

HOW MY WALK WITH CHRIST HELPED
ME OVERCOME ABUSE

JOURNEY OF HOPE

RUTH VALOR



**ONE****EARLY LIFE**

In a perfect world, every girl's first love is their earthly father. My first love has been my heavenly Father. My first fear was my earthly father. Unfortunately, I was never acquainted with my father's good side.

He stood at six foot two with smoky chocolate-toned skin, a slender build, and long limbs like that of an oak tree. He inherited a root of darkness. At the time he courted my mother, he learned to mask his flaws. Outwardly, he was sweet, kind, helpful, and charming. Momma used to say that when he had a job and wasn't drinking, doing drugs, or stealing money from her, he had the potential to be a good provider, husband, and father.

My mother bit the apple of an unevenly yoked marriage. The only good it brought her was her two children: my middle brother and me. Our father was sick and broken. He was an alcoholic, and he abused drugs. His addictions were fed by a horrific childhood. His parents were physically, psychologically, and emotionally abusive. He was labeled as the black sheep of the family because of his dark skin.



They say that those who provide us our greatest pleasures in life could deliver us our worst pain.

—**Dominic Herbst**

I assume my father's mistreatment was inflicted due to his complexion. To bring silence to the home, my grandmother practiced cruel forms of punishment. Grandpa worked the night shift, and Grandma made sure he got his rest under any circumstances.

If my father played too loudly or made a ruckus—as children do—my grandmother would beat him. Once she was done with the beatings, and he was crying, she would shove him in a dark closet. When those cries escaped the closet door, she would pour hot water on his face and slam the door behind her.

Grandma was known to grab my father by the neck when he was a toddler, choking the air from his tiny body, and dangle him outside of their high-rise apartment's window.

Grandpa had his own inner demons that he unleashed in the privacy of their home. He used to molest his daughters.

They say that the hell that we live in is often not with the fire burning around us. It's the fire burning in us. From the pain and the betrayal of the people that we trusted the most.

—**Dominic Herbst**

My aunt discouraged my mother from bringing her children around my paternal grandparents' place. My brother was rejected for his similar appearance to our father. He had smoky, chocolate skin like Daddy. I am fair skinned like my aunt, which was very desirable for my grandfather.

I guess that was my aunt's way of protecting us from their mother and father's sick behavior and abuse. When Auntie was in high school, she often had to stay home from school to take care of



Grandma because she had bad asthma. Auntie ended up graduating from school late.

My father beat my mother until she gained the strength to sever the relationship. He was physically, emotionally, psychologically, and financially abusive to her. I remember one disobedient day, at the age of around six, I was playing at the playground while my mom was working. We were living in a low-income housing development, and I saw my dad walking through the fields in my direction. I froze and couldn't move.

He scooped me off my feet in a hurry, not to be seen, and said that I was coming with him. I found my voice and started screaming, "I don't wanna go! I don't wanna go!" He held tightly onto my small frame. Just like he had done to my mother, his huge hand slapped me.

His eyes were glossy, and he smelled of liquor, musty clothes, and project dirt. The pain from his forceful blows did not stop me from screaming and fighting him. I tried so hard to break away, but I couldn't. All I could do was cry and scream. "I don't wanna go! Let me go! Help please!" I knew in my heart that wherever he was trying to take me, I didn't want to be.

Several neighbors witnessed what was happening. Miss Agatha and Miss Doris came to my rescue. They forced my father to release me. The second he put me down on the ground, I was free. I ran off as if my life depended on it! I ran as fast as my little feet could carry me home, and I never looked back. I saw my two brothers watching as I approached, but they too frightened to help me get away from the monster.

They would not open the door for me because they were afraid, they would allow my dad to get in. I yelled at them to get out of their trance and release the door handle. As soon as they unlocked the screen, I yanked the handle, sending one falling to the floor. I ran over him like a bulldozer.

The phone company's line must have been hot. Someone reported my encounter to my mother at work! She was working security at a



community college on the South Side. Momma called to see if I was safe, and once she knew that I was, she really let me have it.

She was screaming and hollering at me for being outside, but the worst was yet to come. I was in trouble big-time, and you don't want to be around when Momma comes for you!

When my mother walked through the door, I could see that she meant business. She snarled at me like a Doberman pinscher. She was merciless. I disobeyed her; therefore, punishment was the consequence for my actions.

She entered the home with weapon in hand. She was swinging her belt like Bruce Lee, and she started hitting my brothers and me. Mom was beating them for not helping me get away from my dad, and she beat me because I had broken the house rules! I was to come straight home from school, go inside the house, lock the doors, and not let anyone inside of our home or answer the door if someone knocked on it. Instead, I had stayed outside to play.

I was traumatized by the events that took place that day. It frightened me so much that I was afraid that my father would beat my mother and attempt to kidnap me again. I remember my mother letting me go outside to play after my father's attempt to take me. I was very fearful of him, and I ended up bringing a knife with me.

Our neighbor saw me outside with it and told my mother. My mom asked why I had the knife, and I told her that I had brought it with me just in case Daddy came back to get me. "I'm gonna cut him," I said.

As I reflect on that day, I realize that anything could have happened to that little girl. I remember a story my cousin shared about a young autistic boy. His mother left him in the care of his older brother while she worked.

His brother was on crack, which the mother wasn't aware of, and he took the boy to a crack house. The big brother got high and nodded out. While he was zoned out, his little brother was severely raped. From that incident, the boy contracted HIV.



Hearing that story brought tears to my eyes, and I am so sorry about what happened to that young boy. It made me realize that God was with me on that horrible day when my father tried to kidnap me. God was walking with me every step of the way. He wrapped his armor and shield around me, and he was protecting me from the unknown.

I didn't see my father again until I was in seventh grade. I lost all memories of him. I became detached, and I blocked him out of my mind. It was a way to survive the physical, emotional, and psychological abuse that I had experienced with my dad. It was also the abandonment and rejection.

My mother told me that my dad called and asked her if he could see me. He wanted to give me a gift for my birthday. It was the first birthday present I would ever receive from my father. We went to a run-down transient apartment building on the South Side. When I laid eyes on the building, it gave me an eerie feeling.

Drunks in front of the building were smoking cigarettes and drinking liquor from bottles inside brown paper bags. People were passing weed around, rolling dice, talking loudly, screaming, arguing, and cursing at each other while Sam Cooke was belting out a tune over the radio.

I was scared to walk past them to enter the building. I paced myself and walked carefully up the three steps, trying not to look at them. I was afraid that if I made eye contact, and they saw the fear in me, they would try to hurt me.

I reached out very slowly and placed my hand around a hard porcelain doorknob with rugged edges from chipped pieces. I slowly opened the door, and the heavy door squeaked, sounding so creepy.

I hesitantly leaned over and stuck my head inside the door.

My father was standing in the lobby, which had a torn, dirty carpet, huge cracks in the walls, drab dark paint, and a horrible smell. My father was smiling at us with no teeth, and he was wearing tattered old clothing. He was so happy to see us. He did not bring the



bike down because he wanted us to see his place. He invited us up, and we had to ride the elevator to get to his apartment.

There were two elevators inside of the building, but only one of them was working. They looked old; I did not want to go inside. The doors were black, and the inside walls were bloody red. The lights were dim, and they were blinking on and off. The elevator buttons were small and white and covered in dirt. After my father pressed his floor number, it took a while for the doors to shut.

After the doors closed, it took some time for the elevator to start moving. We just stood there in silence, and I was beginning to panic. Suddenly, it started to move very slowly, and I could hear the wires in the shaft struggling to lift the elevator. It started to jerk, and then it just stopped.

I felt a panic attack coming on! My father was shaking and beginning to freak out too. He pressed the alarm button and tried to pull the doors open. I could see the inside of the shaft, the wires, and the concrete.

Above the concrete was the floor of the hallway that he lived on. My dad decided to crawl through the space first, and once he was out, he reached down to pull me out. Then he helped my mother. I was upset because anything could have gone wrong, but I was very grateful when we made it out just fine.

All of us were pretty shaken up, but once we made it to my dad's apartment, we started to calm down. He lived in a very small, tidy studio without many furnishings. It had a cold and stale feeling to it. In the middle of the floor, a beautiful light blue ten-speed bike was waiting for me. I was so happy and excited when my dad rolled it over to me.

I thanked him and told him that I really liked it. Other than that encounter, I was around four years old when my dad came around. He had given me a dollar. He told me that I had to split it with my two brothers. I ripped the money into three portions and gave one portion to each of them. I was so excited. All I could think about was going to the candy lady and buying a lollipop.