

WRITE YOUR SURVIVOR STORY

If you've been hurt in life, you're not alone. Everybody has been hurt or will get hurt. If you're hurting now or have been hurt, one way to begin the healing journey for your heart and soul and find strength and hope again is to write out your story. Use these questions below as a guide for writing out your story.

1. Choose a different name for yourself as well as for the main characters in your story. This helps you remove yourself a little from the story, and allows you to maintain anonymity while you're working up the courage to share your secret.

2. Start with your childhood:

- a) What were you like as a little kid?
- b) How would your parents describe you?
- c) Whom did you play with? What kinds of things did you do with your friends?
- d) What were your dreams?
- e) What are your favorite childhood memories?
- f) What painful childhood memories do you carry?

3. Move into your teenage years:

- a) How have you changed since you were a little kid?
- b) When did you first realize you were changing?
- c) What people, places, choices, or events contributed to changes in you?
- d) What is your relationship with your parents like now?
- e) Who are your closest friends?
- f) What are your future plans?

4. Incorporate your secret into the story. This may be something that fits into the childhood portion of your story, or it may be more recent. Use as many details as you can remember to help you paint the picture of the secret:

- a) What is your secret(s)?
- b) If it was something done to you, describe what happened...Where were you? Who was there? How did it happen? How did you feel after it happened?
- c) If it was something you did, describe what happened. If it's something you've done more than once, start by talking about the first time. What did you do? Why did you do it? How did you feel after it happened?
- d) What did you do after your secret became part of your story?
- e) Did you try to tell anyone? If so, who? What was that person's reaction? How did that make you feel?
- f) If you've never told anyone, why not?
- g) How has your secret affected who you are today?
- h) How has your secret affected your relationships with your family and friends?
- i) How has your secret affected your view of God?

5. The next chapter of your story... We hope you can write this part into your story after you've told someone your secret and begun your journey to healing.

- a) Whom did you tell? Why did you choose to tell that person?
- b) How did that person react?
- c) How did it make you feel to finally let go of your secret?
- d) What is different about you now that you've released your secret?
- e) How do you think your story could help other people who are dealing with a similar issue?
- f) What are you going to do now?

*Questions used with permission from *Secret Survivors* by Zondervan/YouthSpecialties www.zondervan.com & www.secretsurvivors.com