

Repair Your Life: A Program for Recovery from Incest & Childhood Sexual Abuse

Marjorie McKinnon

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Reviewed by Paige Lovitt for Reader Views (4/08)

“Repair Your Life” offers victims of incest and childhood sexual abuse the tools to help them overcome the shame and trauma that they encountered as children. It teaches you how to become the person that you were meant to be. So many survivors of abuse get trapped in non-ending cycles of being in unhealthy relationships, having addictions and making poor choices. Often the children of these survivors become victims.

Ms. McKinnon has developed a six-stage program called REPAIR. It stands for: Recognition, Entry, Process, Awareness, Insight, Rhythm, and Post-Recovery. She dedicates a chapter to each stage and offers some writing exercises to go along with them. By going through this process you will be able to transform yourself from a victim into a survivor. She teaches you to be aware of how the abuse is affecting you as an adult. She tells her own personal story. I felt very grateful that she shared so much of herself because no one reading this book will be able to tell her, “But you don’t understand.” She clearly does and by overcoming her abuse, she sets an example to the rest of the world. Incest and childhood sexual abuse survivors can be whole, healthy and happy.

“Repair Your Life” has a holistic approach to recovery. Going beyond the six stages for recovery, Ms. McKinnon also discusses how to be healthy and whole -- things that victims are not taught. This includes learning how to set boundaries, and take care of your health. She reminds us that we are special and that we need to honor our bodies with healthy care.

The whole book really impressed me; however, there were two things that really had a personal effect on me. The first thing was her discussion of shame. Incest survivors tend to get trapped in feelings of guilt and shame. She makes it clear that the abuse was not their fault and that the blame should be placed where it belongs which is on the abuser’s shoulders, even if they were victims themselves. It is amazing how much damage carrying around a lifetime of shame can do to someone’s soul. The other thing that stood out to me was that she said that predators look for obedient children. So many people that I know that have been abused have had other predators seek them out. This makes the victim feel like they are marked with something that tells the world that they deserved to be molested. I have heard this expressed many times. When Ms. McKinnon mentions that predators look for obedient children, it answered that question for me. They look for children that look like they will do what they are told. That makes much sense, and it lets the survivor know that they didn’t have something “written on their back” identifying them as deserving to be abused.

“Repair Your Life” is a must read for all survivors of sexual abuse. It should also be read by friends and family members close to the survivor. Counselors will also greatly benefit from the book. “Repair Your Life” will give you tools and resources to help you on your journey of recovery.