Dawn

My name is Dawn and this is my story. I grew up in a Christian home with parents who were members of a United Methodist Ministry. They ran a home for traveling missionaries. Though my parents provided love and affection for people off the street, it was not as freely given in our own home.

My mother was an extremely broken person with deep wounds that turned into bitterness. This contributed to her controlling ways and unrealistic expectations of me. My father was a recovering alcoholic and absent the majority of my childhood. As a child, I carried the blame for anything that went wrong. I was never validated nor accepted and constantly intimidated by my parents.

At the age of 7, while on vacation in Florida, I was molested by my uncle. This is my first childhood memory. Sadly, later in life, I found out my mother had also been molested by the same uncle.

During my teenage years, I began to rebel and isolate from everyone. At 15 years of age, I had been raped several times and was faced with my first pregnancy. My mother was more concerned with reputation and made me get an abortion. I tried to reach out to my father, but he called me a murderer and provided no help. This was the start of my using sex to finally have a sense of belonging and to be able to control men.

By the age of 21, I had 3 beautiful children. I married my second husband and we moved in with my mother in law. When she found out I was 5 months pregnant, she took me to get an abortion. When the doctor refused, she placed a stack of money on his desk. Apparently, money talked and, abruptly, my 5 month old child was taken from me. A late term abortion is a 2 day process. When I arrived back at my mother in laws’ home after the first step of the abortion, I was forced into a locked room and told I could have no contact with my children. This was the darkest night of my life.

I ended up divorcing and married a man who introduced me to crack cocaine. But, that marriage didn’t last. At 46, I found myself at the peak of my addiction. I was also engaging in prostitution. I knew I needed help. I just couldn’t face the shame of what my self-destructive behavior was doing to the people that loved me most.

In 2013, my two spiritual mentors contacted a ministry called Out of Darkness. They provided rescue and temporary shelter and helped me find the Christian Women’s Center. CWC is where I found my true self and was the first time I ever felt safe. My heart began to soften from the grace, love and support I received. I surrendered my life to God. I have forgiven myself and others. I graduated from the program in 2014 and now spend most of my weekends working with the residents at the center. I have a thriving cleaning business and my relationship with my children has been restored and I have 5 beautiful grandchildren. I am so grateful for this ministry who showed me that I am worthy.