

Corrosion of the soul

[Society](#), [Child Abuse](#)



Corrosion of the Soul Sexual child abuse kills the spirit of any child and distorts their thinking. I know first hand; I'm the daughter of a molested victim. Even though I was never molested myself, I know the impact it has had on my mother, and that effected me. How can one be a parent when their own parents did such a heinous things to them? How can one try to get over the fact that they lost their innocence when they were just under ten years old? How does an adult act when they were molested as a kid? What is the impact? Millions of children in the United States have been molested. When can they begin to change and stop blaming themselves? The struggles of getting over such a trauma are vast, but people have done it. I am a witness. The prevalence of childhood sexual abuse in our society is quite high. When defined as sexual contact, ranging from fondling to intercourse, with a child normally between five years old to mid-adolescence, the sexual victimization rate is generally around thirty five percent for females and twenty percent for males. Most sexual abuse offenders are acquainted with their victims; approximately thirty percent are relatives of the child, most often fathers, uncles or cousins; around sixty percent are other acquaintances such as friends of the family, babysitters, or neighbors. Strangers are the offenders in approximately ten percent of child sexual abuse cases (Charles S. Clark par. 8-9). The impacts of sexual abuse have been studied in more detail than those victims who have been physically or psychologically abused. John N. Briere, author of Child Abuse Trauma: Theory and Treatment of the Lasting Effects, states, " In one clinical sample 133 women with sexual abuse histories, for example, seventy-seven percent had been penetrated orally, anally, or vaginally, fifty-six women had also been

physically abused, and seventeen percent reported especially bizarre victimization including ritualistic abuse, multiple simultaneous perpetrators, and insertion of objects" (pp. 4-5). This crime is so common into today's society, it's sad to think about. In a different study, lead by Diana Russell, 930 women in the general population revealed that eighty percent of those sexually abused as children felt somewhat to extremely upset at the time of the abuse, and seventy-eight percent reported experiencing negative long-term psychological effects (5). In my mother's case, she felt both. Stabbing Westward is a band that plays very deep and powerful songs which I tend to like, but when this song came on, I felt pain, misery, and heartache for what my mother went through. Here is a passage from the song, Sleep by:

Stabbing Westward: " She stares intently at the door, Listens for his footsteps, She knows exactly what's in store, And the knowing makes it worse, When he calls her daddy's little girl, She doesn't hear him, When he crushes her She can't feel her screams are silent, Hides in the corner of her mind, Where she plays contently, She leaves this nightmare far behind, She escapes inside her dreams, Floating high above her bed, Staring at her father's head, Wishing one of them were dead, So this hell could finally end.

" It sums up what my mother went through. She was only two years old when her biological father committed suicide, but only six months after his death, her mother remarried. The man her mother married was a heartless beast, a waste of space and a perverted sick man. The sexual abuse didn't start until she began third grade. It started off as him pretending to be a " good step-father" in which he would read my mother " bedtime stories". The touching and fondling began. He would tell my mom to be " a good girl" and would

force her to caress his genitals. It started getting worse. He would then sneak into her room at night, undress himself, and start touching her in places no man should touch. This became a routine for her, along with anytime her mother was absent from the house. He never penetrated vaginally, and she is very lucky for that, but orally he did. He would do unspeakable things to her and she was ordered to return the favor. She cried to her mother about the sexual abuse, and her mother didn't care; her mother would watch her husband beat her and do nothing. She was brave enough to try to break free of the hellhole she called "home". So, my mother tried the alternative; she told her Aunt Linda, but she wasn't able to do anything about it either. The constant abuse, pain, and suffering didn't stop for three or more years. When the sexual abuse finally did stop; he increased the level of verbal and physical abuse to the maximum. When she couldn't take it anymore, she told her mother to either get her out of their miserable home or she would do it herself. Thankfully, her mother made arrangements for her to move out and live with her Aunt Linda. She left the hellhole she called "home". She left her abusive step-dad and pathetic mother. She was gone like the wind at the age of thirteen, but the torture and agony came along with her. She left the hellhole, but remained in hell. Sexually abused children suffer from more psychological symptoms than children who have not been abused; studies have found symptoms in seventy-nine percent of sexually abused children (Charlie S. Clark par. 9). The risk of harm is greater if the abuser is a relative and if the abuse involves intercourse or attempted intercourse, or if threats or force are used. The level of harm may also be affected by various factors such as penetration, duration and frequency of

abuse, and use of force. Charlie S. Clark, a writer from CQ Researcher, confirms that, “ Child sexual abuse can result in both short-term and long-term effects, such as: psychological, emotional, physical, and social effects that include depression, post-traumatic stress disorder, anxiety, eating disorders, poor self-esteem, dissociative and anxiety disorders; general psychological distress disorders, sexualized behavior, school and learning problems; and behavior problems including substance abuse, destructive behavior, criminality in adulthood and suicide”(par. 12). In my mother’s case, she didn’t have a childhood, she didn’t have parents to guide her through life, she didn’t know how real parents treated their children. She didn’t know how to get over her awful childhood experience. She was trapped into a world of loneliness and hate. My mother suffered. She went through severe depression, she attempted suicide, she didn’t know how to act in a relationship, and she had no idea how to raise and care for a child. She ended up in bad relationships and had very low self-esteem which made her unsocial. She just didn’t understand how to stop blaming herself. She also has to live with knowing that she never got justice for what her step-father did to her. She has been inflicted with lifelong scars that can be treated, but can never be completely healed. Adults with a history of sexual abuse often present for treatment with a secondary mental health issue which can include substance abuse, eating disorders, personality disorders, depression, and conflict in romantic relationships. Generally, the approach is to the present problem, rather than the abuse itself. Treatment is highly varied and depends on the person’s specific issues. For instance, a person with a history of sexual abuse suffering from severe depression would be

treated for depression. Clark informs that, “ Sexual abuse is associated with many sub-clinical behavioral issues as well, including re-victimization in the teenage years, a bipolar-like switching between sexual compulsion and shut-down, and distorted thinking on the subject of sexual abuse” (par. 14) The effects of abuse can be difficult to pinpoint, even though abuse may affect in every area of someone’s life. These effects are not necessarily permanent, but they can feel overwhelming. Recognizing the connection between present effects and past sexual abuse is not easy. Drawing this connection can be helpful for the healing process. Many victims develop addictions or compulsive behaviors in an effort to mask their abuse-related emotions. They often experience shame about these coping skills which have been used to numb the pain (par. 6-7). Teri Hatcher, actress and writer of *The Dark Secret*, reveals her painful story of her sexual abuse as a child in hopes to help out victims. She was molested by her uncle when she was seven years old. Thirty years later, her uncle victimized another young girl who wrapped her head in a towel and shot herself, just leaving a suicide note that stated that her uncle molested her too. There was no way to take him to court because the victim was dead, but Teri Hatcher knew what she had to do. She told police what happened to her thirty years prior, in hopes of giving herself and the young girl justice. He plead guilty on all charges, and is now serving fourteen years in prison. Hatcher goes to tell other victims that, “ For me, this opportunity, this turning point, gave me a chance to face a very old, but still raging fear. I can’t say that a victim of abuse will ever be completely healed, but this experience allowed me the space to feel validated, vindicated, and frankly, not crazy. It was not my fault. If this

happened to you, you may want to contact the Rape, Abuse and Incest National Network. I wish you strength and love, and a journey that leads to your own realization that you are lovable, worthy and deserve good things (par. 24). Thomas R. Wilken, spokesperson for National Clearinghouse on Family Violence, reports that, victims need to recognize that many people are willing and able to help. Healthy connections with safe and supportive people can help someone overcome the hurt. The victims need to know that they aren't "alone". They can go to a sexual assault crisis center, seek a therapist, or talk to friends and family. Friends and family can listen in a way that supports and validates their feelings, be available for them, encourage them to seek help, and let them tell the details of the abuse at their own pace. My mother had it rough when trying to overcome her childhood. I was her first daughter, and I know from living with her, how hard it was for her to raise me, when she was never properly raised herself. She would feel abandoned when I didn't need her every second. She would act like a teenager instead of the mother she was. She would emotionally abuse me, without realizing what she was doing. She would say hurtful things to me and I didn't understand why. It seemed like it was hard for her to love me, when she didn't love herself. She had so much bottled up, so much agony in her eyes; I was little, but I could tell something was wrong with her. I began to resent her for treating me badly, making me cry. I didn't know why she wasn't like all of my friends' mothers. I didn't comprehend why she was always angry with me, always sad. It wasn't until I was older when she told me about her disturbing past. She knew what she was doing to me was wrong, and she didn't want to turn out like her mother. She wanted to

change. She knew she needed help, and she got it. She went to a therapist for over ten years, each time giving her strength to move on. She wrote in a journal practically every day, so she could channel her thoughts on paper instead of keeping them cooped up in her head. She started to love herself more and more each day and taking medication for depression. She read a lot of different self-help and parenting books to help understand parenting. She began praying and writing to God every night. She starting becoming a better person, in every way. She doesn't talk to her mother or step-father, and probably never will, but she has forgiven them. I don't know how she did that. I know for a fact that I couldn't, but she is a stronger person than I'll ever be because of all the tragic experiences she endured. She has turned over a new leaf, and she moves forward every day. From everything she has been through, nobody could tell that she had struggled for so long. She grew up with such a horrible mother, and then she turned out to be the complete opposite; she is a great mom. She is a prime example of how people can rise against evil and be a better person because of it. I'm proud to say that my mom has conquered her demons. She isn't living in hell anymore.