

## On The Road To A Place Called Freedom

### Practical ways to begin the process of healing from abuse.

By Sallie Culbreth



Perhaps you've reached the crossroads, the place where the pain of the past is ready to meet freedom and a better life. As you begin the pursuit of peace, take advantage of opportunities you can create that will open the doors to healing:

**Seek help.** It is important to have experienced help to walk with you on this journey. You might want to consider finding a pastor or other clergy member to help you with the spiritual damage, or a licensed counselor to help you resolve your childhood/adolescent abuse. Knowing that you need help is not a sign of weakness. It's a sign of wisdom and strength.

**Read.** There are excellent books that can help you address the issues of abuse. Some you might consider are:

- **The Uncaged Project** by Sallie Culbreth  
Published by Committed to Freedom Ministries
- **On the Threshold of Hope** by Diane Mandt Langberg, Ph.D.  
Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., Wheaton, IL (1999).
- **On the Threshold of Hope Study Guide** Compiled by Sallie Culbreth  
Published by Committed to Freedom Ministries, Hot Springs, AR
- **A Safe Place** (specifically written for teens who have been sexually abused)  
by Jan Morrison.  
Shaw Publishers, Wheaton, IL (1990).
- **My Father's Child** by Lynda D. Elliott and Vicki L. Tanner, Ph.D.  
Published by Teen Challenge International, Springfield, MO
- **The Wounded Heart** and **The Wounded Heart Workbook** by Dr. Dan Allender  
Published by Navpress, Colorado Springs, CO(1995)
- Also view our "Resources" page on our website for a more extensive book list.

**Keep a journal.** Write what you feel and think in a journal or notebook. If you don't want to write, then draw in a sketch journal to capture your thoughts and feelings. Do this several times a week, or even daily if you need to. It will help you to move your internal voices and pressures outside of yourself where you can see them and think more clearly.

**Pray and meditate.** Spend time each day quieting your body, mind, and spirit. Even if it's just a few minutes a day, you can start now. Begin to engage God in this process - even if you feel isolated and distant from him. Start to practice honest communication with God. You can pray out loud, silently, or even write out your prayers. God wants to be in a relationship with you. If you're angry with God, he already knows. God is not afraid of your anger, your doubts, your fears, or your questions. He loves you and wants you to find true healing.

**Find a community of faith.** A place of worship will bring peace to your soul, teach you to grow in a relationship with Jesus Christ, and help you connect with spiritually mature people. Worshiping with other people is a very healing experience. There is great spiritual, mental, and physical value when you participate in worship with a community of people.

**Scripture study and meditation.** Get a Bible (we suggest the New International Version - NIV) and begin to incorporate daily Scripture reading. A good place to begin is the New Testament book of John, followed by the book of 1<sup>st</sup> John. While you're waiting and seeking, study the life of Christ and see what you have in common with the One the Bible calls "Immanuel" - "God with us." The more you know about the teachings of Christ, the more you will be able to recognize the lies that abuse taught you. Scripture study facilitates the process of exchanging the lies for the truth.

**Cherish yourself.** Be kind to yourself. Go for a walk, swim, skate, bike, dance. Take a hot bath, get a massage, or change your hairstyle. Eat healthy food with lots of vegetables and fruit. Drink water in abundance. Occasionally, treat yourself to dessert. Take a nap or sit in the sunshine. Abuse teaches you that you have no value. That is a lie that can be countered by treating yourself with respect and value.

**Consider attending a Committed to Freedom Retreat.** When you attend a retreat, you will be given spiritual tools, one at a time. You will be shown how to use those tools. When you return home, you will not be "magically fixed," but you will be empowered to regain ownership of your life and your choices. The goal is to help you move beyond the abuse.