

Rising from the Ashes

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Part VI/Conclusion: Putting the pieces together

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By Julie . . . Over the years my life changed many times and in many ways. I was married and, though divorced, was blessed to have a daughter. I decided not to have her baptized. I think I was getting back at God, for this was during the time that I had given up asking Him for anything. I certainly wasn't going to give Him credit for my blessings.

Another marriage and divorce brought me to my lowest point. All my pieces that were slowly being put back together died in that moment. My world crashed. All that I had hoped for and dared to allow myself to think I might be worthy of was shattered. It had all been a lie. I had nothing left to fight with. I was done.

I went into a familiar mode of survival and fell back into my self-loathing. I hated my life, and I wasn't worthy of living. I considered suicide. I researched on the internet how to do it but couldn't bear to do that to my daughter. And so I was

sentenced to living a life in hell.

And then, in the midst of this darkness, my granddaughter arrived.

My granddaughter was the greatest gift possible, and God placed her in my life at the exactly right time. I didn't give Him credit for that, though. I was still too wrapped up in blaming Him for my ongoing excruciating pain of loneliness and rejection. But she brought me such joy that I started seeing a glimmer of happiness through her.

At one point through those years, I went to a grief group where I had to face my deepest pain. From there I went to different groups and, finally, a divorce care group. At the first meeting, I realized this was going to be based around God, and since I had written Him off, I was confident that I would put this "God-stuff" aside and just take the help to recover from the pain of my divorce. However, God had a completely different plan.

One question I desperately wanted an answer to was where was God all of my life. How did I go through all I did and not feel Him there? Was He there? I had to know.

One day while driving, I was suddenly overwhelmed with the feeling that God was speaking to me. He explained that He had been with me all along, that He had given me His strength to help me survive. I had to get to my computer to write it all down. It ended up being a letter from God to me. I felt incredible peace at finding that answer, and God has been with me every second since then.

Every day I see how my thoughts and behaviors that I still have so late in life come out as that injured little girl.
Feelings



of shame. Certainty of worthlessness. Fears of rejection. But she is no longer powerless, that little girl. She has a voice. And this is one way I can use it. I can now see my father as a man who struggled with his own demons, and I can now say I forgive him from the depths of my heart.

I am aware of the times when I allow myself to fall into those broken pieces, to be that broken, hurting child. But now I can take care of her. And God has blessed me by giving me the opportunity to help others, those who hurt as I once hurt.

For I have finally – finally! – risen above my pain and fears and anger and, like the phoenix, can see a new beginning.