

Commentary...

# Old fears and new tools

By Katy Yoder  
Correspondent

I was honored to be a workshop presenter at The Healing Trauma Conference last month. The event was created to provide resources and access to new modalities for healing past traumas and learning new techniques to achieve resiliency. Co-founders Cheryl Mills and Susanne Frilot worked for 9 months putting it together, and when it finally breathed its first breath, it proved to be a labor of love that took on a beautiful life of its own.

Participants listened to a panel of six experts discussing the main effects of trauma: mental, physical, nutritional, spiritual, social and emotional. Then Elizabeth Bouvier-Fitzgerald was interviewed about her amazing story of triumph over trauma. Before we broke for lunch, Barbara Largent, MD spoke about her own experience with trauma, how she's found healing and her innovative and non-traditional methods for helping patients.

After lunch the workshops began. I taught two "Healing through Writing," classes. I was nervous about how it would go. I know writing about my trauma has healed me, but if it would reach others was something I wouldn't know until I shared my process. I was supposed to record my introduction but was too nervous and didn't remember to turn on my phone's recording device — oh, well, maybe next time.

The response from the people in my class was positive. We enjoyed a quick 45 minutes together and just began to scratch the surface when it was time to wrap it up and move onto another workshop. Next time, I'll allow more time, so we can keep going when the creative and

healing juices begin to flow.

I came home happily tired and excited to teach again. When and where that will be is yet to be determined, but I got the first time over with and I'm ready for more. I slept great that night and woke up eager to continue work on my own story of discovery. But the next night I was sleeping alone and was reminded that recovery from trauma is a slow, repeated process with a timetable of its own making.

With my husband, Gary, visiting his mother out of state, I was home alone.

After I was sexually abused as a child, I became deeply afraid of being alone — especially when it was dark. Only 10 years old, and unable to tell anyone about the abuse, I didn't understand the powerful emotions and terror I was feeling. All I knew was danger got worse when it was dark; especially if I had no one to protect me. If I was in our home by myself, my stomach tightened up, my chest would feel searing hot and my heart pumped like it was going to burst out of my chest. My breathing quickened and got shallow. I'd head for the kitchen and grab the biggest knife in the drawer and carry it with me. I could feel someone behind me. I'd turn around repeatedly trying to see them. I'd look out the window of our long glass hallway and see shadows in the dark. It felt like they'd run up and crash through the glass at any moment.

Then there was the terror that took over when I was asleep. I'd see animals, people and unrecognizable things in my room. I'd wake up — or think I was awake — and scream until my throat hurt. Only light could make them go away. The sleep terror disorder haunted my childhood, followed me to college, then

my first time living alone and eventually when I got married. I never knew when I'd end up screaming. Sometimes I woke up, other times I was unaware of the fear I caused my sleeping partner. My screams scared my husband so badly he was afraid he'd have a heart attack. When I couldn't recall screaming, Gary had to tell me what happened the next morning. I felt powerless and guilty for scaring him. But there was nothing I could do.

This time, the first night Gary was away, I took a long hot shower and got ready for bed. As I walked across our room, my heart began to speed up. I didn't feel afraid but when I lay down, my heart was pounding. I tried to breathe calming breaths into my lungs and heart. I reminded myself that feeling afraid when I was alone happened when I was triggered by an old fear that was no longer relevant to my current life. My home was secure, I had two dogs and I

was a strong adult who could take care of herself. My mind knew that was true, but my heart wasn't buying it.

I finally fell asleep, but later woke up screaming. I couldn't remember what caused my screams, but our big, sweet and protective dog Beau jumped up on the bed and looked down at me with concerned brown eyes. He took a big breath and laid down next to me, snuggling in close. I felt better immediately and soon fell asleep for the rest of the night.

I woke the next morning perplexed about what had caused my reaction. Then I told myself there's no reason to overanalyze it. I'm slowly getting better, but it's a long process. My mind and my subconscious are still working on syncing up. What I can't control isn't worth getting upset about. All I can do is keep investigating new ways to heal, writing what comes up and having faith that eventually, I won't be afraid of what's not there.

# Deputies make drug arrest in Sisters

Sheriff's deputies checking on a couple sleeping in a car arrested a woman for drug possession on Thursday, June 27.

Sgt. William Bailey of the Deschutes County Sheriff's Office reported that deputies responded to a call on Thursday morning regarding a man and a woman sleeping in a vehicle on a property on Locust Street just across the street from City Hall.

Deputies contacted the couple and the woman was allegedly found to be in possession of methamphetamine. The woman was taken into custody and transported to Deschutes County Jail on a misdemeanor charge of possession of a controlled substance.

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