

Where do you go when.....

Where do you go when the world around you is hard, harsh, unpredictable, unsafe? When you enter the house with trepidation because you don't know whether it will be a smile and a welcome or a scowl and a "get lost" that will be the reaction to your presence? When you are told you are stupid, unwanted, that grown ups don't really like you but only talk to you to be polite. When your thoughts and feelings are dismissed and ridiculed, when you are unheard and unseen, in fact when you know deep down that it is much much better to be unheard, unseen and ignored. That is safer. That is the best way, do not speak, do not enter. You go inside yourself, shut the door and bolt it on the inside. You fear everything and everyone, to step outside of yourself makes you feel sick and vulnerable, all things and all people are to be kept at a very very long distance away. DO NOT come close. When even the good things, the joyful things are tainted by cruel words and actions so that you cannot trust even in what is good, or your feelings and reactions to that good. They are twisted, unreliable, so do not feel.

So you become very good at hiding, your mask is firmly fixed, you get practised at appearing fine, of enjoying life, of not being afraid, you make living in the background your strategy, pretending, and eventually believing that this is the way you prefer, this is all you deserve or can be or do. That you can manage, you can cope with all life throws at you. You don't need anyone – not really, even when you fall in love, marry, have children, the pain, the hurt, the fear do not go away, they just get buried even deeper under the everyday living of life.

Of course it is all a lie, and lies eventually get exposed and you crash and burn. You come face to face with your deepest fear, that you cannot cope, manage, carry on, the pain has become too much, has driven you to self harm, self hatred, and to the realisation that it would be best all round, for all concerned to not be here any more. At least the pain will stop, the endless battle against that unending intense cyclone of depression in your mind which has become a physical pain that never ends. Yet still no one sees, no one knows, you are so skilled at the pretence that your closest family and friends have no idea what is happening inside.

So you plan the escape, you sit with the means of exit, thinking, thinking, battling, your hardest battle yet. You are so cowardly, that is the first thought, then stories of others who have gone this way come into your mind, and you remember the devastation, despair, guilt of those left behind. Why? Why didn't they say something, why didn't we see the signs, and you are brought back to sanity and know you cannot do this to those you love, because you truly truly love them, and it is not their fault that you have been unable to say, to be honest with them. They should not have to bear the burden of others, and your, sin.

So you phone the doctor, you confront the reality of your life and you ask, beg for help. That help is given, a long, hard year of counselling, going to the very heart of the matter, tearing down your defensive barriers, exposing the muck and dross of anger, resentment, hate, bitterness that are the result of all those years of abuse. You are helped to be completely free to express these emotions, face them, deal with them, accept them and then release them because the fear that if you ever let them come to the surface they would destroy you is taken away. It was always groundless, but you didn't know that because they were so strong in you. You are given permission to feel those feelings, told that the anger is justified, that what happened was wrong, not your fault, and that it is possible to rid yourself of the others by releasing the perpetrators of your hurt from judgement.

Life slowly changes, other devastating things happen, but you are now so much better equipped to deal with them, because you now face the things directly, accept the emotions and thoughts that they bring, and do not allow them to fester. You are not yet perfect at this, and it will take a life time to get anywhere near close to being so, but you are well on your way, more at peace, with a

stability and security that is a delight to live in.

In all you have said you have not mentioned the most crucial ingredient in all of this – your beautiful, compassionate, loving, merciful, forgiving, saving, healing Saviour. Your Lord and God, your Jesus, who has been with you through ALL of your life, in the worst and the best of times. To see that he was present at certain times was a very hard reality to accept. Why didn't he stop this, why didn't he get you out, save you, protect you? You really do not have the answer as to why, but you do know he did not desert you at any time. You have learned to trust him completely, and know the power of his “turning all things to good”. Explain it? You can't. Believe it you absolutely do. You would not be the person you are today without these experiences.

So you give thanks and praise to your God, you leave the due justice to him, you forgive all those who harmed you, and you now walk in the true freedom that comes only through doing what your Lord asks of you, surrendering all to him, committing each day to him and trusting in his care for you and for your family, friends, and enemies. In all gratitude, praise and worship to the One who has been with you all the way.

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