

Work in Progress

Published monthly by Michele Crawford
Work in Progress is an electronic newsletter intended to assist individuals seeking optimum well-being.

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Feature Article: Letting go: One woman's choice.

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- 1) Note from Michele

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Dear Reader

When children have endured abuse in childhood, in adulthood there appears to be three possible stages along the path of recovery. These levels are called victim, survivor and thriver.

The victim level is stuck in the child's perspective of self-blame, guilt, fear, depression, resentment and shame. Consequences can also comprise an external focus versus an internal self-awareness, unassertiveness, addictions, being easily triggered, problematic relationships and living in a vortex of drama.

The survivor stage is caught up in rage, hostility, depression, bitterness and blame. You are stuck in the unhealthy attitudes of aggression, addictions, isolation and being shut down in many ways: including being disconnected from your emotions, your physical body and other human beings.

Both levels are entrenched in a child's perspective, elicit health problems and control issues. Both levels hold onto a painful legacy instead of reclaiming autonomy and freedom from anguish. Both levels advance self-absorption.

These stages are not rigid or linear. People can cycle back and forth between them. The key feature is being stuck in negative emotions.

The thriver echelon involves the adult perspective of letting go of all associated symptoms: of recognizing what happened in childhood does not need to define your sense of self, your day to day life or your relationships.

Moving through these stages is a process, not an event. Being inspired by the triumphs of others who have done so can be both encouraging and constructive.

Recently, I received a copy of a letter written by an ex-client to her cousin. It is a powerful letter and I considered it a gift to be part of her journey.

I asked her about the origin of the term *blue flame*. This is what she told me.

Her spirit guides gave her the name blue flame to represent childhood sexual abuse and its aftermath. During a sacred ceremony, she was informed the last step to her healing process was to tell her story to others.

I know this woman has a compassionate and generous courage as well as a commitment to helping others. After I re-read her words about the value of passing on her story, I asked her permission to write her letter as one of my newsletters. This is her bequest to you.

All of the names have been changed.

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2) Feature Article: Letting go: One woman's choice.

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Dear Cousin

This has been a long time coming.

I have been living with this secret and it is time to let it go.

Learning and understanding child sexual abuse and going through therapy, one important step in healing is writing a letter, which makes us go through the motions of letting go... of releasing hurts and the ugliness that live inside.

It allows us to let go of the secrets and to confront our abuser. I did not and still don't believe in confrontation; it is too dangerous.

There is no real healing there. I always thought there is a better way. With no clue, I prayed for an answer. I think my prayers were heard; no, I know they were.

I kept trying to think how I was going to write to you, going over and over again what I was going to say. I finally had enough courage to tell Jane and Mary a couple of years ago about what happened when we were children.

They told me that you had already disclosed to them that you had sexually abused me as a child. Thus opening the door for real dialogue. I want to thank you for that. It takes a strong person to do that.

I sit here crying inside; my heart aches for you and me and our lost childhood innocence. I love you Fred, like the way it was meant to be for first cousins. Where we can be carefree and no strings attached, with unconditional love.

Our family was messed up in this regard: where there was only one kind of love and that was between a mom and a dad. It is too bad no one taught us otherwise; things could have been different. Reality is what it is though which is what I'm dealing with now.

Thank you again for owning the blue flame. You had taken it back but it was me that kept it because I wanted to feel self-righteous... because I needed to keep on hating you.

I hated you for a long time and I needed that hate: it fueled me to go on so that I did not have to crumble or look at what happened and how it had hurt and damaged me. I needed that to smother the shame. It was my friend.

In the end, the blue flame caused me more pain and trouble. It still does because I have carried it all these years: it is time I release it and give it back to where it had come from.

So I give it to you Fred. It is in your hands now. In the spirit of good will, I want to share this teaching.

I was told that if I wanted to heal, we have to give back the blue flame from where it came, until it goes back to its original source... in our case, seven generations.

Thank you cousin for always seeming to care and for acknowledging and validating my story. I forgive you.

I think I had forgiven you a long time ago but it was too shameful to broach the subject. I was also fearful that you would deny it and I did not have it in me to fight.

That has happened to me in the past when I confronted someone else. It ended badly. This ugliness has added more fuel to the flame.

I have carried this pain and shame for too long and it is time to let it go. I release you Fred and I release the ugly incidents that had bonded together for too long. I let go.

Ekosi

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3) About Michele  
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Michele Crawford is a therapist who assists individuals who are struggling with trauma, anxiety or depression. Her passion for her work remains embedded in being able to connect with you

in your suffering, helping you find real solutions no matter how complex the issue may be.

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#### 4) Counselling Services

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Are you prepared to live with more happiness, optimism, confidence, self-worth and hope? If your answer is "yes," then your next step is to contact me for a free 20-minute phone consultation. We can then discuss how I might best help you resolve your problems of Trauma, Depression and Anxiety.

The benefits of counselling with Michele include: significantly reduced stress levels, an optimistic outlook in life, increased confidence and hope.

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#### **Privacy Policy**

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I want to reassure you that your e-mail address will never be shared or sold to anyone else.

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#### **Pass It Along**

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