

## RECOVERY STORY

**“A pearl is a beautiful thing that is produced by an injured life.” It is the tear from the injury of the oyster. The treasure of our being in this world is also produced by an injured life. If we had not been wounded, then we will not produce the pearl.”**

*(Theresa Cheung 2010).*

The reason why I have taken this path in life is that my own life experience has been a rocky road. I have had many mountains to climb and times these have felt impossible, but I am a very determined person. Although I had given up on my self at times, and lost the will to live. I never gave up on other people. I have had a very bad start to life, I grew up with an alcoholic stepfather, who was very depressed and angry. As a child, my experience was that I had been subjected to cruelty, neglect and mental torture. Outside my home, I was also sexually abused and bullied. I never blamed anybody for my life being so rotten, but myself, I loved everybody for who there were, no-matter how bad, that was all I knew. I am aware now looking back in hindsight. I do not feel I was ever true to myself, as I lived in a horrible world, but never showed to the outer world how my life really was. I suppressed everything and pretended to my friends, that I had really great parents. I know some of my life experiences where not pleasant, but they did not taint my own morals and values. I can look back at my experiences and see I was a victim of victims. I have listened to my parents and they did their best as the only way they knew.

**“The importance of early experiences on personality and the notion that there are reasons for our behaviour though we may not be aware of them.”**

*(Pete Sanders)*

I was a quiet child who would try and make people laugh no-matter how bad things were. I can look back and see that this was a coping mechanism. I was never aware of this at the time. I can look back and reflect how I would always be. I looked like a boy, as my hair was cut short, instead of offending anybody who thought I was a boy, I just

befriending people who were tough and street wise. I was very introvert so believed this was to protect myself and to ward off further abuse. I was not aware of my coping mechanisms. I now know this was unconsciously. I had suffered from anorexia from the age of 10, I can look back in hindsight that this was a lack of self-worth and not caring about my-self as no-one around cared. My anorexia then developed into bulimia in my adolescence.

I tried everything to become close to my mother, I even choose to do catering as I wanted to impress her as she was a chef. I always wanted to be liked and always looked for approval from other people. My lack of self-worth and confidence reflected as I was never congruent in choices I made.

**Morris West says, “It cost so much to be human being that there are very few who have the love and courage to pay the price. One has to abandon altogether the search for security and reach out to the risk of living with both arms.”**

*(Pete Sanders Pg41 2002).*

I was raped at the age of 18, but never told anybody because I thought that no-one would believe me. I suppressed all my issues and problems I coped through it all with self abuse. I was bulimic, over exercised, I tried to change everything about my physical appearance, as I hated the person I was. I meet my husband at the age of 21 and married at 23. At this time I went further into myself and then self-harmed even more. I believe I could not accept that somebody really loved me. I was no longer being abused, I began to harm myself as that was what I was used too. I was unable to accept my real-self and struggled to fit into the real world, I took every little comment personally.

I first sought help through therapy at the age of 24 years, but I did not understand what counselling process was going to do. My counselling was finished abruptly, through no fault of my own. I was left with open wounds and unresolved issues. I was emotionally, mentally and physically bankrupt. I could not manage my life, but I pretended to the

world on my outer, that I was ok. This then reflected on the days I could not cope when I self-harmed or took overdoses, too many over the years to put a number on. As time went by then interventions from mental health teams, counsellors, but nothing could change my self-worth. I now was an adult with a lot of unresolved issues but was a scared child inside. My first hurt kept me stuck, I never grew up emotionally.

**“All they had in them was themselves, but they would keep going until they found what was in them to find.”**

*(Pete Sanders Pg39 2002).*

I was fortunate to be blessed to with three beautiful children. I believe they are all gifts from God, to give me a purpose for living. I used to be very attached to my children and suffered from separation anxiety, when I was not with them. I used to feel guilty even when I went on my own without them. I used to feel guilty when I went to work. I believe I just found it hard to detach from them. My lowest point in my life was six years ago, when I totally lost the will to live and was in a very dark place. I believe that at this time I had divine intervention from God, it was no bright light. I began to accept my life experiences and looked for ways of helping myself. I used every means available to get better. I went back to educate myself with a long sighted intention that some day, be able to help someone else. All my life I always felt there was a piece of me missing. It took me a long time to realise that there was nothing wrong with me only that had suffered lack of self-worth and confidence.

Sometimes I still think about my life experiences and wonder “Why Me?” I believe that my purpose in life is to learn lessons from my experiences. Learning to accept my experiences, I have been able to overcome them to grow personally and spiritually. If I had not had my life experience, I would not be the person I am today, non-judgemental, sensitive, caring, loving and always willing to help. I have learned that I do not need to impress people for them to accept me, I just need to be myself the organic self who strives to be a fully functioning person.

I have evolved from a quiet, shy, vulnerable child, to someone who had found a purpose in life. I will always strive to grow personally.

**“Life, at its best, as a flowing, changing process in which nothing is fixed”**

*(John Mcleod 2009)*

**I can see that life is full of changes, but if life is to be without drama, I must be flexible to change. I have an aspiration that one day I will be able to help someone in the healing process. I feel that no-one is a lost cause, as I felt myself. It only takes someone genuine to listen to empower you to make the change. I hope my own experience has learnt me enough to care. I was once a victim, but now I am a survivor.**

*(John McLeod 2009).*

I have come to the point in my life now that I want to enjoy everyday and do as much I can, so I can look back and smile! I believe that all my life experience so far has been put on my path to strengthen me, give me joy and to help me grow. I am now the person I would like to be and I strive to be true to my higher self and help as many people I can along the way.