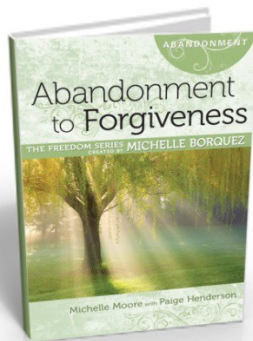


Q & A with Michelle Moore



Is writing your childhood story therapeutic or does it open old wounds?

Both. When I began to write, I realized that I had formed a habit of whenever memories or thoughts from my childhood became too painful, I would shift my thinking to something else. When writing, you cannot do that. You have to stay with the thoughts, thinking back to the details to capture them for the readers. Thank goodness that I had truly forgiven my parents or the writing process would have been unbearable. There certainly has been more healing that has taken place from the entire experience.

Although you've forgiven, how do the scars continue to affect you today? How do you combat old feelings of anger, resentment, and bitterness?

When bad things happen, it is an opportunity for us to learn and grow. The experiences of my life have made me who I am today. If it weren't for the abandonment that I experienced, I would not be the person I am today. And I know that I certainly would not be the mother I am today. Those painful experiences made me stronger and wiser, and have added to my ability to empathize with those who are hurting deeply. When old feelings of anger, resentment, and bitterness try to show their ugly heads, I focus on being grateful for the blessings in my life.

How did you open yourself up to trust people again?

For the first couple of years of my relationship with my husband, I found myself thinking, "It is only a matter of time before he leaves me too." Then, one day a very close friend asked, "Michelle, have you ever heard of self-fulfilling prophesy?" It stopped me in my tracks and I realized in that very moment what I had been doing. Frankly, leaving is all that I had ever known and I certainly believed he was no different. I am happy to share that we have now been together for over twenty years.

What do you tell your children about your parents?

I tell them the truth in a way that they can understand. They know that my mother left me and that my father doesn't come to visit. The last time my father saw my children was on Dillon's fifth birthday. Dillon, my oldest son, is now nine. Oddly enough, from ages five to fifteen, I only saw my father once. As a mother, I have found that I cannot make someone want to have a relationship with my children, just like I couldn't make them want to have a relationship with me.

Is there a relationship with your parents now?

Once someone has forgiven a past hurt, it doesn't mean that the person who hurt them is necessarily in their life afterwards. You can still love them from afar. My mother reappeared after nearly eighteen years of being missing, not to have a relationship with me, but because she needed money. In my case, I still miss the presence of my parents from my life's big moments and special holidays. However, after forgiving my parents, the peaks and valleys of the pain are not as high, low, nor as long as they used to be.

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Can you imagine your life without God?

Absolutely not. He truly is a Healer. He was able to do something that I could never do on my own. I was hurt deeply, angered, rejected, lonely, and so much more until I turned it all over to Him. With God, there is a freedom that cannot be fully understood until you experience it. One significant change I recognize is that I now experience moments of pure joy—something I had never experienced until I fully surrendered. His ways are higher than our ways.

Tell us the significance of your father rejecting you but your Father in Heaven never rejecting you.

As I first began to learn about God being my Father, I had some obvious issues. Being my Father didn't seem like a good thing. The only relationship with a father that I had ever known was filled with abandonment, rejection, disappointment, and judgment. What I had to learn is that no one is perfect. People are going to let you down but God is always there with arms wide open.

What is the takeaway from your story?

Abandonment is rejection, pure and simple. To be abandoned by my father and mother, the people who are supposed to love and support me unconditionally, wreaked havoc on my life for so many years. But holding onto unforgiveness is choosing to live in a prison when you hold the key to unlock the door. As a Christian, I do not believe that forgiving is a choice—it's a command. You have to choose God's way. And there is nothing like it.