

# HEALED

## BY TRUTH

Dear Parents,

When I was a child, my parents did not protect my innocence, and they did not teach me the truth about love and sexuality. It has taken me many years to find hope and healing, and I believe all parents need to hear this message right now.

Whether you know it or not, many children in America have had their innocence lost or stolen in some way by adults in their life who were supposed to love and protect them. Current culture trends are introducing adult sexual content, conversations, and bias to young children, which erodes and wears down their natural and healthy boundaries with their bodies, minds, and souls. This behavior robs children of their innocence and the childhood they deserve.

As a survivor of childhood sexual abuse, and as a mother, I feel this cannot be ignored or silenced. We all deserve to know the truth. As parents, we used to have to sign a paper for other adults to talk to our children about sex, usually in fifth grade. This was both to protect our children and to protect schools. For some reason, this healthy boundary has been crossed and worn down in recent years. Certain adults have stopped asking for parent permission to talk to our children about sex, and not just in schools. It is everywhere on social media and in our communities.

As parents, we should not be ok with this. We are the first line of defense for our children's safety, and it is our duty to protect them. It is our job to remind other adults that they shouldn't be talking to our children about sex.

I grew up in a house with a child predator, and it's easy to recognize their behavior. Child predators wear down children's minds and comfort levels before they ever abuse their bodies. The best way to protect our children from abuse and predation is to teach them the truth about love and sexuality in an age-appropriate way, and to protect their innocence.

It seems many adults have forgotten that children are innocent. Children don't have the same skills and processing abilities that adults do. They trust and believe whatever adults tell them. That's what makes them so vulnerable and increases our responsibility as parents to protect them and teach them the truth.

Predators fill children's minds with adult sexual content and then make them feel like it was their idea. Predators expose children to adult sexual conversations and encourage them to join in. This is wrong, and the adults who do these things should be held accountable. No one should be exposing our children to anything sexual. It's not their job, and it's a sign of predation.

As parents, we should be able to identify these red flags and act accordingly. One of the greatest gifts along my journey of healing and recovery from childhood sexual abuse is the memory of feeling loved and protected by my friend's parents, who did something and said something when things were not right. The strength of their love and their words have continued to lift me up and guide my heart well into adulthood.

It is this wisdom, and this strength that I hope to pass along to you. I encourage you to be the parents God made you to be. Love and protect your children, with a love that can only come from Him. For every parent who stands up and advocates for their child, there are a hundred other children who are helped and protected. One parent's voice can reach thousands. That is the power of truth and common sense.

With all my thanks and gratitude,

CARRIE  BUCALO

--A parent, and a survivor, who stands beside you.