

Chapter 2

When I grow up, I'm going to be different than my parents...

Tears slid down her cheek as she sat in the dark cold closet.

Once again, loneliness and confusion embraced her heart as she experienced the abuse of being locked in a closet by her older siblings.

Periodically, she could hear them working on their chores.

She continued to whimper.

Finally, an older sibling sternly spoke to her through the door: “We’ll let you out, but only if you stop crying. If we hear more than a peep out of you, you’ll be in there all night! Get the picture?”

This happened from time to time in Gene’s childhood.

She was the youngest of 12 siblings, and half of her brothers and sisters died from illnesses at the turn of the century.

Her mother was incapable of taking care of her,

because of her old age, and had many problems of her own.

Furthermore, Gene's father passed away when she was a little girl.

The family was being torn apart by the absence of healthy paternal figures.

She experienced many conflicts, arguments and disputes during the sixteen years she lived at home.

In Gene's case, more was happening to her than simply abuse and occasional closet detention.

She learned to protect herself from those who hurt her by forming an emotional wall to numb the pain she was experiencing.

Many times she felt herself saying, "I will never treat my husband and children like this!"

She married very early in life, but her marriage ended abruptly in divorce.

Almost a decade later, she married for the second time.

She had two children from her previous marriage and two with her second husband.

Let me underscore that she was a good person who wanted to raise her family differently from the way she was raised.

Unfortunately, she began to repeat some of the same cycles she endured during her childhood.

Her first divorce uncovered the deep wounds in her self-esteem from her childhood, which fueled a perpetuating negative self-talk.

Her second marriage would be no different.

Her husband worked at TRW, a company that installed radar systems in most of the major airports around the United States in the 1950s.

He worked over sixty hours a week at the office and more in his office at home.

As Gene's two older children eventually moved out on

their own, she began to experience deeper loneliness and alienation.

This caused her to cling to her youngest daughter.

Up until Roberta was thirteen, she had a good relationship with her mother.

In 1960, the family received a devastating phone call.

Isabel, Roberta's older sibling, was killed in an automobile accident.

As you can imagine, this sent shockwaves through the entire family, and within the few minutes of a single phone call, everyone's lives were changed forever.

“How could this happen? How could God let this happen? Why did this happen?”

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