

WELCOME TO OUR
Monthly Newsletter
we're so glad you're here!

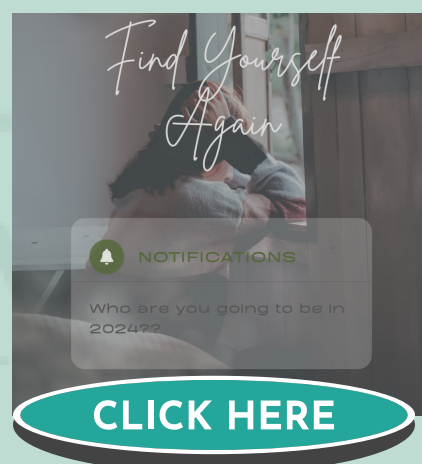
What's New in February ?

- ☆ **Hart Strong Feature: Rachel's Story**
- ☆ **Healers Circle Meet-Up**
- ☆ **New Fun Merchandise**
- ☆ **New Blog Post**

Blog Post Alert!

Co-Dependency and Obsessive Thinking
After the Narcissist

Become aware of the pattern, how it was created, and break free of the cycle that keeps you going back.



Feature

RACHEL'S STORY



Rachel, Virginia

Domestic Abuse Survivor

Meet Rachel!

Rachel is a 39-year-old mother of four. Like many of us, Rachel spent several years in abuse just trying to survive. Nineteen years to be exact. What I find interesting about every woman's story that comes in for feature is their answers to the second question on my list – Do you recall when things began to feel unsafe? There are three very common answers to that question.

- 1)Marriage
- 2)Pregnancy
- 3)Moving in (purchasing or renting a home together)

Rachel's answer – marriage. "The first time things started to feel unsafe was shortly after we were married. I noticed his attitude changing, he began to get jealous and possessive, and would overreact to the smallest things." For example, when her husband had a cousin over to watch American Idol. They were talking and Rachel playfully covered his mouth so she could hear the show. "He started screaming at me and pushed me. I left for a few minutes to let him cool off. I realized then that I needed to be careful with who I associated with and started isolating myself to please him."

TRAUMA

Feature

RACHEL'S STORY

During the course of Rachel's seventeen year marriage, she faced various forms of abuse. Physical, emotional, psychological, and sexual. "It kept me in a constant state of hyper vigilance. I never knew what version of him I was going to get when I came home. I was in constant fear of what I might say or do that may set him off." Rachel shared so much more about the various abuses as she recalled her experiences. She had to find new places of employment due to people at work picking up that she may be getting physically abused at home. Even a trip to the ER to get stitches in her lip after taking a hit to the face. Even then, she lied to the staff and told them her toddler hit her with a toy. "I still have that scar to remind me every day."

Even though Rachel worked and brought home money, her abuser dictated all the spending. Making her feel guilty for spending money on her children. As if they were "undeserving" of simple things like haircuts or birthday parties. "My youngest likes his hair a certain way. Sometimes we do save money and cut it at home, but he wanted a haircut. It was like \$30 – who cares? My son came home so excited to show off his new haircut and his dad made him feel so guilty about it. He said 'what did he do to deserve a haircut? I never got a professional haircut!' I felt so terrible for my son, because once again, his dad made him feel like shit."

When asked how long it took to see the abuse – "I knew the abuse was happening to me. I just adapted and learned to live with it. I knew what I could and couldn't do and what would cause trouble. As long as I stayed in my lane and didn't do anything to upset him, I figured everything would be fine. As long as my kids were fine. However, after a while, I started to notice the abuse tactics spreading to my kids."

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TRAUMA

Feature

RACHEL'S STORY

When COVID hit, we were all forced to be home more. I started noticing him calling my younger son names making him feel bad because he was overweight. My son would stay in his room and his dad didn't have very much to do with him. He didn't have much to do with my oldest son either. Until he found CBD gummies in his drawer. Then he yelled and screamed in his face. Making a 16-year-old break down and cry. All the while, my husband would spend hundreds per week on weed to feed his own addiction. Then my daughter had a grilled cheese sandwich thrown at her. He said it wasn't made right, so he threw it at her after she spent time cooking it for him. That is what it took for me to leave. It was my kids. And now I suffer from massive guilt for not getting them out sooner."

Rachel has been out of her relationship for a year now. Her and the children are doing great. "My kids and I feel safe for the first time in a long time. We can do whatever we want. It's freeing to know that I can finally have a normal life and that I am strong enough to handle whatever life throws at us."

Naturally, Rachel is still exploring coping strategies in her healing. After all, it has only been a year. "I have been in survival mode. I have handled worse for longer. My approach is to just take it one day at a time. My best realization is the need for boundaries. The help me understand how people feel and treat me when I stick to them. Going out of your way to get people to accept you or like you is unhealthy. I have come to the realization that boundaries are necessary and you are going to lose people, but that is their problem and not mine. I no longer hold myself responsible for other's actions." **WHOA! Hallelujah, Rachel! Preach girl!**

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TRAUMA

Feature

RACHEL'S STORY

Rachel also shared some of her childhood experience as well. Indicating that her mother was also abusive. And due to these early wounds, she had been conditioned since childhood to accept abuse, feel responsible for it, and people please to avoid continued abuse. Through therapy, she has explored these things and has become more aware. “My therapist made me realize how much I have overextended myself and gone out of my way for survival and/or acceptance. The impact it has had on my life is massive.”

Closing Thoughts



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This relationship had made me realize that I am not the problem in the way I'd been trained to believe for so long. I am able to live my life in peace without fear. I still struggle. Still have flashbacks. Some sounds still worry me and even phrases trigger me. However, I am in the process of trying to heal that and deal with the anxiety. I made it through all this. It's only going to get better!

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TRAUMA

Healers Circle Meet-Up

Ready for in person community?? Well it's here! If you're a Kentucky local and you're ready to heal, learn, grow, and support TOGETHER - We are here for you. Join us!

March Topic: Codependency

As children we learn what how to "safely" attach to people. However, not all of us learned what a healthy and safe attachment to a caregiver looks like. And that's okay! Join us in February where we will be learning and reflecting on our own attachment types, understand how those patterns have shown up for us in our current relationships, and start to let go of those that no longer serve us! Allowing space to welcome in new ways we show up in relationships, allow others to show up for us, and develop understanding of what we want to create, to avoid the same old disappointment from the past!

[Follow Hart Strong Enterprise on Facebook to register](#)

Are you seeking a community of like minded individuals? People dedicated to breaking cycles, mindful living, and seeking to learn more about healing trauma while building healthy relationships? Look no more!

Join us every 4th Thursday for Healers Circle meet-up. Where you can meet others alike dedicated to healing, breaking toxic cycles, and building lives we deserve together! Led by Heather Hart, local certified trauma recovery specialist. Heather is committed to building an inclusive community eager to learn, grow, and heal.

Building Community

Hosted By:



From the Ground Up
New & Used Books

*Mystic Bliss
Creations*



Heather Hart-CTRC
CEO, Hart Strong Enterprise

Check Out The Merch!

In case you missed the announcement last month, we got new merch! Pardon my appearance below! I was just too excited to get these babies on!!



 **BUY NOW**