

WOMEN WOUNDS



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The Mark of a True Friend

Places all negative emotions on the Throne. Does not hold hurt and anger but instead gives them to God. Always returns good for evil without question. Knows a kind word can diffuse a fire instantly. She loves, always. Listens without interrupting and without judgment. Forgives, often. Has healthy boundaries. Knows the value of honor. Always considers others over herself.

Chances are, you or someone you know has been pushed away by another woman in a relationship. Being hurt is simply unavoidable. It's a part of being in relationships with other women.

As you go through the stories in this e-book, you may see parts of yourself reflected. We hope it acts as a catalyst for those who need to heal from wounds inflicted by women, giving you the courage to be vulnerable and trust women again.

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Chapter 1

Skin Deep

by Sissy Reese

I had been my experience in life that relationships are superficial. In fact, most of my relationships have been that way, validating my inner narrative of not being good enough. One definition of superficial is "shallow; not profound or thorough." What struck me the most about the definition is the word "profound." Profound is having deep insights or understanding, or penetrating to the depths of one's being. Having superficial relationships does not allow one to know and understand another person, or to have insight into why they are the way they are, to know their story. The flip side is also true. No one can really know who you are if you are the one who is superficial.

We all have a deep desire to be seen, to be fully known and still be loved once the not-so-pretty parts of us are discovered. We know that Jesus loves us this way. We know that He is the one to see us when no one else sees us, that He loves us when no one else loves us. Even though Jesus is enough for us, we were created for

community. Community is only as good as we are willing to be open to going deep with one another.

Until the past few years, I have felt like I was not good at relationships and that I was the problem. I have felt that I was the one who was always trying, was the one who was open and yet, still unknown. As I grow in my walk with the Lord, I am realizing that it is not me as a person. I do not think we as a people make it easy for anything other than superficial.

We generally are judgmental, too busy, or too consumed with ourselves to see someone else. We have this picture of the person we need to portray, which causes us to not live an authentic life. It takes intention to be open, to engage others in real conversation.

Being vulnerable is scary and it is also courageous. How we respond to someone's vulnerability is key to making room for more. This also allows for shame to diminish. The things that are kept in secret oftentimes are riddled with shame. Once our stories are out in the open, healing can begin. It has been my experience that I obtain revelation as well as freedom when I share. There is so much

available to us when our relationships are rich in depth. If you long to live in community where you are seen and fully known, ask the Lord to bring people into your life who are looking for the same thing.

If you have believed that you are not good enough to have profound relationships, ask the Lord to heal you of this lie. Be the person you want others to be to you. I am not saying any of this is easy or that I am any good at it either. There is grace, though. Grace for you, grace for me, grace for others.

Chapter 2

The Wounder

by Victoria Sandage

When I realized my friend's depression was critical, I just had to do something. I see a need...I am compelled to meet it. It seems to be a mercy gift. I believe love heals. I believe God puts the lonely in families. I thought she just needed a home, a family, and to be loved. My family embraced the call. Not wanting her to be alone and succumb to all those tormenting thoughts, we invited her to spend a few weekends with us. I thought it would be enough. Our friendship deepened, we spent lots of time doing fun things together, enjoying one another's company, praying together, and worshiping. But the dark thoughts and oppression still haunted her, especially during weekdays when she was on her own. Months went by, she was with us just about every weekend. I'm not sure when things turned emotionally dependent and relationally unhealthy, but they did. She was stuck, really, we both were, and as much as I tried, I wasn't really helping her long term. Inwardly, I was losing the cheerfulness that accompanies mercy. I was not flourishing with cheerfulness. Something was wrong.

I tried gently to set some boundaries but that didn't work very well. I was so afraid of doing anything that might make her feel like I was rejecting her. My spirit and soul were troubled, and the weight on me was only getting heavier. This wasn't her fault at all, and I believe my intentions were good. In my helping, I became unbalanced.

Step One in The Twelve Steps Program is to "admit you are powerless over _____ and our lives had become unmanageable."

Mine certainly felt unmanageable. Thankfully, I was in community with a group of friends who could help me process my feelings and lovingly point out my blind spots. After counsel and prayer, I had to consider cutting off the relationship altogether (at least temporarily). Oh, my goodness! I couldn't believe it had come to this. It felt like the most unloving thing I could possibly do. I was sick with how this might make her feel or what it might do to her. I loved her but my actions would not look like love. Rejection had been a trigger in her life. I didn't want to hurt her. Would I be pushing her over that edge that we

had worked so hard to keep her away from? It was one of the hardest things I had ever done. She was devastated. I had wounded her terribly. Could our friendship ever survive this painful wounding? Would she ever forgive me for hurting her like this? We didn't speak or see each other for a number of years. I was very sad about that. Then one day she reached out. She opened her heart. It was tender and loving. She wanted to thank me for doing what I did, acknowledging how hard it must have been for me. She shared that it had been a very dark time for her but she said that if I hadn't done what I did, she would not have had real change, breakthrough, and healing. I was amazed. Her gratitude washed over my soul that day and it felt really good. It was a gift and I would not take it for granted.

Wounds from a friend can cut so deeply, and often are necessary for growth to happen. Knowing that doesn't really make it any easier but it is hopeful. In our situation something very good ended up happening. Our relationship looks a little different now, but the love we have for one another still runs deep, maybe even deeper now that we've come out on the other side. I'm happy to

report my friend has experienced lots of healing, is happily thriving, and living a really good life.

We may not always get to see redemption on this side of the veil. But I do know that if any of this sounds familiar, wherever you find yourself, this is not the end of the story, good is coming! "

So we are convinced that every detail of our lives is continually woven together for good, for we are his lovers who have been called to fulfill his designed purpose."
Romans 8:26,28 (TPT)

"Faithful are the wounds of a friend..." (Proverbs 27:6)

Chapter 3

Enough About Me - Let's Talk About You. What do You Think of Me?

by Adrienne Tietz

We all know self-centered people. Being around self-centered people may make you feel disrespected, uncared for, unseen, unheard, used, disregarded, overlooked, and expendable. Sometimes, highly empathetic people will wonder, "What's wrong with me? Why doesn't this person care about/like me?," when in fact, there are never any satisfying answers to these questions. It can be deeply disappointing and difficult to be in a one-sided relationship, and it can take years to work through it.

Since we're incapable of changing others, our next step is learning how to handle ourselves in relationships with self-centered people.

1. Realize our own sin and brokenness. We have issues, too! When we understand how much we've been forgiven and continue to be forgiven by God, it sure helps a lot with forgiving others. When God brings us through various places of healing and enables us to walk in more freedom, it's not for the purpose of looking at others disparagingly and feeling superior because we feel holier or more selfless. It's for the purpose of serving others and giving. Our own journeys of healing need to be combined with great humility to know that every good thing God has given us and develops in us is from Him and for Him.
2. Know that there is no formulaic approach to one-sided relationships. Sometimes, God may lead us to significantly limit interactions with a particular person. Other times, He might ask us to leave the door open. God does not necessarily tell us to cut off all contact with highly selfish people (although it is often very tempting!). Nor does He necessarily tell us to invest heavily in those relationships. We should approach each situation prayerfully, with flexibility, with wisdom, with humility, and with openness to what we feel God calling us to in that particular season.

3. Know our own worth/value. God sees us as beloved children. Therefore, we need to forcibly stand against lies of the enemy that would try to tell us we're worthless, don't matter, are expendable, etc. Our identity and worth are wrapped up in the love of God in Christ. Never stoop to the lies of the enemy that swirl around when people treat you poorly. Stand firmly in knowing you are loved, and let God bring healing to those areas.
4. Be sure you have healthy and life-giving relationships in your life. We all need these. These kinds of relationships leave us feeling seen, valued, encouraged, and uplifted. There is mutual respect and consideration. These are the types of people we can depend on when life is tough and who celebrate with us when we rejoice. These are people who are emotionally mature enough to think about and genuinely care about others.

Did you know there are many people who do not even have one person in their lives like this? Jesus has a deeply pastoral and compassionate heart, and we get to emulate him. To throw around a catchy phrase-be the change! As you follow Christ, let Him lead you into more and more genuine love for others that manifests in you being this kind of safe, encouraging, caring, hopeful person to others.

Chapter 4

Betrayed

by Mary Jensen

I have a question to ask you. Have you ever had a secret told in confidence come back to haunt you? My woman wound story is that of betrayal, not once but twice, by someone I once called friend.

One day over 30 years ago I had a secret that came out in a legal proceeding that concerned a very personal, sensitive issue in my life. I was completely caught off guard and mortified at the time. It caused me a great deal of discomfort and immediately brought back the shame of my secret. Fast forward 30 years. The same person who shared my personal information back then again felt the need to share this with my grown daughter who has always had my back and pretended that I had already told her. My daughter didn't immediately come to me about this. In fact, it was probably a year later, and we were having one of our heart-to-heart conversations, at which time she brought it up. Again, I was completely caught off guard and this time brought to tears by the utter disrespect and betrayal of someone I once called a friend.

I never felt the need to share that private part of my life with my children and she took that from me. I was now being forced to have a conversation I never intended to have. She had over the years tried to make me look bad in the eyes of my children, so I was used to that. But this was so over the top and a complete invasion of my privacy.

I don't have contact with this person anymore, but she plays an active role in my children's life and has for a very long time. I have never confronted her, nor will I because it would serve no purpose. I have learned that hurt people, hurt people, and I know that her life has not been all that she dreamed it would be. Over the years I have learned that I can't stop her from talking about me, but I can choose to not let it affect me in a negative way. I have been able to forgive her. With God's help, I can look on her with eyes of compassion and genuinely pray for the things that are causing pain in her life. It is my biggest heart's desire to love like Jesus loves, without judgment and without boundaries. Just pure sweet love. And I truly believe that if we pray for those who have wounded us, God will heal our hearts and heal theirs as well.

Chapter 5

Silence

It has been said that actions speak louder than words. This statement is usually true, but in the case of friendship, words carry a lot of weight, and the lack of them can be almost unbearable. Such was the case with my best girlfriend.

I suppose I was reaping what I had sown. For many years I had perfected and employed the silent treatment on my husband and daughter as a way of showing my disapproval of something they had said or done to which I took offense. But now the tables were turned and my best friend, the sister-in-Christ that I spent almost all my fun girl time with was suddenly cold and non-responsive towards me.

I reviewed our recent conversations in search of wrong words I might have spoken. Played back activities we had done together to ascertain a wrong motive. I searched for reasons that would have caused this shut-down of communication with such a special friend. But nothing stood out. Next, I called with the intention of finding out

what was going on, but little conversation got us nowhere.

Finally, after lots of tears and some good counsel from my husband, I asked my friend to meet me at the park. She agreed but after spending more time in silence than in friendly chatter, I had to resolve that this close and enjoyable relationship was over and I would most likely never know why.

After that final meeting I would often see this friend at church, occasional functions, and at the local market. At first, I would not make eye contact and look for a way of escape. The wound was fresh and cut deep in my soul. But over time, I have come to a place of peace and real healing, as I have allowed my loving Father God to repair my heart and heal me of my girlfriend wound.

I love looking for valuable lessons in life and I have three from this situation that stand out.

1. Really...and I mean really! Treat others the way you want to be treated. What you sow is what you will reap!

Proverbs says, "I have personally done away with the petty and childish act of (The Silent Treatment)."

Now I employ the mature and Big Girl art of communication. I don't always do it well, however; I do strive to do it in love. Often, I pause to ask myself if a response is even necessary, or whether imparting grace and forbearance would be a better action.

2. If you find yourself in a relationship quandary like mine, go to the Lord quickly and ask Him how to proceed. If you realize you have been some part of the problem, quickly ask forgiveness. Be sincere. "As far as it is up to me, I will live in peace with everyone."

3. And finally—this is a big one! After praying and making things right on your end, if reconciliation is just not going to take place, gracefully move on. Don't beat yourself up with "woulda, coulda, shoulda!!" And please don't beat up the other person, not in words, actions or thoughts. We can and should take personal ownership of our responses to others, representing and befitting our Royal positions as Daughters-of-The Most High!

I am happy to report that God has given me real compassion for this sister-in-Christ who has had many personal battles in her life over the years. I have prayed for her and those situations and would gladly renew our relationship without a word about the past.

Chapter 6

Wounded Women Wound

by Ingrid Maddock

Women wounding is often seen as an unavoidable aspect of the complex tapestry of female relationships. The intricate dynamics that exist among women can sometimes lead to deep-seated pain and emotional turmoil. This pain, often rooted in past experiences, can resurface unexpectedly when relationships reach a point of impasse or conflict. It is not uncommon for unresolved issues, whether stemming from childhood, previous friendships, or societal pressures, to manifest in moments of tension, causing wounds that can be both profound and lasting. Even when individuals strive to place God at the center of their relationships, seeking guidance and strength through faith, the reality remains that women are not exempt from experiencing emotional wounds.

The belief that spirituality alone can shield one from the complexities of human interaction can be misleading, as the heart's vulnerabilities often remain exposed regardless of one's spiritual commitments.

Wounded women wound others. This cycle of hurt can perpetuate itself, as those who carry their own emotional scars may inadvertently inflict pain on their friends, family, or colleagues. When a woman feels wounded, her reactions may be influenced by her past traumas, leading to misunderstandings, jealousy, or even betrayal.

These reactions can create a ripple effect, where the initial wound is compounded by the responses of others, further entrenching the cycle of pain. It becomes essential for women to recognize this dynamic, understanding that healing is not only a personal journey but also a collective responsibility.

By fostering open communication, empathy, and a willingness to confront and discuss past wounds, women can begin to break this cycle. Only through awareness and intentional effort can they move toward healing, transforming their pain into a source of strength rather than a weapon that inflicts further harm.

Psalms 143:7 (MSG) *He heals the heartbroken and bandages their wounds.*

Ephesians 4:32 (AMP) *Be kind and helpful to one another, tender-hearted [compassionate, understanding], forgiving one another [readily and freely], just as God in Christ also forgave you.*

Chapter 7

Wounded Woman Prayer

Dear Abba Father,

Today, right now in this moment, I am present, I am with you. Come be with me. I desperately need to feel your tangible Presence. As my heart is humbled and contrite, I sincerely ask for your gracious mercy and forgiveness to wash over me. By my full authority, the authority you have given me, I renounce ALL agreement with an orphan spirit. In the name of Jesus, with every ounce of authority that is behind that Name, I break the stronghold over my mind. In Jesus' Name. Release! I break the stronghold over my emotions. In Jesus' Name. Release! I break the stronghold over my spirit. In Jesus' Name. Release!

I thank you that I am your Royal Daughter, your heir. You have blessed me with a priceless everlasting inheritance with you, my Great Father. I feel your love and forgiveness and I fully accept and acknowledge I have been released from generational bondage and curses that have been placed knowingly or unknowingly over my life.

I declare that you love me unconditionally.

{You} have loved {me} with an everlasting love; {You} have drawn {me} with unfailing kindness. Jeremiah 31:3 (emphasized).

I declare that strongholds are broken.

{I} do not conform to the pattern of this world, but {I am} transformed by the renewing of {my} mind. Then {I} will be able to test and approve what God's will is? His good, pleasing and perfect will. Romans 12:2 (emphasized).

Jesus promised

{He would} not leave {me} as {an} orphan. John 14:18 (emphasized).

I stand resolute that

{The} weapons of {my} warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds; Casting down imaginations?and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ. 2 Corinthians 10:4 (emphasized).

I am reminding you

{I} did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but {I} have received the Spirit of adoption as {a daughter}, by whom {I} cry, Abba! Father! Romans 8.15 (emphasized).

{You} predestined {me} for adoption as (a daughter) through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of {Your} will. Ephesians 1:5 (emphasized).

As a final act of heart surrender, by faith, not feelings, I forgive _____ for wounding me. I forgive them in obedience to You. Now I release _____ from all my resentment. That release frees me from the bondage of the past.

In the Powerful Name of Jesus, Amen.