

WHEN YOUR PAST ABUSE STILL HURTS

From Broken to Restored

A guidebook from one who has been there.



ALLISON MCCORMICK
SMART LIVING IN SMALL BITES

To read more, the entire book is available on Amazon.

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This book is written by the author to share her life experience with the sole purpose of providing insight, encouragement and hope. The information provided in this book is for informational purposes only and is not intended to substitute professional counseling or treatment.



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Writing is a synergy between heart and mind. The perfect marriage of life experiences and God's grace-filled guidance. Although it is a solo discipline, it takes a community of support to successfully navigate the journey. I want to take a minute to thank the community which has consistently supported my craft.

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To God, thank you for entrusting me with your words. I ask that you continue to guide my writing and I ask that in some small way, it glorifies you. Thank you, Father.

And finally, thank you for joining my journey. I hope this book is an encouragement to you and that it helps you to see your journey in a new way.

DEAR READER

If you have chosen to read this book, you may be searching to understand God's plan and his goodness amid feelings of betrayal and shame. Perhaps you are looking for a way to push all the ugliness of your past under the proverbial carpet and run from the memories that haunt you.

I spent several years of my life stuffing pain and hiding from shame, but I hope that as you read my story and have a chance to explore your own, you come to recognize the brokenness you suffered at the hands of another can heal. You can move from a position of being trapped by feelings of fear, anger, and shame and find the grace to forgive your abuser, those who should have protected you, and yourself.

I want to be candid. Embarking on a journey focused on the past, our hurts, and God's truth will be difficult. But I want to reassure you, you are not walking this path alone. As difficult as it may be to accept, God remains close and he is available to help you overcome all the barriers that may arise.

I will be praying for you and your journey. Thank you again for walking with me,

Allison



MY STORY

Childhood is supposed to be a safe place. A playground that nurtures and helps us grow into healthy adults. But for some, childhood is an empty field, a place where the brokenness of others, our childlike trust, and the desire to please collide. And it is this collision that can break the human spirit, causing the injured to hide and coloring the future a pale shade of shame and fear.

As a child, I lived in one of those wastelands. As an adult, I am working through the effects of the crash. But the irony of my journey is it started in a literal field. A place of childhood imagination, a land filled with underground forts, wood crate castles, and a path that wandered over dirt mounds and through a labyrinth of tall grasses and wildflowers. A path that led from my home to the home of my abuser.

They were our neighbors, an elderly couple. He was short and round. She was bedridden. They were the object of my mother's compassion.

My trips to his house were made to deliver freshly baked cookies, vegetables picked from our garden, or sometimes a shopping bag filled with dinner. Other times, I was sent to stay with him and his wife because my mother had to run errands.

I clearly remember the anxiety I felt each time my mother asked me to make the trip. I would leave our porch walking as slowly as my body would allow, measuring the distance I traveled by glancing back toward home until my toes reached the imaginary boundary line—the edge of the field that bordered his house.

I would run down the bank of the shallow gulley, coming up on the opposite side, through the wire gate, and around the back of the house until I stood on the front porch with my heart pounding in my chest. I was certain others could hear each beat. I would stand at that door for several minutes, waiting for the courage to knock. Once inside, it was an endless game of cat and mouse as I tried to distance myself from the inappropriate affections of a broken man. I was too afraid to tell my parents that he would trap me in a room, standing in the doorway, not allowing me to pass. I couldn't share that the toll for getting out of the room was paid with a price—a price too costly for a child to pay.

I was five. He was old enough to be my grandpa.

I should have been safe. But his uncontrolled obsessions made him a predator.

I continued to make the trips. Each time I returned through the field, spilling my secrets onto the ground through a cascade of tears. Yet, my mother's kindness for the couple overflowed, drowning me under a wave of hopelessness.

Until I turned seven and we moved, leaving the field, my abuser,

and my secrets behind.

It would be over a decade before I shared what happened during those visits. By then, the elderly couple had both passed, their home leveled, and new homes graced their lot and the empty field.

Although I moved away from my abuser's reach, he was never far from my thoughts. His actions shaped my views about intimacy and formed the boundaries I used to keep myself safe. The shame and fear I felt as a child were only magnified by my inability to tell anyone what had happened. I was trapped—a child carrying a secret that shaped her future.

As I moved from my pre-teen to teen years, I wrestled with a constant barrage of thoughts. Why didn't I tell someone? Why didn't my parents protect me? Why didn't I refuse to go? Why didn't I...? But deep inside, I was forming two theories to address the many questions.

First, I believed that what happened to me was wrong and somehow “it” being wrong turned into “me” being wrong. Second and perhaps the most dangerous, I blamed myself for my abuse. I should have told someone, done something, refused. Over time, these theories became my truth. Left unresolved, the being-wrong, my-fault feelings drove me toward a life of perfection and striving.

As an adult, I worked hard to prove my value, took on more to demonstrate my worth, and kept all men at a comfortable distance.

The rest of the author's story has been intentionally removed. To read more, the entire book is available on Amazon.

YOUR STORY

Every person's story is nuanced. Yet, we share a common hurt and need. Telling our own story—even if it's just for ourselves to read—is an important step toward hope and healing. Write your story below.



"Our lives begin to end the day we become silent about things that matter."

—Martin Luther King, Jr.

PROBLEMS TO FACE

My life was filled with many different and often competing emotions. For years they kept me trapped, unable to move forward. But I was fortunate; I had people around me who encouraged me to look at each emotion and determine if it accurately reflected the woman I wanted to be. I took time to identify the key feelings that held me hostage and looked closely at whether they were the truth or a distortion fueled by my childhood perspectives. As I worked through each thought, I was better able to take the needed steps to move forward.

You may also be dealing with a flood of emotions. As long as they are left to run uncontrolled in your mind, they have power. Power to keep you ensnared, weighed down by the pain of your past.

I encourage you to take a few minutes and read my thoughts on shame, confusion, anger, fear, and distrust. These were some of the many feelings that entangled me, kept me striving, and chased me throughout my adult life. They may be emotions you are wrestling with as well. If they are, feel free to write down your thoughts in the spaces provided.

As you engage in this reflection, I hope you will find the courage to be brutally honest with yourself. You don't need to hide anymore. You do not need to be afraid. Acknowledging the emotions that bind you can bring freedom.

*“Because the Sovereign LORD helps me, I will not be disgraced.
Therefore, I have set my face like a stone, determined to do his will.
And I know that I will not be put to shame” (Isaiah 50:7, NLT).*

Shame

I vividly remember my trips through the field on my way home from our neighbors. Tears rolled down my face, my heart pounding in my chest. I just wanted to get to the safety of home. As I ran, my five-year-old brain reminded me that I had caused my abuser's affection. If I were stronger, smarter, prettier, he wouldn't behave that way. It was my fault, and those feelings led to a heart of shame.

I held shame's secret close and in my silence, I became more and more confused. My mother was my protector. The one person in my world that was safe. Yet, she asked me to make repeated trips through the field and into his arms.

How is a child supposed to deal with what feels like betrayal? How can the mind cope with all the disconnected emotions? As a child, I learned to hide. As an adult, I filled in the gaps of my perceived inadequacies with more and more striving. Striving to forget and striving to achieve.

Shame, when fueled by the power of confusion, offers a stumbling block. It distorts the truth of who we are and keeps us trying to make sense of what has gone wrong in our world.

Are you chased by feelings of shame? Do you ever find yourself confused and unable to move forward? If yes, how are you doing with replacing shame’s distortions with God’s truth? What is one step you can take to move beyond your confusion?

The rest of the problems faced and the steps taken have been intentionally removed. To read more, the entire book is available on Amazon.

DO YOU FEEL LIKE YOUR PAST WON'T LET GO?

Maybe it feels too hard to handle on your own. Do you wish you could talk to someone who understands—someone who's made it through, could walk with you, and lead you toward hope?

In this book, you will find that woman.

- *Read her story—a story like yours.*
- *Discover the problems she faced and the steps she took.*
- *Find courage through her confidence and hope.*
- *Pen your own story and struggles on the pages provided.*
- *Take comfort in realizing you don't have to walk alone.*

In *When Your Past Abuse Still Hurts*, author Allison McCormick shares her deeply personal journey toward finding healing and redemption after enduring the haunting effects of childhood sexual abuse.

Allison's story is an invitation to identify the brokenness in your life and develop a path toward freedom. Whether your hurt was the outcome of abuse or came through living in this fractured world, Allison hopes this book will help you navigate the emotions that can keep you stuck in a cycle of fear, shame, and anger. She believes that as you retrace the path of your own story, you will discover the comfort of knowing you are not alone. There is a path that leads to healing.



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Another guidebook in the *Smart Living in Small Bites Series*.