

JANET E. MARTIN  
JMARTIN66@COX.NET

## INTRODUCTION

Janet is the former President of the Arizona State Board of Education, the Director of Education Policy for Center for Arizona Policy, the founding president of Parent's F.R.E.E. and the former Arizona State Director for Concerned Women for America. Janet is retired from classroom teaching, a profession she started in 1963 in Anderson, Indiana. She has taught in public, private, and home school settings. Her most recent job was with the Tempe Elementary Schools, 1976-1994. The last six years were spent as a sixth grade teacher, where Janet became most aware of the general decline of skills, knowledge, and values.

Although many societal and moral factors come to play in these concerns, there are specific actions parents, students, teachers and other civic leaders can take to reverse this downward trend. Janet has served on state and national boards and focus groups addressing ways to improve student achievement and life choices. Her family consists of two sons, John and James, daughters-in-law Traci and Cindy, and grandchildren Logan, Darian, Ally, Jenna, and Joseph.

Janet is actively involved with First Baptist Church of Tempe, Arizona, where she has been a member since 1973. She currently serves as an education consultant.

---

*I'm about to be a quick-change artist and turn the introduction of me that you just read inside out. Oh, the formal bio is correct. I have been a wife, educator, mom, grandmother, pro-family activist, and education consultant. That is my one story. But now I want to share with you my other story.*

*The following is an adjusted intro/bio, different but oh, so very painfully true.*

## JANET E MARTIN SHORT BIO OF THE ABUSED

Janet is an abuse survivor, but not without scars. As a young child she silently suffered abuse from a step-grandfather and others in a small Midwestern town. She is a divorcee of over 33 years, never remarried, raised two sons, and suffered depression off and on for many of those years. She had to take a medical disability in 1994 due to a disabling, unpredictable, chronic neuro-muscular disease. Besides family abuses, she has been subjected to abuse from the medical field, the media, and political adversaries. Janet's grandparents, parents, three siblings, aunts and uncles died long ago. She is broken and in need of healing.

This is the 'other' woman I present to you.

I would much rather speak academically about abuse, from my head, not my heart. For a good part of my 65 years I have lived from the neck up, only to learn now that living "out of my head" has at times nearly pushed me to living "out of my mind!"

So, in order for me to talk to you from my heart to yours, I will need God's help. Please join me in prayer.

My Dear Heavenly Father, help me share from my heart words having first come from You. May they be of some help or give some insight to others trying to make sense of the pain of their life. This is not an academic treatise on abuse; it is a brief story of my wounded heart crying out to You, God, for healing. Holy Spirit, minister to those in need, please, to God's glory alone. In Jesus' precious name, Amen.

## LESSONS THAT ARE CHANGING MY LIFE

September, 2006

As I share with you what I am learning from God about my abuse history, I have discovered that some aspects I have known about for years, but others are new to me.

One of the first things I have had to admit is that I place way too much emphasis on **approval** (from self or others), apart from God's approval. I have repented and now seek to not 'worry' (for lack of a better word) about what I or others might think and say about my appearance. Now, that is easier said than done, but the will is where it all starts, so I'm on the way. God leads gently.

Another issue is the one of **control**, which I am beginning to recognize and surrender to God. Because of abuse (step-grandfather, neighbor boys, college dates, etc.) throughout my youth, my sense of safe boundaries had been so violated that I found myself in situations I did not really want to be in. Yet 'self' was not strong enough to 'just say no.' Seeking peer approval was what was important to me.

When I was a little girl my brother, Dick, six years my senior, used to tease me about being chubby and then sister Kay, three years my senior, would join in. My mom seemed unable or too busy to stop them; Dad was seldom at home, due to serving in WWII. I remember being at my maternal grandmother's house (Grandma Hathaway...the wife of the abuser), when Dick and Kay would chant "Fatty, Fatty two by four, can't get through the bathroom door; so she went upon the floor...[the rest I can't remember]." I repeatedly tried to get them to stop, but the more I tried the meaner they got. I finally made up my mind.

THE OATH: I would never be chubby again.

In junior high I began the intense study of food, calories, exercise, and control of appetite. It was no longer safe for others to be in control of my life; I had to take matters in my own hands. Throughout high school and college and marriage, I maintained the commitment, or 'oath.' At times I would be in situations where it was obvious if I ate too little. I'd eat and find a time to quietly slip away, go to the bathroom, pull off sheets of toilet paper to carefully lay on top of the water and promptly, but quietly throw up. I found ways to do this so

traces of food never remained in the toilet or on me. I do not remember thinking that I was being secretive or sneaky, for it was all just part of my plan. I never talked to another anorexic or read about it. It was just logical to me. I was always careful to brush my teeth and tongue so as to not leave traces of acid on my teeth or stench on my breath. Then I'd freshen up my makeup, if needed, and with a lighter heart rejoin the group. I think my mom knew something was up but only mentioned it once when I was a young mom. I evaded the issue and changed the subject. She did, too.

After my divorce in 1973, I seldom ever over-ate and purged, nor did I abuse laxatives. I am blessed to be as healthy as I am. What happened was that my way of looking at food and exercise became a way of life for me. I don't like to be in any place for a long period of time, especially when I am not in charge of my day's schedule. Life has become very ritualistic for me...it must be safe, routine, predictable, and controllable.

Had it not been for God placing Steve and Celestia Tracy in my life many years ago and keeping our friendship close over the years, I might still be living a borderline survival life. "But, God...." Aren't those lovely words!!!

God opened the door for me to work with abused women by editing the writing of their healing stories. He used my 'red-pen' teacher editing experience to gain entrance into my heart. A close friend of my daughter-in-law asked me to help her with her story. She told Celestia about my help; Celestia gave me Steve's book on "Mending the Soul" and then asked me to review their new workbook and other women's writings. This has been a sacred privilege. I am humbled and feel so very ill-prepared for this work, but the Holy Spirit is in charge of that and He is well qualified. It was by reading Steve's wonderful book that I permitted myself to acknowledge that the abuse in my life was real and it was serious enough to cause damage throughout my life. God awakened me early one morning and urged me to write a letter to my deceased step-grandfather. As strange as I thought it was, I did. Four pages later, some tears, and with great relief, I forgave the man for abusing me and offered up the letter as a burnt offering to God to use to His glory as He saw fit. God then opened the door to my healing through another precious abuse survivor.

This woman's story was about her daughter who died from complications due to anorexia. In reading the daughter's journals over the last 8 or 9 years of her life, I couldn't escape seeing myself in the pages of her journal, only with less severity. I lived. Tragically, she did not.

So, I have read four books, journaled, prayed, gotten nutritional help, and am now getting help from two Christian counselors. I'm also working with other women using the Mending the Soul workbook (the one God allowed me to edit, which is now helping me). Many are praying for my healing. I will get better as God leads, but I will have to work at this all my life. Having an eating disorder is an addiction. I do so very much want to be in the center of God's will and live for His glory and enjoy intimacy with Him. He wants that, too, so He will bring it about.

Intimacy is critical to the survival of the human soul. It is the thing that I ache for. It is the hope I have in Jesus that keeps me hopeful that He will bring it about.

Thank you for praying and for seeking God with me.

## JANET'S HEALING STORY, PART 2 "Facing the Underlying Pain"

"Because of the healing power of God, we all can experience joy and peace that is beyond understanding, as described in Philippians 4:7 ['and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus']. As you begin the work of healing, you may question if you will ever feel relief from the ache in your soul, have the courage to make better choices, or understand more about life. The answer is a resounding YES! If you are struggling to find hope, let us, who have been on our own healing journeys, offer you our hope. For we have seen the deep recesses of despair and can attest to God's miracles of healing that can happen for you as well" (Celestia Tracy, Mending the Soul workbook, page 22).

I, too, am now one of those souls and this is Part 2 of my story. You may read over my shoulder as I write to a longtime friend.

January 28, 2007

Dear 'Friend',

It is early morning and Lady [my cocker spaniel] was sure that at 4:06 we needed to start our day. I go to bed early, so it was okay. Not only that, I do love the early morning! God's Word seems so fresh and His presence so, well, "present".

It has been months since I first shared with you some of the journey my Heavenly Father has me on. Words fail to capture the reality, but the Holy Spirit will fill in the gaps for you, my dear friend and prayer warrior. God is at work!

For eight months or more I have been openly aware of some of the struggles I have dealt with throughout my life, mostly stemming from my step-grandfather. I have seen the devastation caused in me and in my love ones from his sexual abuses and my parents' disconnectedness from my wounding. Numbing and denial helped me survive as a little girl, but so did doing everything in my power to try to gain control over my life. Life seemed just beyond my finger tips of control, leaving me with anxiety and frustration.

Jesus was my Savior and I thought my Lord, but I certainly did not rest in His control. I based my self-worth on things that I could control, for example education, jobs, volunteer positions, appearances, work, 'doing for God' (which is the biggest problem!). So much of this was under my radar, but probably obvious to others.

The search for control and for making myself thin and invisible took on a life of its own. My goal was to avoid being further teased by siblings and classmates, but what resulted was that I compartmentalized my life into secret, less secret, and open areas. Some things people knew about me and some things I think I didn't even know about me, much less others. None were secret to God.

I praise God for the eating disorder (spoken about in the first part of my story), for it eventually

forced me to take a look at myself and my past. God used the journal of a 19 year old freshman at Moody Bible College, who died from complications of anorexia/bulimia, to speak to my heart and see myself. What a price her dear parents had to pay and how the family suffered in losing her! Beka was a gorgeous young lady who passionately loved Jesus, but painful life events took her down paths where she would eventually fall prey to this potentially deadly disorder, told in full on her parents' web site [www.bekashouse.org/life-story.htm](http://www.bekashouse.org/life-story.htm). I work some with Beka's mom in helping her write Beka's Story and she works with me in helping me overcome my anorexia. God is healing!

God also used a friend from Remuda Ranch to familiarize me with eating disorder information and Celestia Tracy (Mending the Soul Ministries) to get me into counseling with a therapist at her practice. My therapist is a godly woman who prayed before, during, and after our sessions. God for certain led our sessions, making each week an adventure I highly anticipated. Emotionally, I hit walls and discovered doors I didn't want to open, people I didn't want to remember, decisions I made I didn't want to own up to, and more hours in prayer and journaling than I can remember. God slowly melted my walls of ice. I seem to be one who needs time alone after time with others to process with God and ask Him to speak to my heart, which He is so faithful to do. The many, including the fabulous women in my Mending the Soul small group, who faithfully prayed for me made the difference in my healing and in my desire to be healed!

## THE CLASH OF GOALS

My session with [therapist] following the Christmas Holidays was a turning point. I was tired of dealing with issues, alarmed by seeing my clothes get tighter, and frustrated by allowing others to have a say in what I ate. [My dietician/nurse practitioner was kind, but firm, which was the tough love I needed.] Even with the progress I was making, food still created anxiety in me. I was encouraged to journal and ask Jesus what the deeper problem was, which is what I did the following day or so.

January 5, 2007

Help me, Jesus! It is early morning and I am still asking You for discernment on why I am anxious. In reading Rev. 18, You spoke to my heart about Babylon perverting other nations, especially Your people, by their adulteries and excessive luxuries.

**"Come out of her, My people, so you will not share in her sins."**

I have been consumed by what society and others say is beautiful. Their goals subtly became my goals. My goals are wrong-minded. I am working at odds to Your goals and it is causing me great inner conflict, as well it should. God's goals or my goals? Make the choice, Janet! My goals and what I now believe Your goals are for me are at odds. I want to be 'thin' and You want me to be healthy, but how I view thin and what it takes to get me there is NOT healthy. CONFLICT!

Please, Jesus, change my heart to reflect Your goals. I confess I am in rebellion and repent of that sin. Change me to become more like You, no matter what.

So, what were my secret destructive goals? There were goals driving me that I couldn't put in words, buried somewhere deep inside, doing harm not good. Again, I asked the Lord and again He

faithfully responded:

1. BE INVISIBLE
2. BE 'BETTER' THAN OTHERS
3. BE THINNER THAN OTHERS
4. BE SICKER THAN OTHERS
5. DIE SOONER THAN OTHERS
6. BE GONE

Oh, Jesus! Those are Satan's goals for me, not mine! I have been in bondage to Satan. That must not be!

So, what are Your goals for me, Lord?

1. Have no other gods before Me.
2. Love God and God alone.
3. Worship God with all your heart, soul, and mind.
4. Trust God, obey His Word.
5. Your body is to be the temple of the living God.
6. God's temple was to be well taken care of.
7. God has a plan and timetable for your life.

To achieve my secret goals, which were self-destructive, I had to limit amounts of food and have just enough calories to survive.

To achieve God's goals, which give abundant life, I needed adequate amounts of calories and nutrients. His goals promote radiant health, energy to be active, and mental alertness to be clear-thinking. They also provide the enjoyment from the various tastes of good food, the satisfaction and comfort food provides, and the pleasant social relationships that go along with normal eating.

God gave me a concise action plan:

- Submit to God's goals.
- Flee Satan.
- Replace Satan's lies with God's truths.
- Tell my Mending the Soul group.
- Get prayer support.

The result would be to break the bondage. That I wanted to do!

## **HELP IS A CALL AWAY!**

Later that day while resting on my sofa, the Lord spoke to my heart. "Janet, get out the little box of toy Army guys and little animals Joe [my grandson] played with over Christmas vacation when he was with you." Then God clearly asked me to trust Him to allow myself to be a little girl (probably 3-5 years old) and find a little toy doll and sundry other items to use in the scene He would unfold to me. On the floor before the Lord, I set up the Army guys and assigned each a name of an abuser (my grandfather, Carper, Larry, Harry, etc). I [the little toy girl] was

in a corner and I had my little animals around me, with a toy barrel (an old kid's meal toy with a clown who hides inside it that pops up by a little lever), a helicopter, and a Hot Wheels car. These were my comforting, hiding, escaping items. The guys and a toy gorilla [my grandfather] all would attack me and I would hide or try to run using one or more of my escape items. The great and amazing turn of events was that the Lord also had me add an orange play telephone to this mix of toys.

For the first time in my memory I got angry, real angry! I hit those guys, called them 'bastards' and 'bad guys', pretty violent for a little girl! I told them they had no right to mistreat me or hurt me or control me. NO MORE! I played and replayed that scene until suddenly I grabbed the play telephone and called '**Jesus! Help me!**' Immediately, there was a strange, new peace in my heart. The power the abusers once held over me was gone, as was Satan's control over my life. That secret little-girl-room in my heart was unlocked, swept clean, and the Holy Spirit flooded my soul with His peace. God is my Source, my Counselor, and my Healer. To God and God alone goes praise and thanksgiving!

[I have made a shadow box diorama to memorialize this experience. It is hanging in my kitchen with two Bible verses (Jer. 33:3 and John 10:10) written out to keep my memory fresh on what God does for His children.]



## Free!

Oh, I still have habits that God is redirecting (especially in choosing a variety of foods to eat and allowing Him to set the course of each day, etc), but the struggle for control I've given to Him. My therapist suggested to get a new cook book and each week try some different recipes, which I started. Also, I continue to journal, especially when I'm confused. When working through emotions, I get together with a friend or two and talk things through. Relationships are so very important as is prayer support.

I am tired from all of this, but tired in a strange way. It is a tired that is a restful tired. I can actually rest and be re-energized. I just want God's heart to explode in mine, to have His will reign and mine surrender, daily. There are so many hurting, wounded souls in this world, even in 'my little world.' In whatever ways Jesus wants me to be used in His work I am willing and resting and rejoicing. It is His call.

Casting Crowns recorded a song "Does Anybody Hear Her" that speaks dearly to my heart. That was me at the first of this story and now this new hope is my message of Jesus' healing love.

Thank you, my dear friend, for listening and praying - for thirty plus years of listening and praying! Please do not stop!