



The Community
School

Passages Program



Passages Press

How I Took Back Control of MY LIFE

by Renee Grey

Not everyone has the perfect life. Most people do not live the fairytale life - you know, the one where the princess has an evil stepmother, but in the end Prince Charming comes and gives true love's kiss and makes everything better. No, life is not a fairytale, which is why people have to learn to move on from the abuse that the evil stepmother, father, foster parent, husband, wife or someone else in your life has unmistakably caused.

Because of unfortunate circumstances that have taken place in my life, I myself have been a victim and the attacker. When I say the attacker I do not mean that I was abusive to others in my life, but I was abusive towards myself. I will not tell my story of what happened throughout my life, but I will refer to some parts. So, here is how I turned my life around.

It has been a little over four years now from when I decided I no longer wanted to be a victim; I no longer wanted to be a statistic. I was eighteen years old, had just broken off my relationship with my fiancé and was moving into my new apartment. I loved to drink; I loved to get high. My ex and I would spend at least a thousand dollars a week on drugs. We were always searching for that new high. How did I move on from this? I decided after I left him I was going to clean my ass up. It was hard and I had relapses. But I met my current husband and he helped me a lot. He would not put up with my shit. Everyone needs someone to be there for them, for

comfort and to push them on to do things they do not want to do.

You can never fully get over abuse in your life. Today I still deal with it. What I did was face it. Not all of it, but in time I hope to face all of it. My way of facing abuse was by telling my story, not to just random people, but instead to friends who had similar things happen. I also studied abuse. I wanted to know why people did this to others, why we the victims stayed in these situations. I listened to people tell me it's not my fault, and anyone who has ever been a victim may know that it's not their fault, but it's hard to truly believe it.

I cannot tell you how to deal with abuse. All I know is what I did. I accepted what happened, I studied why this happens, and I moved on from it. I have tried to not let it affect my life negatively anymore. Instead, I grow stronger.

Parenting

by Kristina Ott

In the past eleven months I've learned a lot about being a parent. As I'm young, it's been the hardest job that I'll ever have. A lot of young girls that get pregnant stop going to school and think that their life is over, but it's not. When I found out I was pregnant I knew that I wanted to finish high school and get a job, because it was what I needed

November 2009

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to do to raise my baby!

Everyone has different ways of raising their children. Discipline is teaching, not punishment. For discipline some people smack their kids' butts and send them to their room for the rest of the day. All you're teaching them is how to sit in their room and that violence is the only way to settle issues. I can't really discipline my baby because she's too young, but I will tell her "NO" in a stern voice; babies learn by repetition, so keep repeating it and eventually she'll understand. If you are able to understand your child, then it will help you shape discipline to be most effective. Both parents also need to be on the same page and have agreements on a punishment, such as time out. If not, the child will end up getting his/her way with one of the parents. Sometimes children act out because they want attention, such as having a temper tantrum. Walk away and tell her that she can pull herself together.

Everyone has different parenting skills and definitely have ones they need to work on. I think for me I should work on patience, because now that Kylie can move all around it gets pretty hard for me to get her dressed and to change her diaper. I sometimes get a little frustrated and have to walk away. I'd like to change that so I can maybe make some sort of game out of it that will maybe help her learn to dress herself, too.

I think that in a lot of relationships with babies the mother has the most responsibility. In mine, I do have most of the responsibility, but my boyfriend and my grandmother both help me out a lot; I'm just thankful that I have them both here for me. Sometimes people will get into relationships and the father doesn't even want to be a part of the baby's life, which is sad, but there is always someone else that will be there for you. Most of the time I think this happens with young dads because they aren't sure what they are supposed to do, so they just bail, which is another reason I suppose waiting for kids is a good idea.

I want to make sure my baby has a better life than what I had, so I'm going to make the changes that I need to and make sure the people around her do, too.

"A child without discipline is a child who feels unloved" --Selma Fraiberg

Free Your Children

by Renee Grey

I believe in encouraging my child's curiosity and physical development. I have seen many people who find it easier to put their child in a car seat, crib, playpen or high chair rather than letting them run around and play. To them it is easier to control a child who is restrained. They do not have to watch them as carefully. They do not have to pick up after them. That way the child is not interfering with what the parent wants to do. I 100% disagree with this type of parenting. I will tell you why.

My way of parenting is the complete polar opposite of that. My children run free all over the house. I have toys everywhere in my house: the toy room, living room, kitchen, bathroom, their rooms, even my room. And you know what? I wouldn't trade it for the world. If I have things I do not want my kids to get into, I put them up high or lock them in a cupboard. Children will be children, and as parents I feel it is our job to encourage them to run and play and explore new things. Sit back and relax; watch what a child's mind will come up with if you give them a few blocks and a place to play.

Not only is it more fun for a child to run and play, but it is healthy. A child learns through playing, reading, interacting with other objects and people. It helps their mental development, as well as their physical development. A child who is restrained all the time may not interact well with others, their speech may not be where it should be for their age, and they may not understand what they can and cannot do when they are not restrained. Also, they often become overweight and may not crawl or walk at the times they should be.

I think that it is plain and simple- if you hold your child back, if you do not let your child grow and learn new things, the consequences are not hurting you; they are hurting your child.

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Joshua

by Anna Martz

My son Joshua has needs just like everybody. The only difference is that he is too little to do it himself. So, when he is hungry he will either start sucking his thumb, or he will make little noises. Those are signs to me that I need to start a bottle. As he drinks his bottle I need to stop him and burp him. If I don't, he spits up a lot. I also need to do this after he is completely done with the bottle. When he needs to be changed he will either fuss or cry. That's when I know I need to bring him to the changing table, undress him and change him. From being circumcised I need to put Vaseline on him. The Vaseline stops the diaper from sticking to the skin. When he is tired I often rock him or sing to him. Sometimes all he wants is to cuddle and be close to me. When that is the case I love to bring him as close as he can get to me. It soothes him and makes us both happy.

There are a variety of ways to bond with your baby. Some are as follows: while feeding your baby look at him in the eyes and even talk to him; you can read a book to him; you could sing to him. You could go on a walk with him. Really, anything that will give you two some one-on-one time is a great way to bond.

With Joshua I love to read to him and talk to him. When I feed him I often look at him and talk to him. I also try to feed him in a room that we're alone in; that way I can focus completely on him and he on me. I can tell he likes it because he will stare right back at me. Occasionally, he will make a noise, but right now he just stares a lot. Talking and looking at Joshua has already brought us closer. I also take him on walks with me; he loves being outdoors. He loves being read to, as well. That is one of my favorite ways to bond - reading to him.

Bonding with Joshua is great on so many different levels. Now when I talk to him he turns his head or eyes and looks at me. I love that it means he knows who I am and is comfortable with me. Another benefit to bonding with him now is that when he is older, he will trust me. Bonding with

your baby is the ultimate key for a great relationship when they're older.

Bonding with Joshua has made me thankful for him. When I look at him and notice that he has all his fingers and toes, that he is strong and healthy and smart, it's taught me to be appreciative of the little things.

A Simple Solution

by Kristina Ott

Everyone has some sort of conflict in his or her life and there is always a way to solve it. At my house I have a lot of problems with people moving my stuff and then not having any idea what I'm talking about. I get pretty angry. When I sat down and talked to everyone in the house about the issue they understood where I was coming from and we came up with an agreement that I keep my stuff in one room instead of wherever I decide to put it. It works out pretty nicely, because all my things are in one spot and I can just go grab what I want instead of freaking out because somebody moved it on me.

Men Beware!

by Melinda Hunt

During pregnancy there are emotional changes. Like sometimes I would just start to cry for no reason at all, then get really annoyed and grumpy toward people. I was really just baffled all the time because I didn't understand why I was like this. People kept telling me that it was just my hormones getting the best of me. But how does that help? Physical changes are pretty crazy, too. I am very picky about how I look; some people say I'm conceited. Well, I get very upset when my clothing doesn't fit today, but yet it fit yesterday! I got really upset and cried and sometimes even yelled at anyone around me when I was pregnant, especially if they said I looked good. I never meant to yell at people or hurt anyone. But one thing people need to know about pregnancy is that a lot of women are very uncomfortable with themselves because of all

the physical changes. They get upset and angry about the way they look, and sometimes they take it out on the wrong people. We really don't mean to do it, it just comes out. SO JUST BEWARE OF WOMEN WHILE PREGNANT! (At least, I'm sure that's what men must be thinking.) LOL...

Amelia

by Naomi DeWalt

When I first found out that I was pregnant I was so excited. I was standing outside of the Rockland Public Library, and my friends looked at me and said "Naomi, you're getting fat." I was offended, but then they told me they didn't mean it in a bad way or anything, I just looked pregnant. So we went to Rite-Aid and bought an at-home pregnancy test. A couple of my friends and I walked back to the Rec Center, and I took the test. I waited the three minutes that took forever. The three minutes were finally over and there was a perfect plus right on the test. I screamed and jumped up and down; I couldn't believe it. I had tried getting pregnant and I took a million tests and each time was a failed attempt. Then when I least expected it...

The day I found out, I was already five weeks along. When I actually had time to think about it and what I was going to do, the happiness wore off and I was horrified. I was so scared. I didn't have a job or anything, I wasn't in school, I had nothing for a baby; I was just a kid myself. My life completely changed and went down hill after that. I went from being sixteen years old in a happy relationship with lots of friends and I came out being sixteen years old and a single mother with no friends. I was severely depressed and alone in my pregnancy. My boyfriend at the time wasn't there for me; he didn't care; he didn't want me or Amelia. It was awful. My friends stopped hanging out with me because of my boyfriend. He was so controlling: I couldn't leave to hang out with them, I couldn't call them, and they didn't want to deal with it. Getting pregnant or a dramatic life experience like

this is when you find out who your real friends are. They're the ones that'll stand by you.

I think I stand out from other young mothers I know. I am hands-on. I do what I have to do when I need to do it. I show my daughter I love her, I'm always there. I've been there for my daughter since day one. I couldn't leave her, neglect her, give her away because I wanted to party or hang out with friends. I did and still keep doing my part as a mother. I am working to support her, I am in school to get ahead and at least have some type of future. I am with Amelia other than the few hours I work a week. I support her, I buy her clothes, food, toys, and everything else she wants and needs.

The thing I like most about being a mom is watching my daughter grow and change every day. I love seeing her smile, listening to her laugh, and watching her grasp a hold of new things. I love the responsibility and the rest of the stuff that comes with it. I don't exactly like all the crying; it wears on me. I am exhausted like all the time. I'm still a kid myself, I need to sleep, so I'm worn down and half the time I don't think I can handle it. Most of the time I think I'm going to go nuts, but I keep my cool. I would never do anything to hurt my baby.

Photography

by Anna Martz

Photography is something I really enjoy doing and recently have started taking classes. For my assignment I interviewed my photography teacher and have made a little album of all my pictures. I enjoyed going out and taking the pictures. I really liked seeing the different sites; you never know what you will find or see. The going out is one of the best parts of photography for me. I think that the most frustrating part of being a photographer is that you can go out and take a hundred shots, but only ten out of that hundred will be good. But that would truthfully be my only frustration. There are so many pleasures to photography for me that the one frustration doesn't matter.

Besides enjoying going out and seeing all the different sites, I also love to see how the pictures come out. Seeing the site by eye, then on your camera screen, then as a developed picture, each gives the site a different look. I plan to continue my photography classes and hope that one day I can be a professional photographer.



Beauchamp Point by Anna Martz
Original in color

A Challenge

by Naomi DeWalt

Self care is self-explanatory. It's about taking care of your self. My own personal form of self-care, I need to work on. I don't do anything for myself anymore. All my time, effort, and energy goes into taking care of Amelia. I need to take time for myself. The only time I get to myself is a five minute shower either in the morning or after work, and I'm usually up on and off during the night. I'm usually always working, I have school things to work on, I'm with Amelia all the time except for the few hours a week that I work and my life is just so hectic. I'm going crazy and I don't exactly know what to do.

Being a mother is a lot harder than I ever expected it to be. It's definitely no walk in the park! It's a lot of responsibility when you have yourself to take care of and a child or children. I'm currently trying to set my priorities straight, so that

everything is done that should be, I won't have anything else to worry about and I can take time for myself. It's a lot of stress when you're a single parent. You have to juggle to get things in order, from the way things are in your current living situation to the way they should have been before a child was even a thought. But I don't really mind, for the most part.

I'd like to be able to sleep all through the night and not feel rushed and completely hopeless just about every day of the week. That's something I'll have to adapt to on my own. I love my little girl; she's the world to me, and I'd do anything for her, even if that means I lose out. I gave up my childhood and I want her to be able to have the best one she can. The thing for me is getting stressed way too easy, I let things get to me way too fast, I'm out of control with my temper. Amelia changes that with me. I'm a better person because of her. I don't know what I'd do without her. She's my world. I never knew the real feeling of what one little person could do to you, and how quickly that little one can change your life.

I've learned a lot about myself in the process of being a mother. I learned I can love someone, that I am responsible, and that I'm perfectly capable of conquering the world on my own. I can multitask, I'm patient, I'm the supporter and caregiver for once. Nothing's as easy as it was for me before. I never used to care. I didn't have to worry about anything or anyone else except for myself. Amelia was the road I'm glad I took.

My goal is to take more time for myself and do something fun that I like to do, that I haven't done in a while since Amelia's been born. I need to learn to talk things out and ask for help because I know I can't do it on my own. It's completely useless trying to do more than you reasonably can. It doesn't make you a bad parent when you know you need help and you ask for it, it makes you human. Everyone needs help, parent or not. I need to learn to have fun in my physical surroundings and make the most out of any situation. I need to live my life to its fullest. I miss what that feels like, and like I said, I have been so run down lately I can't force myself to do anything, let alone get out

of bed in the morning. I have my days and times that I just want to curl up and cry. I put myself down and get the thought in my head, that Amelia deserves a better parent than me, but then it comes back to me that I'm only sixteen, I'm still a kid myself trying to raise a kid and do everything all on my own. I'm trying to make possible what feels like the impossible and I'm running myself down, but I know at the end of every day, I'm doing the best I can for my little girl. If I had the world in the palm of my hand, I'd give it to her in a heartbeat.

Back to my plan... on top of learning to juggle my time between myself and my child, work and school, I don't exactly eat right because of the stress. I don't feel like I have the time to eat or do anything else to take care of myself. That is definitely another thing that I have to work on with my self-care. I've been gaining weight like crazy and I can't keep it off. I grab little snacks here and there, usually the wrong foods, and I don't have time to do any type of actual physical exercise. My life as I knew it has completely turned upside down, but I'm choosing the high road and eventually I'll meet my goals.

Upcoming Workshops:

Wednesday, November 18th

- Budgeting 2–3 pm
- Music Together 3–4 pm



@ Point Lookout Fitness Center
Lincolnville

Wednesday, December 16th

- Music Together 3-4 pm



@ Point Lookout Fitness Center
Lincolnville

The Meeting of a New Friend

by Cassandra Chase

The day has begun
Full of fun
The nerves of new things
The nerves of new people

A friendly face
A nice small gesture
A loving smile
The notice of same

The notice of not so bad
The notice of not so different
Same eye color
Same likes, differences

Same problems
Same days
Full of laughs, cries
The ending day of sighs

Shopping on My Own

by Sarah Troxel

When I hear shopping I think of clothes, jewelry and handbags, but now that I live on my own and have a family to take care of, I am a little more in touch with reality. I now know what credit is and how to establish it. Credit is what I feel is your building foundation to your financial future. If your credit is good; due to the fact that you are on time with payments for all of your bills, then financially you are in the black. It will be a lot easier to get a loan for a car or house because your credit shows the bank that you are good with your money and you pay on time.

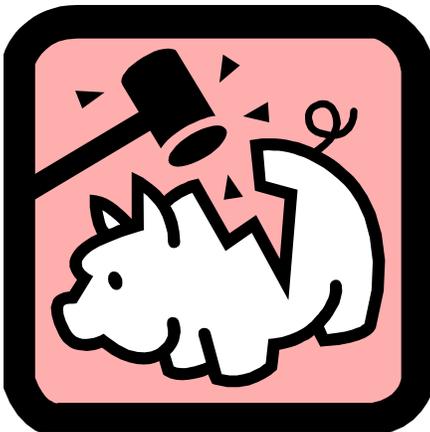
Now, if your credit is bad, then it would be just the opposite. It will be a lot more difficult to get help from anyone. I mean if someone asked Devan

or me to lend them money and people told us that the person still owed them money or was very lazy with payments, then we would not want to lend them money.

I have just turned eighteen this year so I am still in the process of establishing my credit. I have electricity, phone, water, and cable all in my name. I have been on time with all of those monthly bills and soon my credit will show that. But starting with no credit is hard and getting a credit card will help speed up the process.

I have a credit card that I use for little things, such as milk at the store or gas for the car. This way at the end of the month the credit card bill will be small enough to not affect my budget for the month, but still build my credit faster.

Credit cards are not “free money.” Remember, you will have to pay back the credit



card company for what you spend plus interest. Oh yes, interest is what happens when you have a payment plan with a company and they put so much a month added to your original bill.

That’s a drawback for credit cards. They may help build your credit, but they can crush it just as quickly. The interest can build your bill up to so much, which will eventually make the interest rate go up as well.

Having an orderly shopping pattern helps with your money spending, as well. With food shopping, I go once a week, so I get everything I need and don’t go picking throughout the week. For my monthly bills I take a certain amount out of each paycheck each week and put it into my savings. This way, at the end of the month, all my money is in one spot. But then there is clothes shopping. Granted, I do love to shop for clothes, shoes, handbags, makeup and anything else you can buy.

At the time of my buying it I am happy and can think of a million ways I could wear or use the product; then I get home, turn my head and think to myself, “Really? \$85.00...”

When I get upset I go shopping, because it makes me feel like I am thinking about just me, even when I feel as though no one else is. I just do not want to stop, but I have learned to control myself a little better now, due to the fact that I have a baby. I hold back on big splurges and put the money towards something for the house or Sophia. I have a secret though; I make it so it is sometimes possible for me to go out and buy something for just myself, and how do I do this? I bargain shop. I always buy the generic brand of food, which is sometimes close to \$5 cheaper than the name brand. Also, I go to “Sam’s Club,” the store that sells in bulk. Sometimes foods packed in the giant or family size may seem like the best buy. You may think that buying one large container will not cost as much as two or three smaller packages. But larger containers do not always end up costing you less than smaller ones. It is important to look at the cost per unit and compare this cost. The “unit price” tells you the cost per pound, quart, or other unit of weight or volume of a food package. It is usually posted on the shelf below the food. The shelf tag shows the total price (item price) and price per unit (unit price) for the food item. You can save money when you compare the cost of the same food in different sized containers or different brands. For example, if you want to buy frozen orange juice you may find a 6-ounce can that cost \$.64. The unit price for this small can is \$3.42 per quart. A 12-ounce can of frozen orange juice, in another brand may cost \$.89. The unit price for the larger container of juice is listed as \$2.38 per quart. Here, the larger container is cheaper per quart.

To think, the whole time my parents were shopping they were doing all this. Well, now that I know all this, I give them a pat on the back for all the work they did. I guess it is my turn, but at least I know how to save my money in the process.

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Book Corner

Where the Heart Is

by Billie Letts

reviewed by Renee Grey

I read the book Where the Heart Is by Billie Letts. I also watched the movie that was made. This book is based on a true story about a girl named Novalee Nation. Novalee was moving to California with her boyfriend Willy Jack. When they stopped at a Wal-Mart Willy Jack left her there. Novalee had no money or even a place to go and she was pregnant.

Novalee ended up living in the Wal-Mart. No one knew until she had her baby. She met one lady who took her and her baby into her house. Novalee made big strides in her life. She encountered many obstacles in her life but was always able to pull herself up again. She had made choices in her past that were not the greatest, but she learned from them. One of Novalee's greatest assets and downfalls was she was very trusting. People often took advantage of her, even her own mother.

There were many differences between the book and the movie. The book told you in more detail about what happened with Novalee and her baby Americus. The one I noticed right away was her unlucky number. In the book it tells you that seven is unlucky, and the movie it is five. Also, in the book it tells how Forney throws Novalee a birthday party and in detail about the night she gave birth and how she felt. There is no party in the movie, and the night of her birth is a very quick scene. Either way the movie and book were very touching. I challenge everyone and anyone to read this book and watch this movie, and after doing so, look at yourself. If you find something you do not like, change it. If this girl can take her life and change it the way she did and became a woman

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what is stopping us? The odds were against her and she did not let it stop her, so why let it stop us?

Story Hours

Rockland Public Library

594-0310

- Baby Storytime (0-2)
10 am Fridays

Camden Public Library

236-6673

- Booktime for Babies (0-2)
10 am Wednesdays
- Babbling Books (2-5)
10 am Mondays

Belfast Free Library

338-3884

- Birth – 2 Storytime
10 am Thursdays
- 2 & Up Storytime
11 am Fridays



Searsport Public Library

548-4484

- Preschool Storytime
10 am Fridays

Waldoboro Public Library

832-4484

- Preschooler Story Hour
10:15 Wednesdays