

**NOW
FREE**
TRUDY'S STORY

TRUDY MAKEPEACE

Author of Abused. Addicted. Free.

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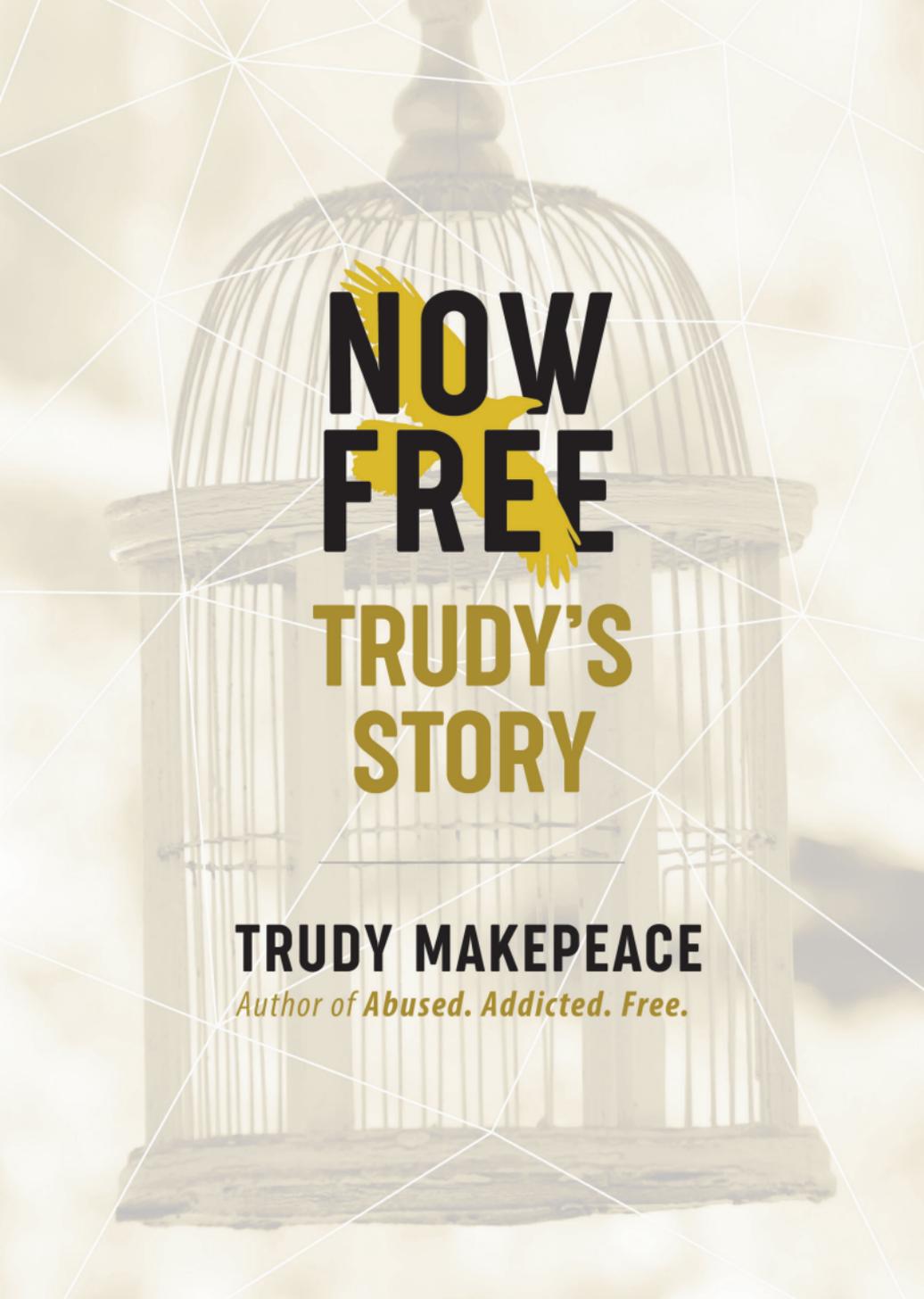
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MY STRUGGLE TO GET FREE

In 1996, I was excited at the thought that my life was about to take a turn for the better – a great deal better; I knew it couldn't possibly get any worse. I was now starting a course at a dance and fitness college in Bristol; it was my chance to fulfil a lost dream.

Whilst I still smoked weed, did a bit of coke, E's and speed, I was no longer injecting heroin; in my book, I was clean.

I soon got into a casual relationship with Tyrone, a petite black guy with long slim dreads. I was dumbfounded when he suddenly suggested, 'Have you considered working as a woman?' I was gutted. I stormed out of the café in disbelief, ashamed to have fallen for his flattery. No man would ever get me on the game. It was my deep need for love and acceptance, coupled with my low self-worth, which had led me to get involved with the wrong guys. I didn't see Tyrone again.



I was just four when I first experienced shame. It was then that I discovered that I had two mums. I thought I was special but my adopted mum, Tina, corrected me. She led me to believe that there was something wrong with me – that I was the problem and I didn't belong in their family. Silenced from asking about my identity, I felt overshadowed by shame.

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I first experienced shame.

It was not until I was 14, now in the care of social services, that my birth mum, Eileen, was able to explain how her sister, Tina, came to adopt me.

'When I found myself pregnant, on my own without a job, I knew I would struggle to cope as a mother. I felt I had no choice but to just let Tina take over; I knew they would give you a better life. It was too late when I realised my mistake. Then, when your mum was pregnant with your sister, your dad offered to let me buy you back for £200 but I didn't have that money.'

I was stunned to hear that a price was put on me. And yet, it didn't impact me massively, for my life had been in free fall since the age of five.



It started the evening I was left in the care of John. As I stood in just my pants for him to put on my calamine lotion, his look caused me to feel naked, awkward and embarrassed. I felt violated even at that age. Something in my throat was almost choking me as he took me to the sofa.

I was desperate to tell someone, but I didn't believe that anyone would listen and I feared that I would be blamed and get another walloping. But how did mum not see that something was troubling me? I had gained a new constant companion – a dark looming shadow that followed me everywhere and became buried deep inside. Other abusers followed.

My sexuality had been awakened prematurely. My understanding of love became distorted. Starved of any affection from my parents, I began to find value in knowing that I was desirable to men. I grew up living as though I was labelled 'victim'. I had no idea just how vulnerable I was and how, subconsciously, I would attract other perpetrators.

I grew up living as though

I was labelled 'victim'.



At school, I was bullied and teased on account of my tatty, ill-fitting clothes. That reinforced my feelings of inferiority. Yet, life was even more painful at home, with the outbursts of anger and violence, and without any emotional bond with mum.

By the age of about eleven, I felt an overwhelming sense of injustice and rejection. Unable to communicate my feelings, I lived with a barrage of fear, anxiety and shame. I loathed and despised myself, blaming mum. And I was becoming increasingly light-fingered, which enabled me to have what others had – such as decent shoes and a half decent school uniform.

By the time I was 13, the situation at home had become intolerable. Having already attempted to kill myself by swallowing a load of pills, I was placed with a foster family. I left mum with her words ringing in my ears, 'I want nothing more to do with you; you're no longer part of this family. Do you hear me?' I did – and I knew she meant every word.

Through my teenage years, I was tormented by anorexia; a rebellious attitude; a growing obsession with stealing; self-harming and an unwise relationship with Billy, just out of prison. He was 12 years older



than me and his interest in me did wonders for my confidence and self-esteem. The relationship ended when he got locked up again.

It was no surprise that my life revolved around drugs, alcohol and partying. I lived for taking speed and for dancing. They allowed me to express myself and, if only for a few hours, to escape to a 'happy place'. But the sense of self-loathing continued to rage inside.

... the sense of self-loathing

continued to rage inside.

Eventually I moved up to 'the gear', from being a 'speed head' to a 'smack head'. Speed intensified my emotions and thoughts; heroin enabled me to forget.

Remarkably, although I was held on remand a few times for shoplifting – an occupational hazard – and for using a stolen credit card, I never served a full prison sentence. I always got off with probation, rehab, or a testing order.

And then came that opportunity to turn my life around in Bristol. And I felt good that I reacted as I



did to Tyrone's suggestion. I was never going to sink that low – or so I convinced myself. But within a few weeks, I was facing the reality that I had to boost my income. With great shame, I called a parlour. I had my first client that afternoon. I hated the work. It caused me to deeply mistrust and resent men, some of whom were as addicted to sex as I was to drugs. The drugs helped to alleviate my feelings of disgust.

With great shame,

I called a parlour.

Soon I was in a new relationship – with an addict, of course – and crack ripped its way into our lives like a hurricane: violence, aggression and paranoia ruined our relationship. Having become a slave to heroin again, now the crack pipe gained its grip on me too. And funding it needed more hours in the parlour – virtually every spare hour.

Could I sink any further? Yes, when I took up the idea of working the streets, in the early hours after a shift at the parlour. The streets became like home to me.



The streets became like home to me.

Annalise, a nun, was the one notable exception to all the unsavoury people I encountered. She worked with a charity that supported working girls. I was now 21 and that had been my trade for four years. One morning in October, sick from not having had any heroin for over 16 hours, I found myself at their Loaves and Fishes Project. She persuaded me that I needed help. At just five and a half stone and with a severe chest infection, I was too weak to argue with her. That evening I was in a rehab in South Wales, run by a Christian charity, Victory Outreach.

But a couple of weeks later, when I was moved to one of their smaller homes in Birmingham which allowed greater freedom, I got one of my clients to collect me and take me back to Bristol.

I had now been in Bristol for ten years and had made more than thirty attempts at getting clean and detoxing. With every failure, the hope of ever getting clean slipped further away.



**...the hope of ever getting
clean slipped further away.**

About a month after leaving Victory Outreach, now in need of money for electricity and food, I called on the nuns. I was my usual wreck, and I should have guessed that Annalise would encourage me to go back to Victory Outreach. I agreed.

I shared a room with Carole, who gave me a little book that had verses from the Bible. These words of Jesus got my attention:

*Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened,
and I will give you rest. Matthew 11:28*

I felt weary and exhausted. I was worn down from all the years of addiction, abuse and emotional trauma.

A group of us went to a meeting in St David's Hall in Cardiff to hear Reinhard Bonnke, a Christian evangelist. I didn't grasp everything he said but I understood what I needed to know; Jesus died for my sins and I needed Him to save me. No one had to tell me that I was a sinner! He explained that Jesus



died on the cross for us, taking our place to pay the penalty for our sins, so that we will receive God's forgiveness, not His punishment. We will then have everlasting life with Him and with Jesus.

The preacher invited people to receive God's forgiveness, make a fresh start in life and be filled with the Holy Spirit. I was confused about this Holy Spirit. But one thing I did understand – I was desperate for a fresh start.

... one thing I did understand -

I was desperate for a fresh start.

People prayed for me and I left St David's Hall somewhat dazed – but, unmistakably, a different person.

A few days later, I was overjoyed to receive a backdated social payment. I was a different person but the desire to score was still with me. I managed to leave, with only Barney, the hefty basset hound, aware of my intentions. Despite nipping me in the backside, he failed in his valiant attempt to bring me down. I planned to return in a few days.



People could see that I had changed. Yet, five weeks later, I was flat on drugs and homeless again, overwhelmed with despair and more depressed than ever.

I knew that I had to get back to Victory Outreach. I went to see Annalise. It was a sobering moment; after all these years, I realised that I could not fix myself. Now, for the first time, I believed that there really was no hope for me. Was this the end of the road – my ‘lot in life’?

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And then that night, I was arrested for indecent exposure. Already wanted for breaches of orders, I was locked up for the night.

The following morning, I was remanded in custody for three weeks pending pre-sentence reports. Victory Outreach offered to support an application for bail to the rehab. But did I want that, with all the restrictions that I would be under? Eventually I agreed, as did the court. They imposed a six-month conditional residency order.



Only later did I realise that what I had understood to be freedom had actually led me to be a prisoner – a prisoner to rebellion, addiction, prostitution, crime, greed and selfishness. God's way is the only way of true freedom.

**God's way is the only way
of true freedom.**

I began to understand that everything I had been searching for was found in God, through His Son, Jesus: love, acceptance, security, belonging, forgiveness, and hope. I was sure that God was revealing Himself as the ultimate Father, especially for me, because of my deep sadness at not having known my real father. Down on my knees, I pleaded with Jesus to come into my life and to forgive me. This time, it was personal. I more fully understood what He had done on the cross and I was willing to trust Him to help me with my whole life.

**I pleaded with Jesus to come into
my life and forgive me.**



Immediately, I experienced a peace in my heart; the restlessness, anxiety and fear I had been carrying for years were all gone. Now, waves of love seemed to wash over me. I felt safe and secure.

And I felt clean on the inside, as though I had had an inner bath. It was extraordinary; I felt pure, like a virgin again. I knew this was God forgiving me. The blood which Jesus shed on the cross cleanses us from all unrighteousness and purifies us from all sin. After all those men, the streets, the parlours... I was clean! This was a priceless gift.

It was by God's grace – totally undeserved on my part – that I was set free from all my guilt and shame and that my dignity was restored. Jesus had saved me and restored me.

Later, I experienced what seemed, at the time, an even bigger miracle; I stopped the valium and was freed from the controlling power and grip of addiction. My need for drugs was taken from me, reinforcing what I already knew – God is real.

I felt safe, secure, accepted, and loved. I had found the greatest love of all: the love of my Father in heaven that brought me hope for a future. I would soon discover that this hope would release me from the



pain and struggles of my past. This was much more than a fresh start: it was a new beginning. This was my miracle!

Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: the old has gone, the new is here!

The Bible, 2 Corinthians 5:17



WHAT ABOUT YOU?

That, in a very small nutshell, is my story. What about yours? As you have picked up this booklet, perhaps you can identify with some of the struggles that plagued me for so many years: rejection; abuse; a lack of identity and self-worth? Have you pursued a lifestyle that has caused you shame and guilt?

But perhaps neither of those is true for you. However, one thing is true. You have sinned against God; every one of us has. You don't have to commit a crime, or live a life like mine, to be a sinner. Jesus taught that envy, hatred, jealousy, lust, lying, and cheating are all sins (amongst many others).

And we all stand condemned by God because He is holy and cannot tolerate sin; sin has to be punished. But, regardless of the mess we may have made of our lives, God does not want to punish us. That is why He sent Jesus to take the punishment in our place. Jesus did that when He willingly surrendered His life, suffering the most horrendous death by crucifixion.



**For God so loved the world
that he gave his one and only
Son, that whoever believes in
him shall not perish but have
eternal life.**

The Bible, John 3:16

**God made him who had no
sin to be sin for us, so that
in him we might become the
righteousness of God.**

The Bible, 2 Corinthians 5:21

This leaves us all with a choice – whether to accept God’s offer of forgiveness, by believing that Jesus dealt with our sin when He was crucified. Only those who accept that offer will be saved from God’s



punishment. They will live with Him in heaven forever. But all who reject Jesus will face God's punishment themselves. That will happen when Jesus returns to earth to judge us.

Being a follower of Jesus will mean giving up some, and perhaps many, of the things you enjoy – and, no doubt, friends too. And you will still encounter the disappointments, struggles and stresses that are a normal part of life.

But the cost of a new life with Jesus is nothing compared with what you will gain – real purpose, meaning and contentment and the promise of everlasting life with Him.

To become His follower requires:

- accepting that we deserve to be punished on account of our sin,
- believing that only Jesus can rescue us from God's punishment,
- confessing the wrong things in our lives and repenting of them, that is, turning away from them,
- deciding to live to please God, according to what the Bible teaches.



If you are ready to make this big decision, you can do so by praying this prayer.

Dear Father God,

I am very sorry for everything in my life which is not right. I want to stop living to please myself and to start living to please You.

Thank You for sending Jesus to die in my place because of my sin, in order to save me from the punishment which I deserve.

So please forgive me and accept me as Your child. Please help me to live to please Jesus and to make Him the centre of my life.

Amen

If you have prayed this prayer and been sincere, God welcomes you into His family as His child. All your sins – past, present and future – are forgiven. You are a new person, just as I am.



Don't worry if you do not feel any different. It is important not to rely on your feelings but on God's promises in the Bible.

You will need support as you begin this new life. If you know someone who is a true follower of Jesus, ask them to help you. Alternatively, please contact us.

Perhaps you are not ready to decide just now. If you have questions, I encourage you to speak to a Christian you know or write to BeaconLight who have worked with me to publish this booklet. But please do not 'sit on the fence' or just put off your decision; it will be too late when Jesus returns from heaven to judge everyone. We do not know when that will be.

I have never regretted the decision I made 17 years ago. When I decided to follow Jesus, God took my story, and He began to rewrite it so that the past did not define the future. He will do the same for you if you will trust Him with the pen of your life.

May God bless you.

Trudy Makepeace

August 2023



PS. AS I LOOK BACK

I am amazed how God has loved me back to life. That verse from the Bible – 2 Corinthians 5:21 – is absolutely true; when you receive Christ into your life, you become a new person – the old has gone. So, what has changed? Just about everything!

God set me free from my addiction but He has done so much more. His forgiveness released me from my sense of guilt and shame. His love healed my broken, hardened and selfish heart; He softened it, giving me a love and compassion for others. He has enabled me to restore the relationships with my family, something I never dreamt would be possible or even wanted.

With this healing, a purpose to my life emerged, notably to use my experiences to help those whose lives are controlled by addiction. I find it difficult to believe that God has enabled me to manage a rehab, get a degree, establish my own home and share my story across the world.

It has not always been an easy journey. There have been losses, pain and struggles along the way; engrained patterns of thinking and behaviours



needed ongoing healing and a renewing of the mind. It has been a long road but one that has been made sweeter because Jesus has walked it with me.

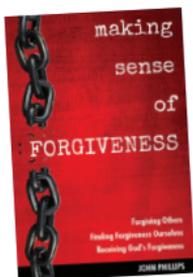
He will continue to walk with me each day and I am excited by all that lies ahead in this life. And I long for the day when I will see Him! I shall spend eternity with Him!





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Making Sense of Forgiveness

tackles questions such as:

What does it really mean to forgive?

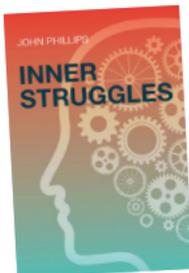
Why should we forgive?

Why do we need God to forgive us?



Can I Forgive Myself?

aims to help those struggling to
forgive themselves.



Inner Struggles

uses Bible verses to offer hope and
comfort to those in need of God's
help in their struggles.

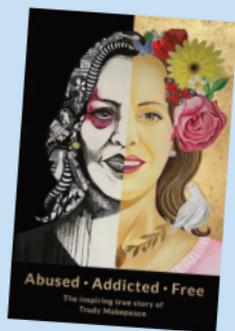
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BeaconLight Trust
PO Box 91 Banstead SM7 9BA
www.beaconlight.co.uk

In *Now Free*, Trudy Makepeace explains how God set her free from an eighteen-year battle with drug addiction and from time spent living and working on the streets.

Trudy tells her story in *Abused. Addicted. Free.* She is a church pastor and also travels widely, teaching and preaching and sharing her story.



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