless you.

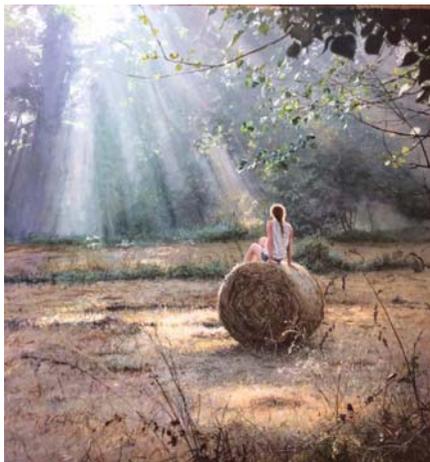


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*As the deer pants for the water,
So my soul longs after You,
You alone are my heart's desire
And I long to worship You.*

*I want You more than gold or silver,
Only You can satisfy.
You alone are the real joy-giver
And the apple of my eye.*

*You-re my Friend and You are my Brother,
Even though You are a King,
I love You more than any other,
So much more than anything.*

*You alone are my strength, my shield,
To You alone may my spirit yield.
You alone are my heart's desire
And I long to worship You.*

Martin Nystrom

First Chapter

*D A R K N E S S... CONFUSION... REJECTION... FEAR...
PAIN... HUMILIATION... NAUSEA...
DISGUST... BEWILDERMENT... LONELINESS...*

"We should not commit sexual immorality" (1

Corinthians 10 v8)

I could hear that voice..... shouting me over and over again..... and I carried on playing....., pretending I couldn't hear....., blocking it out.

Then the tone of the voice changed and my little heart started pounding and I knew I had to go inside....., inside to my dad so that he could 'love' me.

I never knew God was with me, then. I was so small and tiny and I always felt so alone and frightened.

My dad forced himself on me, and forced me to do vile disgusting things to him. I didn't like it and afterwards I would cower in my room sobbing and retching at the memory of what he'd just done.

This went on for about 6 years on a regular basis - maybe two or three times a week, and everything he could possibly do to me was done, including attempted rape. Fortunately, I was too small and actual intercourse never took place but I can remember him trying to penetrate me and the excruciating pain I felt. No matter how much I struggled or cried, he seemed oblivious to what I was feeling and seemed to turn into some sort of monster, shouting at me and getting violent. I was confused and I didn't understand what was happening to me - after all I was only 6 years old when it all started.

Then my mum started being cruel to me, treating me 'differently' than my brother and sister, frequently hitting out at me and I always felt she hated me. I can remember her holding me by the hair and repeatedly banging my head off the wall. I would clean for her and run errands for her, I would give her breakfast in bed and help her in any way I could. I was practically begging her to love me but I never felt as if she did....

I knew my dad must love me though because he always stuck up for me and made me feel special. I didn't dare tell anyone what was happening. It was our 'secret' and if anybody found

out then I would have nobody in the world to love me as I would be sent away and so would my dad - 'because nobody would ever understand the love we felt for each other'. I had to believe my dad - he was my dad and I loved him.

I did well at Junior School and was well liked but towards the end of my Junior School years I was trusted to serve in the snack bar and began to steal money. It was only very small amounts, I didn't need it or want it, but I just stole it - maybe I wanted to get caught - maybe it was my first cry for help!

*REBELLIOUSNESS.... ANGER.... REJECTION....
VIOLENCE.... HARDNESS.... DETERMINATION....*

"He has taken away all my wealth and destroyed my reputation" (Job 19:9)

The only thing I ever associated with love as I grew up was sex. All men ever seemed to want was sex so I imagined that this was the way to make men like you.

I allowed my friend's brother to abuse me - and at the same time he was abusing her. It was not like my dad though, it was like a game. My uncle also tried to abuse me. An old man I knew offered to pay me money if I touched him or if I let him touch me. By now I was getting angry at men so I took his money and laughed at his weakness and stupidity. I started to fight back! The abuse by my dad had stopped but the damage was done - I had been touched by evil and I started to rebel.

By 13 years of age I was smoking, experimenting with various soft drugs, drinking and generally rebelling against society and against any kind of authority. I stole money from school and frequently played truant. I was sent to see a child psychologist and after a few visits she came to the conclusion that I came from a good home and did not really have any problems and so I was discharged. By this time I was acting really hard and getting into fights all the time. People were scared of me and it felt good - no one was ever going to hurt me again!

My dad had changed - I now noticed that he had violent outbursts where he would smash pots and pans and hit out at my mum. I often saw bruises on her arms and he began to punish any disobedience with hard and strict regimes. I can remember my brother and I having to kneel over the stairs while he lashed us with a thick leather strap.

He forced us to eat every scrap of food on our plates even if we were heaving because we were full. I can remember refusing to eat rabbit (we had a pet rabbit outside and it seemed wrong to be eating rabbit for tea). He made me sit there for hours with a plate of cold potatoes, gravy, veg and rabbit and tried to force me to eat it cold. As I tried to stop myself from being sick he warned me menacingly that if I was sick I would suffer for it and that I would still be made to eat the food, even if I had to eat it for breakfast the next day.

I'd taken pain-killers on a regular basis from about the age of 13 and when I was about 14 years old I made my first threat of suicide. I was told by my mother that if that was what I wanted to do then I should hurry up and get on with it. She then went to the shops leaving me alone in the house for about an hour so I could decide if I wanted to live or die. That sort of rejection at 14 years old was very hard to take.

After I left school I calmed down a bit and settled into a job. I was going steady and things looked good but after 18 months in a relationship with my boyfriend, he beat me unconscious one night leaving me with a fractured skull and in a coma for three days.

When I recovered I felt angry that yet again a man had hurt me and I began to drink a lot and generally have a wild time. I got involved in an incident in a pub and the police were called in and I ended up being arrested for assaulting a police officer, under-age drinking, disturbing the peace, etc, etc.

At 17 I left home and not long after took an overdose. I really wanted to die at that point in my life - my parents weren't interested in me and my life seemed to be going nowhere but I was rushed to hospital and had my stomach pumped. I saw a psychiatrist the next day who pronounced me fit and well and sent me home. Nobody ever seemed interested enough to probe deeper.

Then I met Gary and fell in love but he had drink problems, his mother was an alcoholic and his brothers were heavily into the drugs scene. Although we had many problems because of his family background and drink problems and my psychological problems, we decided to get married.

My parents greatly opposed the marriage (my dad had always hated me going out with boys and hated that fact that he had 'lost' me). Straight after our wedding they begged me to leave Gary. (Incidentally, they knew nothing about his family or his drink problem). Their wish that my marriage would fail only succeeded in giving me the determination to make my marriage work.



*DEPRESSION.... SHAME.... FRUSTRATION....
HELPLESSNESS.... ISOLATION.... SELF LOATHING....
DESPERATION.... GUILT.... BITTERNESS....
SELF PITY.... ANGER.... FEAR.... HATRED*

"And the agony they suffered was like that of the sting of a scorpion when it strikes a man. During those days men will seek death, but will not find it: they will long to die, but death will elude them".

(Rev. 9:5-6)

We struggled in the early years of our marriage. We had no money and Mary was born five months after our wedding. Louise followed soon after and times were very hard. Gary still had a drink problem and I began to suffer from deep depression. I struggled on thinking it was just post-natal depression and I would get over it, but one day I completely broke down when I was with my friend and everything just came tumbling out about my dad and how he had abused me. I'd mentally blocked everything out, practically since he stopped abusing me. My friend instantly contacted my Health Visitor and I can remember her first visit - I knelt down with my head buried in the carpet unable to look at her because of my deep shame and guilt about what I was telling her. And so began my nightmare of trying to come to terms with what had happened to me.

I was shunted from one psychiatrist to another and from one psychologist to another and I went to practically every hospital in Manchester trying to find someone who could help me. I went to Prestwich and Bridgewater - where I was admitted for a spell, but where they too failed to help me. I also had hypnosis sessions.

Eventually I became addicted to tranquillisers. I took sleeping tablets and any other drugs I could get my hands on, which was made easier by the fact that Gary's brothers were heroin addicts. I smoked draw and can't even remember some of the drugs they gave me to blot out the pain. I do remember taking heroin and saying that it was rubbish because it didn't give me a high. (Looking back I was probably so pumped full of other drugs that the small amount of heroin I took probably had little effect).

My children had been placed in a day nursery full time because I was so ill and just couldn't cope with them. My Health Visitor was wonderful and without her I think I would have killed myself. She visited me at least once a week and quite often, when I was really bad, would visit me every day. I only had to ring her up and she would drop everything to come and see me. She drove me to various hospital appointments when I was particularly ill and always seemed to be there when I needed her most. I really do believe that without her support I wouldn't be here today. Years later, I found out that she was a Christian.

When I came off drugs I suffered horrendous withdrawal symptoms and was seriously ill for about six months. I had the shakes, blackouts, hallucinations and paralysis, to name but a few. I had nervous breakdowns and various illnesses relating to severe trauma and stress. At one point I had no periods for over a year.

After 13 years I was termed 'untreatable'. The doctors wanted me to tell them every detail of what my dad had done to me - but my mind simply couldn't cope with that and I felt as if they were enjoying it in some perverse way.

I couldn't even recall these things for myself without going crazy - it was all too traumatic and the scars of my past were too deep. Finally, they told me to 'pull myself together and put it all behind me'. I felt even more worthless - as if I was some sort of freak and I resigned myself to the fact that this was how I was going to be for the rest of my life and that until the day I died I would be living in the very depths of hell.

Throughout my married life my mum and dad had treated me abominably. They never treated my two daughters as their grandchildren and never took the time to get to know them. I could write a book alone on the mental cruelty they inflicted upon me and my family over the years. It was not in my imagination. Family members who regularly witnessed this mental abuse have said it was appalling the way they treated me.

When I came out of Bridgewater Hospital I was so ill my husband knew that there was more to my illness than I was letting on. (I told him I had gone in there partly because of my

drug addiction and also because I was frigid - we'd had very severe sexual problems in our marriage so this was feasible, I thought). I couldn't tell him what was really wrong with me - it was still my secret shame.

How could I explain that I could never leave him alone in the house with our daughters, how could I tell him why I went hysterical if he went in the bathroom when they were splashing about in the bath, how could I tell him that when we had sex he took on the form of my dad and every time we had sex I was reliving what my dad had done to me.

How could I explain why I would never touch him sexually in any way - not even to kiss him fully on his lips. How could I tell him I hated sex, how could I tell him of the pictures I saw in my head every time we had sex, and of how I cried for hours after - hating myself and feeling so dirty and ashamed.

How could I tell him I waited for him to go to sleep and then crept downstairs so I could let all the frustration and anger out, how I sat there till daylight came, sobbing and thumping myself and pinching myself and pulling my hair and banging my head on the wall - how I spent these hours wishing I could kill myself, wishing I could end this torture and escape from my vile and disgusting memories.

I simply couldn't tell him.

The night I came out of Bridgewater he asked me if I'd been abused and I nodded 'yes'. He respected my wishes not to cause trouble and simply told my dad to stay away from me.

Then the real mental cruelty started.

My mum and dad went to see my brother and sister and told them. My dad accused me of being a whore at 12 years old saying I had seduced him. He said I'd been begging him for months to leave my mum so that I could have him for myself and that I'd threatened to ruin their marriage if he didn't leave my mum and come away with me - and the lies went on and on and on.....

Christmas 1992/93 was very bad. I was so ill and depressed and started thinking that the children were older now - they

could look after themselves and maybe the time had come to end it all once and for all.

They sensed something was very wrong and briefly I told them what had happened to me. All the time I kept thinking 'how can I leave them alone in this corrupt world'. This always stopped me from taking my life - although it was always on my mind, wondering if I could fake an accident so that they would never have to know that I'd taken my own life.

I was getting worse and worse and was waiting for an emergency bed to go into a psychiatric ward. I had very much given up on myself and felt that the end was sadly drawing nearer and nearer for me.



Second Chapter

*AMAZEMENT... LOVE... JOY...
PEACE... SECURITY... COMFORT...
FORGIVENESS...
L I G H T*

"I will open the windows of heaven and pour out on you in abundance all kinds of good things". (Mal. 3:10) "My saving power will rise on you like the sun and bring healing like the sun's rays". (Mal. 4:2)

Quite by chance I met Katy and after telling her a little about myself she arranged a meeting with two Christian ladies, Joan and Ann.

I didn't really want to go and meet with them and I quite honestly thought I would end up spending 2-3 boring hours listening to them preaching God to me, but because I didn't know Katy too well I felt I had to go because all the arrangements had already been made.

I don't really know what we talked about that night but somehow, before I left, I'd committed my life to Christ. It was February 5th 1993.

The next day I felt totally confused and wondered what was expected of me. I remember saying to Ann that I would never go to Church - my dad had been a regular Church-goer and was supposedly an upright and Christian person of good moral standards, so I felt that Church-goers were hypocrites. I'd also said that I would never ever be able to forgive my mum and dad for hurting me so much and totally destroying my life. I remember Ann just smiling and saying 'you will'.

Two days later (which was a Sunday) I sat bolt upright in bed and blurted out 'I'm going to Church'. I was absolutely amazed because something fantastic had happened overnight. Before I had gone to bed the night before I had simply said to God "Well, here I am. My life is worth nothing as it is so I give my life totally to you. Do what you will with it". I sat in Church that Sunday morning not even knowing what had made me go - but most important of all, a great healing had taken place. I

could openly and honestly forgive my mum and dad for everything they had done to me. All the pain and trauma had gone - all the hatred and anger and bitterness - all the negative feelings, gone! To this day I am still amazed that God wiped those feelings out of my life. The biggest miracle was the way I was able to forgive my dad and the way all my feelings about what he had done disappeared. I give thanks for the miracle and the transformation that occurred that day.

In the Bible there are stories of Jesus walking among the people healing the sick and making the blind see and when people read their Bibles they are amazed at the miracles He performed - but Jesus is walking among us now, so closely, healing and loving and performing miracles. What God has done to me is a miracle!

Four weeks after becoming a Christian I attended a Maranatha Gathering. For anyone who doesn't know, Maranatha is a community of Christians who gather together and whose aims - through the power of the Holy Spirit - are for unity, healing and renewal. Maranatha means "Come, Lord Jesus".

The thing that was most apparent at this meeting was the immense love I could feel present. I had truly never experienced such a feeling of love before. I have attended many Maranatha since and I have shed a lot of tears there. God's presence has been so evident and I have received a lot of healing through prayer, worship and Christian support.

In September 1993 I started the 'Light out of Darkness' course, which has taught me so much. At first I felt quite depressed as I became more aware of my own sinfulness but I also realised that we have to be aware of our sinfulness if we are to develop and grow as Christians. Again, I shed a lot of tears as I struggled with things in my life that I had to face but when I finished the course I felt that I had a deeper relationship with God and I'd learnt a lot about myself and my relationships with other people. I also learnt that God has an immense and incomprehensible ability to forgive us for our sinfulness. Because of the deeper awareness of myself, I feel I am better equipped now to deal with relationships in my life and therefore great healing has taken place.

It's a wonderful experience to look back and see where God has been moving in your life. When I look back I realise just how much God has healed me and how much he is enabling me to learn and grow as a Christian.

Now I praise God for my past; for how could He have filled me with His Holy Spirit?; how could He have shown me how great and immense His love is for each and everyone of us?; and how could I have trusted Him so completely and stood so firmly in my faith without God's great healing power and the presence of the Holy Spirit evident in my life?

Although I was able to forgive instantly, by the grace of God, I feel that God unblocked this area of my life because of the number of negative emotions I felt. You see, God heals you where your need is greatest and He alone knows our greatest needs. Other people I know have been healed in areas that I am still struggling with. I've still got a lot to learn and I've still got a lot of areas in my life that need healing. It is an on-going process.

I still have difficulties in my sexual relationship with Gary but we seem so much closer in our day to day relationship and I know I will be healed of any problems in this area of my life.

I've never really admitted this but I think I have an eating disorder. I'm overweight. I constantly think about food. I binge until I'm, sick and bloated and can't move and then I diet. I get depressed about my weight and am self-conscious. My sister has similar problems - maybe it is to do with our childhood and being forced to eat everything put before us - I don't know - but I do know and trust that God will heal me - in His time.

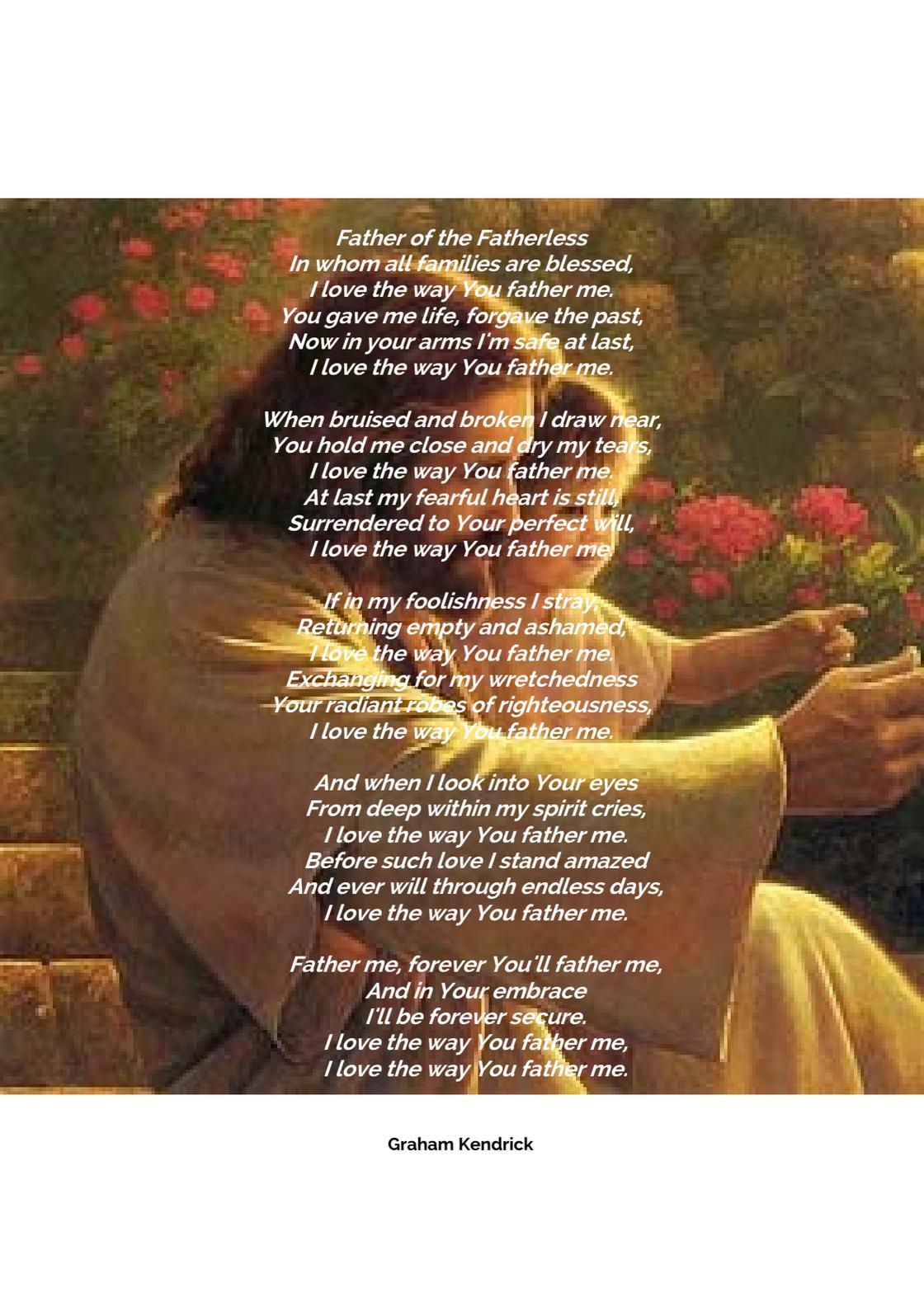
I continue to take pain-killers on a daily basis and at the moment I can't envisage stopping but I do know and trust that when God knows I am ready, He will help me.

When I surrendered my life to Christ, he healed the biggest problem in my life overnight. He removed all the mental traumas that were driving me mad and causing me to be so depressed that I wanted to end my life. That is all He needed to do then and slowly, gently, He is nursing me back to good health, peace and immense joy.

A year ago I felt guilty because I heard Christians saying that they loved Jesus and I couldn't say that I loved Him truly from my heart, but now I love Him so much my heart aches - and my desire to serve Him is so strong. I feel like a tiny baby in God's family - just starting out on life's journey with God - being taught and guided and growing in His love and grace, and I feel truly blessed.

I've recently been given a beautiful present off a very dear friend. It is a small child lying in the palm of Jesus' hand - and that is exactly how I feel. Jesus has His arms wrapped securely around me and it is a wonderful feeling to experience the immense warmth and love He generates. Now I have truly found my Father.





*Father of the Fatherless
In whom all families are blessed,
I love the way You father me.
You gave me life, forgave the past,
Now in your arms I'm safe at last,
I love the way You father me.*

*When bruised and broken I draw near,
You hold me close and dry my tears,
I love the way You father me.
At last my fearful heart is still,
Surrendered to Your perfect will,
I love the way You father me.*

*If in my foolishness I stray,
Returning empty and ashamed,
I love the way You father me.
Exchanging for my wretchedness
Your radiant robes of righteousness,
I love the way You father me.*

*And when I look into Your eyes
From deep within my spirit cries,
I love the way You father me.
Before such love I stand amazed
And ever will through endless days,
I love the way You father me.*

*Father me, forever You'll father me,
And in Your embrace
I'll be forever secure.
I love the way You father me,
I love the way You father me.*

Postscript

*PEACE.... JOY.... LOVE.... HEALING....
THE BEGINNINGS OF TRUE FREEDOM....*

January 2017

I am now 58 years old and I had not seen my mum and dad for years. I couldn't cope with my dad's lies about me and I grieved and yearned for the mother I had never had because she had chosen to believe my dad. I hated not only what he had done to me but also what he had done to our family. I felt physically sick and repulsed if I ever saw him in the area and would have a severe panic attack and run away to hide from him. My heart would be pounding and I could not understand why, as a grown adult, I feared him so much.

In January 2016 my mum was admitted to hospital and a few days later my dad was also admitted to hospital. Before my dad was admitted I received a phone call off him and he told me that he regretted what he had done to the family but he did not think the abuse was that bad and that it had been a loving thing between us. I told him how I felt as a child and how what he had done had severely affected my life, and that of the whole family. For the first time ever he said he was sorry. Because my dad was not able to visit my mum because he was also in hospital, for the very first time in many, many years I was able to go and see my mum – the mum I'd yearned and longed for all my life! They were both in hospital for 3 months and I spent almost every day by my mum's bedside from morning till night. They discovered that my dad had lung cancer and that it had spread throughout his body. Even though it is a horrible thing to say, I felt nothing for him and was glad that he was going to die before my mum. It gave me the freedom to be able to see my mum and build on our relationship. I took my dad in a wheelchair to see my mum every day that he was able and he would have a cup of tea and a biscuit with her. I hated seeing him – it made me feel physically sick and I felt so angry and upset at all the things he had done to affect all our lives!

In the final days of his life he was moved to a hospice (mainly because he was neglected in the hospital and was dishevelled

and dirty and was not receiving the correct care). I went with him in the ambulance and he was distraught and did not understand what was happening to him. He was crying out for my mum and asking me why I was separating them. I will never forget that journey and the wailing and crying that my dad did. I spent the whole of the journey crying myself and all I could whisper to him was "trust me dad, please trust me" and wondering if we had made the right decision in moving him. When we got to the hospice they took me into a room and sat with me until I had calmed down. It was the most distressing journey of my life. When I finally went to his room he had been washed and shaved, his hair had been combed and he was quite peaceful.

On his fourth day at the hospice, I woke up with an urgent need to go and see my dad. I spent about 2 hours at the hospice completely alone with my dad. I sat quietly in the chapel and then I spent about an hour with my dad praying and talking to him. I knew he could hear me, even though he was heavily sedated and asleep.

I forgave him for what he'd done and for the mental cruelty he had continued with throughout my adult life; I forgave him for the life we'd lived as a family, all of us objects of his controlling and bullying ways; I forgave him for the impact he'd had on everybody he had hurt – my mum, my brother and sister, my daughters and his other grandchildren and my auntie. I told him how happy we could have been as a family and how I would have loved and looked after him and my mum in their old age.

I prayed that he would go to Heaven and I released him into God's care telling him not to worry about anything and that I would look after my mum. I told him how sorry I was that things had turned out how they had. He looked so peaceful and I kissed him on the forehead and told him that I would see him in Heaven.

I went back to the chapel and I knew a great healing had taken place – for my dad and for me. I never, ever felt that I would find peace from the horrible images and memories but something amazing happened that day.

When I look back I can see exactly where God was in all of this and I thank him for his grace. My dad passed away peacefully later that day.

I went to live with my mum for 6 months after my dad died as she is dependent on 24 hour care and it was a wonderful time of bonding and discovery. I learnt that she is a funny, beautiful woman and we have grown so close. I love listening to her stories about when she was a child and about her life.

My mum developed mild vascular dementia shortly after my dad died and due to my own illnesses I began to struggle to look after her, so very reluctantly she went into a residential care home. I am still very involved with her care and manage all her affairs for her and I go and see her every day. I love spending time with her and we've grown so close and I'm getting to know the mum I never really had and I want to make up for all those lost years!

God has healed our relationship and I know that our time together is precious!!

My mum is now happy, peaceful and settled.

My husband has just gone into a detox unit – the first time he has ever addressed his alcoholism.

And me – well I still don't like looking at photos of my dad and the things he did still affect my life – I have been celibate for many, many years, I still get upset and angry when I hear about the abuse of children and I still have a passion to fight for those who don't have a voice - young and old.

But – something has been shed – I know there has been another massive healing. I am at peace now, I feel more free, I don't go through great black periods of depression anymore – and I don't worry about being celibate – God has healed me in his own time and has been so gentle and loving with me that I trust Him implicitly.

I never, ever thought that I would get to this stage, so never underestimate the power and love of God and never give up trusting God.

It is in his time that changes will happen so be patient and wait on Him!

He knows your pain and he carries you when times are tough. Try and live your life to the full every day in the promise of God's unconditional love, healing and grace!

CARPE DIEM!!



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Maranatha is a free, open and loving Christian Community, committed to Unity, Healing and Renewal. Its members include Roman Catholics, Anglicans, Baptists, Methodists, Salvationists, Pentecostals and members of the United Reformed and Evangelical Churches. We are all one in Christ and our aim is to be more effective as Christians in the places where we live, worship and work.

Acknowledgements

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