

Poems of Childhood Pain

The Effect of Sexual Abuse on Children

Kenzo Amariyo PhD

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Warning: This book may cause emotional or psychological trauma. **READ AT YOUR OWN RISK.**
If you are in any way traumatised by the contents of this book, **seek medical help immediately.**

Warning

This Book Contains Distressing Details

If you have suffered sexual abuse, please seek professional guidance as to whether it would be advisable for you to read this book. If after reading this book you feel in any way traumatised and/or distressed, **seek medical help**. This book contains one offensive word.

Dedication

I dedicate this book to all the clients I have counselled for sexual abuse.

I have written this book as a reminder that you are not alone, that many others have sadly walked in your shoes.

I have written the poems in hope that it will help to make the effect of sexual abuse more understood. When light shines in the darkness we become conscious of the things we do not know exist, or do not want to look at. We can then choose to either turn a blind eye or stand up and rally against it. This is my way of standing up for you all and rallying against sexual abuse because no-one deserves to be sexually abused – not even you.

I wish you all well as you navigate your way through some or all the feelings of hate, blame, low self-esteem, and depression; through all the un-forgiveness, the suicidal thoughts and intentions and the rest of the negative emotions that can and

often do overwhelm you.

I wish you all well as you pass through the stages of grief, eventually reaching a place of acceptance; not acceptance that makes it ok, but an acceptance of what happened has happened.

I wish you all well as you embark on a journey of healing. Your story and healing will be the medicine many others need, do not feel ashamed to share it.

Remember that you are not alone, and you are still the beautiful person you once knew you were, you just need to find your way of making the sun shine again in your own life.

Sharing your pain has helped me to grow in understanding and wisdom, and for that I am eternally grateful. I have heard, seen, and felt your pain. We have talked together and at times cried together and although I may no longer be physically present in your life, I will always carry you in my heart - Kenzo

“Cry ~ Forgive ~ Heal”

Sexual Abuse in Children

Chapter One

Studies show that 90% of child sexual abuse is committed by men to children that they already know, and most perpetrators are family members, studies also reveal that girls are at a higher risk of sexual abuse than boys.

Around 25% of sexual abuse cases involve penetration or oral-genital contact. The psychological and emotional effect of this can have catastrophic results with many children going on to display symptoms of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). Many children that have been sexually abused have difficulty recalling the incident(s), often because of the trauma that

resurfaces, and in many instances because of the mind's inability to recall the event. For some, there is no detailed memory just distressing feelings.

It makes sense that when any human being is sexually abused, there will be long term issues. Some children will end up needing a lifetime of psychological support, many often require medication to support their mental health, whilst others will go on to lead a relatively normal life.

Many issues can and do arise from sexual abuse which can complicate life in general and the ability to have fulfilling adult relationships, especially those that involve intimacy. Anxiety and depression can also have a leading role in the victim's life which can also lead to suicidal thoughts.

For many children that have been sexually abused, there is a sense of self-blame, often because they feel that had they not done this or done that then perhaps it would not have happened. Other children feel blame because they did not fight off the

perpetrator even though they know that they would not have been physically able to; and for others still, especially in older children, the guilt and self-blame can come from knowing that at the time, it felt quite pleasant. One thing to remember is that our genitals are designed to respond to gentle touch and although sexual abuse is far from appropriate touch, if the perpetrator is gentle and kind, it can still stimulate the victim whether they want to feel stimulated or not.

Child sexual abuse can impact education, which in turn can impact future work prospects, it can increase the prevalence of suicide and drug abuse.

For many sexually abused children, even as an adult, they can have feelings of wanting to escape. This, and many other feelings are often managed by way of excessive alcohol or drugs or other dangerous behaviours which could lead to accidental or deliberate suicide.

Many sexually abused children become withdrawn and closed off

emotionally, they find it difficult to trust because of the severity of broken trust and often prefer to be alone although they do not necessarily want to feel lonely.

The effect of childhood sexual abuse/rape is huge. Unfortunately, a small percentage of sexually abused male children go on to repeat the behaviour with their own children or the children of those close to them. Whilst this does not mean that women never become perpetrators, evidence suggests that women are more likely to internalize the events and display more self-destructive behaviour rather than abuse others.

The cycle of sexual abuse can be difficult to break, perpetrators usually know what they are doing is wrong, but feel unable to stop the behaviour, some feel that there is no-one to talk to about their behaviour or desire because they know they are at risk of judgement, false accusations and possibly jail.

As not all sexually abused children come forward to make a statement, and often for fear of not being believed, or because of feelings of shame, it is hard to honestly say how many sexual abuse or rape cases in children go under the radar.

As a child's perpetrator is often known to them, a distorted connection between shame and love can be made, especially if the sexual abuse started at an early age. In adult life, this distorted connection can bring confusion into intimate and non-intimate relationships which could result in abusive relationships being interpreted as loving relationships.

The distorted relationship clearly reflects the repetitive cycle of abuse. The victim is often unaware that they may be attracting perpetrators of abuse which does not mean that it is their fault, it simply reflects that they need help to heal psychologically and emotionally as often, perpetrators can sense, whether consciously or unconsciously who they can victimize.

In intimate relationships, victims of childhood sexual abuse can have complicated feelings around sex which can also put them at risk of rape within that same relationship.

Sexual abuse must stop, it is destroying people psychologically, physically, and emotionally. The impact can be felt socially and economically as many victims will require psychological and emotional support for life.

If you know someone who has been sexually abused, please encourage them to seek professional help. It does not matter how long ago it happened, what is important is that the person receives appropriate care and support.

Healing from Sexual Abuse

Chapter Two

Healing is never easy; it is best viewed as an opportunity for an inward journey where pleasant and unpleasant memories and feelings can rise and ebb, just like the tide.

Healing comes in many different forms for each of us but no matter what you require healing for, it often takes a remarkably similar pattern for us all.

The first crossroads you will face is one of choice; some of the questions you need to ask yourself are: Do I stay as I am? Do I just change directions? Do I try and live a life of denial? Do I move forward, accepting what has happened and open to moving on through healing, into better pastures?

Deciding the latter will open the door for you on many levels, but do not think it is an easy road, healing is seldom easy because it requires us to look deep within at our emotions and thoughts. It requires us to have an open heart and be willing to feel the pain, to somewhat relive the memory, the trauma, the grief, the shame, the fear.

To all those of you that have already begun your healing journey, well done, I trust you will see it through to the end.

To all those who are thinking about taking the journey, be brave, it is an opportunity to heal, take it, you deserve it.

When you first start talking about the sexual abuse, it can bring up so many memories, many that you have played through your mind over the years, and memories you didn't even know you had. The memories can also seem like they are distorted, because how you viewed each moment then, may not be how you view it now. Perception changes. You will probably

have a host of feelings flooding in, ranging from sadness, despair, to anger, hatred, the feeling for revenge. It could feel like complete turmoil, and you may feel that you wished you had never opened what may feel like pandoras box, but trust me, things will settle down given time.

Often, with victims of sexual abuse, memories and feelings have been suppressed, so it can be hard accessing those memories and feelings, but with time, and expert guidance, you will be able to access them which eventually, will aid your healing.

Over time, and especially if the abuse happened whilst you were incredibly young, you can start to question whether it really did happen, whether you made it up, whether those that told you that you were telling lies were right. Acceptance of what happened is essential to moving forward and healing. You cannot heal something that you do not believe happened. You must reach a state of acceptance of what

happened. Acceptance is not saying what the perpetrator did was ok, it was far from ok, your acceptance of what happened is moving from denial into the healing arena. You cannot change what happened, but you change how you view it and how it affects your life. Talking about the abuse is a huge step forward, because many people keep it a secret, sometimes out of shame, other times because it was drummed into them as a child that they must not tell anyone or there would be consequences. Talk about it, get it out in the open, but be selective with who you talk to. If you do not feel you have anyone you can trust, find a counsellor or psychotherapist. Or if you want a different approach, find a healer who is also qualified in counselling.

As you start to break the silence within, you may experience feelings of guilt, self-blame, regret. You need to understand right now, it was not your fault, nothing you could have done would have made it your fault, you were a child, they were the adult.

I have heard over and over how in the case of rape, the female has been blamed or partially blamed because she was dressed inappropriately, it is so wrong. At the end of the day, even if a woman is standing there naked, it does not give anyone the right to sexually abuse her, to help themselves against her will. As a child, it would not have mattered if you were innocently going around naked, you were a child, no adult has the right to use you to fulfil their own sexual lusts and desires. Do not feel guilty it is not and was not your fault. Lay the blame on the shoulders of the perpetrator.

For some, reaching a place where they feel they can confront the perpetrator is a huge step forward. If that is what you feel to do, then perhaps you need to do that. Talk to a professional first so you can explore the idea. For some, using counselling techniques that permit you to imagine talking to the person is powerful and less intimidating, it can also give you an opportunity to see what was going on for the perpetrator at that time.

After a trauma, many victims can suffer with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). In the field of healing, I would say that a piece of you had split off, left, and that it would require a skilled healer to help you to reconnect with that lost part of you, and safely bring it back and reintegrate it within yourself. Once reintegrated, it would be vital that you continued to nurture that broken piece. Such nurturing comes from looking after yourself, and making sure that your inner child feels safe, secure, looked after. Mindfulness can help a lot with this as it helps you to become aware of the thoughts that you have and the feelings that often accompany those thoughts. There will be times when you will not even realize that you are playing memories of hurt and pain; your inner child will be disturbed by this, and you may cause it to panic.

Other ways of dealing with the abuse is to write a letter to the perpetrator, you may or may not send it, speak with a professional to see what will be best for you. Writing can

be a wonderful healing tool because you can take as long as you need, you can write as many nasty words as possible, you can even express your feelings for revenge and what you would like to do to them. Writing this type of letter is not designed to get back at them, but to release your pent-up feelings and give you a sense of being heard. Letters like that are best destroyed afterwards, as the act of destroying it is part of the letting go, releasing all the emotions linked to it.

One thing to remember is that as you progress along your healing journey you will experience a range of emotions, you will go through the cycle of grief. You will move between feelings of anger and rage, acceptance, sadness, and eventually you will reach, if you want to, a place of forgiveness. I know many of you will feel disgusted that I would even suggest that you forgive those that have sexually abused you; but one thing you need to remember is that forgiving them, is for you not them. It is to release you from holding onto negative feelings that

could eventually hurt you, whether that be through continued mental health problems or continued emotional trauma or even other health problems. They already took so much from you, do not let them keep you bound to them through un-forgiveness. When we can fully heal, we can move out of the victim place and into the arena of *the wounded healer*. There will always be scars, but scars can heal to a degree where they are not visible to others, to a degree where only you know where the wounds are. The wounded healer is now capable of helping others without retraumatizing themselves, they have come out the other side, healed and whole. How wonderful that will be for you to be able to stand whole, free, and able to help others. No-one can understand the effect of child sexual abuse like the person who has been through it. The rest of us can only sympathize, or empathize, you can heal and then help others onto their own healing journey, and although this may not be in the same capacity as a healer, it could certainly

be in the capacity of a listener and friend. Do not sweep your experience under the carpet like a dirty rag, turn it around and make it the very thing that brings you and others healing, health, and hope.

One Man's Story of Sexual Abuse

(Name and some details changed for anonymity)

Colin was in his sixties, a lovely man, married with children. He had been married for 20yrs when his wife passed on. Up until that time he had never told a soul about the horrific sexual abuse he suffered at the hands of his father.

He had suffered with a hernia from the age of 14yrs, thought to be caused by stress. In his forties, Colin was having heart trouble, and unexpectedly he would fall to the ground with severe chest pains. After several trips to casualty, the doctor informed Colin that there was nothing wrong with him, and that he needed to stop worrying

about life and just get on with it. Later in life he started to have skeletal issues, and further down the line, neurological issues leaving him unable to work or walk. You could say that these are normal issues that many people suffer with, and I would agree. However, during the counselling it became evident from a spiritual perspective that his silence about the abuse was building up in him, slowly crippling him and causing undue stress upon his entire being.

When his wife passed, it was as if that was the straw that broke the camel's back. He completely lost all sense of life, he started to drink heavily, and he even tried to kill himself but failed. He felt a complete failure and could not think of any reason to go on, he spent several months in and out of a mental health ward. His five children had no idea of the abuse, they just thought he had lost it because of mum passing.

Drugs and alcohol had started to be the main coping strategy even though he knew they were not helping; they helped for

a moment, but once the affect had worn off, he was right back in the same hole.

There came a point in his life where he knew he needed more help from outside. He had a remarkably close friend who he finally confided in. He did not give her the full story but enough for her to get the gist of it; that night was the opening of what could be seen as pandoras box.

When Colin came to see me a couple of weeks later, he was ready to talk about the sexual abuse in a much deeper way and was also ready to tell his children. It was not that they needed to know, it was that he needed to let them know so that they could understand why he was as he was.

As Colin began to talk, he sat weeping and rocking like a small child as he blurted out about the constant sexual abuse and how he felt disregarded, disrespected, fearful and ashamed. As it all poured out, accompanied by heartfelt sobs, he started to release sixty years of pain and heartache.

Obviously, there was going to be many more tears and anguish.

Colin had trained in mental and emotional studies from a youthful age, looking back, he feels it was his way of trying to understand the abuse. The good thing that came from it was that because he was aware of the cycle of abuse, he vowed never to abuse his children, and he did not; but not because of strength of character but because he never felt he wanted to. Slowly he started to heal, he started to open his heart and let his feelings about the abuse out. He shared with his siblings about the abuse, and to his horror, and somewhat relief, they too had suffered sexual abuse from their father. The relief was not about being glad the siblings had also gone through the same, but relief that he had not been singled out for some reason. This was a turning point in his life.

We talked about his dad and how all around looked up to him with respect as a loving father and husband. We talked about the probability or possibility that his father

may have also been abused. Over time, with much self-healing to the inner child, and several counselling sessions, he finally came to a place where he could forgive his father; that was another turning point in his life. As he spoke out the words "I forgive you dad" he broke down, he completely crumbled, it was as if the entire world had been on his shoulders and finally broken him. The dam wall was in pieces, and I held the space for him so that he could release all that he needed to release.

To see such a kind and gentle man so broken was heart wrenching, but as a healer, you must be willing to stand in the fire with someone and feel their pain; and I can assure you I certainly felt the pain.

Colin came back a few more times after that, but those sessions were more focused on moving on; Where do I go from here? Who am I now all that heaviness is lifted? What do I really want out of life?

The next time I saw Colin it was in passing, he looked bright and had a smile

that stretched to eternity. He had met someone new and was now in a steady relationship, he had told her from the start about the sexual abuse and the effect it had had on him and how it can still affect intimacy. His neurological issues had eased, meaning he had regained 50% of what he had lost. His heart problems were given a diagnosis and were now under control, and he was living his life the best way he could. For the first time in his life, he reported feeling emotionally free. He acknowledged that he still had to use mindfulness to ensure he did not fall back into old patterns of thinking, but he was happy. I saw a new man that day. To see him so free and happy was one of the biggest blessings I have had, a far reach from the broken man sitting and rocking in my healing room.

Life will help us heal, do not be held back by you past, be willing to move forward and:

Cry ~ Forgive ~ Heal

Poems of Childhood Pain

Chapter Three

“Broken Dreams”

*Broken dreams,
Broken trust,
Too much touching,
Too much lust.*

*Too many visits,
In the night,
Sick to the stomach,
Feeling white.*

*Sworn to secrecy
I must be,
Whilst my spirit,
Dies in me.*

*Not allowed,
To talk or share,
Doesn't anyone,
Really care?*

*Can't they see me,
Screaming loud?
Disappearing,
In the crowd.*

*Hiding from,
My very life,
Still unable,
To manage strife.*

*Too much torment,
Too much abuse,
For 20 years,
And never set loose.*

*Even now,
They are dead and gone,
My life is ruined -
Everyone.*

*Don't touch your children,
Don't make them cry,
Don't spread abuse,
I'll tell you why.*

*It makes us want,
To harm ourselves,
It is not welcome,
You poison elves.*

*Please just pass us,
Way on by,
Then we will not,
Forever cry.*

*For inside,
We feel real dead,
You have completely,
Screwed our head.*

