

## **Chapter 21**

### **Suffering is optional**

**My entire life was crazy. I was in a toxic relationship filled with terrible insults, I hated my job, I hated my life and the way I felt all the time, my health was poor, and I was battling the thoughts of suicide all of the time. I heard the word codependency here and there in the rooms of AA. I would hear people say things about taking hostages in our relationships. It's true, I would choose girls that couldn't speak English so they would need me, I thought maybe they would stay with me if I was useful. My thinking was totally distorted I had given up on love at this point, I pretty much just wanted a warm body next to me. It took months for me to let go of my lover and anyone else that was hurting me. I would tell people in AA that I was unhappy and that my relationships were no good for me, I would hear, "Just let go" easier said than done, but finally I did let go.**

**~O~**

**My life was so unmanageable, I used to think that I drank because of my many problems, never did I realize that it was my drinking causing all of my problems, by the bad decisions I was making. In fact, there were times I would try to avoid making a decision all together, I was so afraid of the consequence in making a wrong choice that I just sat in my misery until life made the moves for me. I settled for everything in my life because I didn't think happiness was an option.**

**~O~**

### **Jackson Memorial Hospital**

**As I was sobering up, I felt as if I was crawling out of my own skin, all of the hateful feelings I had surrounding the molestation and rape were circling me, I just wanted to hurt someone, I wanted to hurt men, I got scared thinking I might hurt someone and go to jail, it was the first time in my life I felt out of control, when my feelings seemed to take over my actions, I looked at men and wanted to hurt them even though the men around me did nothing to me, still all of this rage was there, right under the surface of my skin. I hated them they didn't deserve to live the terrible people look at what men do to woman, and I ran I ran to get help. I actually looked at my own site and saw that there was a help link to rape victims and that Jackson memorial hospital had a free rape crisis facility for woman who have been raped. I called them set up an appointment and went about 5 times. It was a very big help, it seemed like I just cried and cried and cried, the counselor was so helpful, I was talking about things that had happened when I was a teen and even as a child with my step father, she listened and let me air all of those ghosts out of my closet. I told her of all of the things I wasn't doing right and a few things in my life that I was doing right she said a little bit of something positive that your doing is better than nothing.**

~O~

There was this little Latin club I used to go to when I was an active drinker I would start off with 8 drinks just to loosen up. I would go there from opening to closing every weekend. I remember having one hell of a time, having funny interesting conversations, and dancing all night long with different women. Here I was for the first time after about a month of being sober, walking into my favorite watering hole.

Bartender: What can I get you?

Me: Bottled water please.

Bartender: Water?

Me: Yes please, with a side of lemon.

A friend of mine that I always talked to all night long came to greet me. I was so happy to see her, it had been awhile and so much had happened since we spoke last. I told her that I had stopped drinking and am going to try a new way of life. She didn't have much to say about that or actually anything. I remember her being more sociable and spunkie, was it me was I different, where is that funny light hearted conversation, why was I standing there board out of my mind, people passed me and I stood there thinking where is the fun I remember? Maybe I was the fun and I am just not fun anymore, maybe the fun was in the bottle, and it's gone.

Little did I know that change is the hardest thing to do in the world. Real change hurts sometimes, especially if you haven't really changed anything in so long. I even drove the same highways to get to where I needed to go, taking the long way around instead of trying faster routes. Was change possible for someone like me?

When I was drinking, I was making money. I had it all. I was fine financially. I had a lover, though I was lonely. I had two jobs, a dog, transportation. All of my bills were paid. I thought the worst was over; nothing could be worse than the DT's, but I was wrong. As soon as they were over, my emotions that I had been suppressing with alcohol for all those years flooded back like a river run wild. I was happy, mad, sad, glad and furious all at the same time. I could feel everything from what seem to be my birth up to that day. I was remembering emotions and feelings that I thought were long forgotten, but came back as if it were yesterday. I felt like a victim all over again. I was afraid that I was going to hurt somebody. Including myself, I wanted to drink constantly. I screamed out to God and was angry at Him for letting terrible things happen to me. I started remembering resentments I had and things I had forgotten years ago, such as being raped, and the fact that I didn't have a family that loved me. I started hating men all of the sudden the rage took over. I started crying out of control over everything. Nothing seemed to be right, I was uncomfortable in my own skin. I wanted to hurt people to the point that I ran to Jackson Memorial Hospital seeking professional help. They had a free rape crisis unit. I went to speak to a counselor, a few times and she talked me through the pain of what had happened, it was enough at the time. I kept going to meetings and telling my story of what happened to me. The painful details of my childhood and the rape I endured at 13. People were so patient with me telling me that this too shall pass, and that things would get better, "keep coming back" and I did I kept coming back. My first few months it was everything I could do not to kill myself, there were times that the desire of killing myself was so great that I thought I was done, that I

would have no control over my actions. I told a woman in one of the meetings how I was feeling, and she said, "You can always kill your self, but in the mean time keep coming back to the meetings, and just know suicide is an option, but doesn't have to be an action" it gets better just ride the waves.

I was told to make a list of all of the resentments that I bore for people. And I had many. From the beginning of time, my own mother hurt me, and the list grew from there. People that I thought I had long forgotten seemed to come back from the dead in my mind. I started with one and ended up with 55. Jesus was I angry, No wonder I drank. Then I was told to write the things I had done to others. I wrote them down to the best of my recollection.

At the beginning of our conversation, I took out my list of the resentments. I was embarrassed at some of them, because they seemed trivial, but then there were some that were obviously a big deal to me like the rape. I was furious, but then Nancy asked me what was my part in it? I thought for a moment, what do you mean my part. As if I had something to do with it. But I did..... I was there of my own free will. Did God tell me to go back? Did anybody force me to go there? No, it was my free will and then it was Manuel's will to rape me.

Some of the things were not my fault, like when I was a child and I was molested, or the cruel treatment that came from my Mother and Raymond. These things just happened, but it wasn't God's fault either he wasn't the one doing it to me. I had struggled with this for years: But He gave me these parents! Yes, but had they had another daughter in my place, they would have done the same thing to her, because it was their free will. It wasn't because it was me, it was because that is what they chose to do. Child abuse happens to children, not one particular child. It didn't happen to me because I was Christine Michelle; it happened to me because I was a victim of child abuse, and I lived with child abusers.

I have a choice: I can hold onto all of these resentments, or I can let them go. I have to except that it happened, and that there is nothing I can do about it. I can't rewrite history, and no one in this life time can make up for what they did to me.

I was watching Joyce Myers on TV, she was talking about forgiveness. She said that forgiveness is simply not holding the person who has wronged you responsible for hurting you. That they don't owe you, that there is no debt to be paid to you. That God would take care of the debt for you. If you would only let him. I thought about that. She went on to say that probably the person couldn't pay you back even if they wanted to. How in the world is anyone going to pay me back the childhood that I lost. All of the years of heart ache and confusion. She was right no one could pay me back.

The things I did to others I also had to admit. I was no angel. You can't fix something that you deny exists. I told all. Of the rapes that I had done, I beat on my lovers, I lied and cheated.

I was asked to make amends even if I felt the person didn't deserve it. I was told that this wasn't about them, this was about me staying sober. It was these very things I was trying to forget that were causing me to drink. So one by one, I tackled them. The things that kept me up at night were the first things that I addressed, most of which cost money.

Why did I have to? Because it was eating me up inside. I had to make right. It wasn't going to go away on it's own.

And all who come into the rooms of AA seeking help find it there. I know

**because I have, and I was at my end. My family gave up on me. The church didn't want me.**

**Society didn't want to put up with me. But AA accepted me as I was ... broken. And through the members' stories and friendship and God's guidance, I found a new life. I was learning things I should have learned as a child and adolescent, at age 33 and am still learning now at 38, but it's better late than never. AA is more than just a way to stay sober, AA teaches you how to live in this society sober, how to cope and work through guilt and resentments. I have heard it said that it is the last house on the block, and for some people it is, it was the only place I could go where people actually cared about me, they listened to my heart ache. It has helped me face the wreckage of my past.**