

# Emerging From Broken

Free Guide *by Darlene Ouimet*



## Getting Unstuck on the Healing Journey:

*Answers to the  
Most Popular Questions  
Asked on  
Emerging From Broken*

[www.emergingfrombroken.com](http://www.emergingfrombroken.com)

There are some very common questions that I receive through comments on the website, the contact form, on the Emerging from Broken Facebook page and through my private coaching practice. Because these questions are so common, I have come to realize in many ways that they are directly related to the ‘trapped’ or ‘stuck’ feeling that so many survivors of dysfunctional relationships experience. These questions are at the roots of depressions and disorders. These questions hold the key to understanding self-esteem and how self-esteem and self-worth become so damaged in the first place. Understanding where these questions come from contributes to understanding why and where people get ‘stuck’ on the journey to emotional healing.

***How can I learn to love myself when I have been told by mom, dad, grandparents and teachers that I am worthless?*** Other ways of asking this question could be: “How can I go against my parents’ opinions of me?” or “How can my parents be wrong?”

It was important for me to realize that my parents were my life source when I was small. They had the power to nourish my life or to cause my death. I believed that everything they said was true; I had no other frame of reference. I had no reason to suspect that they might lie to me or that they might be wrong about me. Because I was taught this from a very young age, the foundational idea that my parents were NOT wrong was powerfully formed. I had to open my mind to the possibility that maybe, just maybe, they were wrong.

I had to consider the truth about the statement “all people are created equally.” For some reason I never related that equal value to me. I didn’t relate to being as equally valuable as everyone else. A big part of my emotional healing had to do with me finally realizing that I *was* equally valuable; embracing that truth happened after seeing how my belief system lead me to accept that I was not as good as others in the first place and the damage that this caused.

One of the things in my way was a certain contradiction I had unknowingly accepted in my life. On some level I believed that babies were not born ‘bad’, but I couldn’t relate that to myself. I didn’t realize that I believed I was different from other people. If someone told me an abuse or trauma story, I never discounted that story, but for some reason my own story seemed justified. Not only did I not have equal value to my parents, teachers etc—I also believed that I didn’t deserve it.

I had to start thinking differently. What if it wasn't actually my fault? What if I didn't actually deserve any of the things that had happened to me? What if it wasn't me at all? It was through taking a closer look at the things that happened to me and facing the pain of those things that I was able to question the truth about my own involvement in those things.

Was it really my fault that I got hit? Did I actually do something wrong or was my mother having a bad day? Did I cause her bad day in the first place? Did I deserve to be hit in the way that I was hit? Was the punishment consistent with those 'wrong actions' or did they seem to be more about the mood my mother was in at the time?

Did my emotionally absent and passive abusive father ignore me because I was uninteresting, unlovable and not good enough, or did he ignore me because of something missing in him? And if it was something missing in him, does that excuse him? Had I been making excuses and feeling sorry for my parents all this time as a way to justify how they treated me?

Did I really do something as a child to attract adults into sexually inappropriate situations with me? Did the teacher who picked on me, who threatened and humiliated me in front of the class, actually have a reason to do that (meaning that I deserved it) or was she just plain wrong?

It was through taking a closer look at these things that I began to comprehend the damage that was done to me and where that damage caused my self-esteem to be broken way back then. In seeing what happened then through a new grid, I began to see a new path to healing that broken self-esteem. I began to hope that perhaps it was true that there was a special person in me that never had the chance to come out. And if it WAS true, then I wanted to find that special me! As it turned out, those people were all wrong about me.

***“Everyone” says that the problem is me. How can they all be wrong?***

People have their own reasons for insisting that it is 'you.' Most often, the biggest reason is about them not wanting to see the truth in their own lives with their own dysfunctional relationships. It is easier to keep the victim down than it is to look at the truth, especially if that truth affects them too. Being raised to believe 'the problem is you' is a very difficult belief system to undo and replace. Victims of dysfunctional relationship very

often become addicted to proof: if they can't prove they are 'right' about their own grievances, then they must not be right. But even the belief that we have to 'prove it' comes from dysfunction in the belief system and has its roots somewhere.

As for abusers, they will never look at the possibility that it might be them. Abusive and controlling people never question themselves. They are very sure that it isn't them.

***How can I move forward when even my therapists have told me that my pain isn't real or that it "wasn't as bad as it seemed"?***

I had been taught from a very young age to 'respect authority.' I did not realize that authority can be crooked, corrupt or even completely wrong.

Pairing this teaching with the ways I had been raised to believe as a child that I was always wrong, that whatever happened to me had something to do with me 'asking for it' or bringing it on myself, and because I had been so steeped in the belief that there was something lacking in me, it never occurred to me that a professional or someone who was in a position of power could be wrong.

I had been trained to accept that whatever was thrown at me by anyone older than me or anyone in any kind of power position actually spoke the truth. I was also convinced that I didn't 'know' better than anyone else, that EVERYONE knew better than me. I had to consider that these people, these other human beings with their own grid of understanding, their own pasts, and their own dysfunction, might perhaps be wrong. My hope came from meeting someone else who said there was a way to heal when all others before told me that it was a matter of 'forgiveness', 'letting it go' and 'leaving the past behind.'

***I don't have many memories of what happened to me. How can I find "the root" or origin of where the broken began?***

I still don't have all my memories. I had very few when I began the process but I had enough to begin the work. I looked for patterns and hidden messages that I received when my needs were not met. I looked at times I was shut down, silenced, or threatened and the messages that I got from those events. I looked at how my fears had developed and if

they were still valid fears now that I was an adult. I began to understand the ways that I learned to cope, to survive and to just get by. When I looked at just 3 memories, I started to see the pattern of how that belief system began forming in childhood. The amount of memories to work with has never held me back from healing.

***My abusers are dead. How can I get resolution?***

Resolution has nothing to do with the abusers. Believing that it does is a very common misunderstanding. The solution does not lie with the perpetrators of abuse or mistreatment. Closure comes from facing the pain, validating the abuse and changing the belief system that formed because of that abuse. NONE of this emotional healing work depends on anything from the people who did the harm.

***Do I have to go no contact with my parents in order to heal?***

I didn't confront my parents or talk about any of my childhood realizations with them for the first year that I was in the healing process. I spoke to them regularly as though my healing process had nothing to do with them; I was focused on how to overcome my depressions and the depth of unhappiness that I felt. I spent a lot of time coming out of the fog; there was no 'time line' and there were no 'musts.' I gave myself permission to take my time looking back, discovering the false belief system and how it got there, and taking down the rotten foundation so that I could start building a new one on which to proceed with healthy relationship.

I was very thoughtful about everything and examined the truth for a long time before I confronted (first) my mother. Even as I began to see where the damage began and how it related to my mother and father, the thought of going no contact never even occurred to me. But as I dug deeper into the formation of my belief system, I saw that the dysfunction and one sided relationships I had with my parents and their misuse of power and control in my life still existed, and I began to realize that I needed better boundaries with them.

At that point, I didn't consider that I would end up in a no contact relationship with either of them. Perhaps if I had suspected that it would end up that way, I would not have been interested in continuing the healing process. It is important to understand the nature of this—believing that going no contact is 'not an option' and having an extreme fear of that

option or result is because of the belief system formed in childhood. This belief system had taught me that my parents were my lifeline and without them I could die. In childhood, that is true. It would have been next to impossible for me to survive on the street when I was a kid. Even though this was no longer true in my adult life, that belief system still remained powerful.

In the end my mother walked away from me because my new boundaries were not something she could respect. My biggest fear had been that my own mother would reject me but the truth was that she had rejected me all along. The reality of her final rejection was actually a relief and it spoke volumes of truth about our relationship in the first place.

BUT there are some parents who are willing to sit down and hear the pain of their grown child. There are some parents who are willing to make changes and are willing to consider that their insistence on one-sided respect is not love. Going no contact with family is not mandatory for healing. Drawing boundaries based on self-love and self-respect and embracing the concept of equal value is a far more important goal here.

### ***Where do I start? How do I begin this process?***

The beginning for me was simply becoming willing to consider that there was hope for healing and to open my mind to a new way of thinking. I have an e-book coming out soon and in it I have compiled a good deal of my work and insights. I share a lot about HOW I came out of the fog by realizing things that I had never realized before. There were contradictions in the ways that I had been taught; the rules of relationship that applied to me did not apply to ‘them’, especially the people who were in authority over me. The abusers/controllers did not practice what they preached and I had never been aware of that fact before. It took some time, persistence and determination for me to face the pain and the damage that caused me to view myself through the grid of ‘un-worthy’, but seeing how I had come to those false conclusions about myself was what led me down the path to freedom and wholeness. The beginning was really about having hope—that it was possible—and then it was about having willingness to go forward. For me, I believed that this was my last chance and I am so grateful that the process I communicate about WORKS. I live a full and wonderful life today.

***My family won't respect my boundaries therefore I can't progress in the healing process. Re-worded the question is: if my family won't change, can I still heal?***

Part of the 'brainwashing' was that I truly believed that I could not make an independent decision. For years I got the message that I was not capable of thinking for myself, that my decisions were usually wrong and that I didn't know what was best for me or for anyone else. This message undermined my confidence and eventually I didn't even know that I could make a decision or come to a conclusion or have a feeling without putting it through their grid. I asked myself what 'they' would expect me to do or to feel. I had to be willing to see things through a NEW grid of understanding in order to begin letting go of the belief that only other people could tell me who I was, and to begin to learn who I really was. I had to let go of the idea that my family 'hearing me' and respecting me was part of the solution.

One of the first things that I realized on my journey to wholeness and emotional healing was that my feelings had been invalidated so often that I believed my feelings were invalid.

My pain had been invalidated and discounted for so long that I believed my pain was invalid.

I believed that my pain, my story, my life, weren't that bad. I believed, just as I had been told over and over again, that I was exaggerating, and I learned to discount myself, my pain and my feelings in the same way I had been discounted by the adults and caregivers in my life. I believed that it was 'just me.'

To coin a rather popular phrase when it comes to being brainwashed, I drank the Kool-Aid. I believed that the way I had been defined by the actions, treatment, and messages from others was the truth about me. I had to find a way to break through those lies and restore the actual truth about me.

It was key for me to understand what happened to me—that I had been desensitized to my own feelings, to my own pain and my own story. The understanding of how I was desensitized was a huge part of understanding the brainwashing I had accepted as truth about me. I had to break through that in order to begin healing.

Emerging from broken is about coming out of the fog. The fog is a product of learning how to cope with being invalidated. Emerging out of the fog is about realizing that I am

NOT invalid. I came to understand that I am not invalid by realizing why I thought that I was in the first place. I thought that I was invalid because of the messages I received, messages that were communicated to me through trauma, neglect, abuse, and invalidation. Messages that ‘defined me’ as unworthy.

Emerging from broken is about realizing that your pain is real and that it is justified. It is about validating the damage and acknowledging that there was damage. Children are not born broken. Depression and struggle start somewhere.

This is about validating what has never been validated before, no matter what anyone else has to say about it. I had to give up the belief that being validated by the people closest to me was the only way to heal. I had to give up the belief that ‘they’ were right. As a child I had no reason to think they were wrong but I am not a child anymore. Believing that it was ‘me’ was part of my survival and a big part of the coping method that I needed as a child. As an adult those beliefs no longer serve me.

I had to validate MY pain and MY feelings. In order to do that, I had to look at the pain through a new grid of understanding. I had to see it through the eyes of truth and not through the dysfunctional belief system that had been passed down to me through the generational cycle of abuse and neglect perpetrated upon each generation of children for the purpose of power and control.

This work isn’t about positive thinking. I tried being positive for many years and the depressions got worse. It isn’t that I replaced negative thinking with positive thinking. What I did was I found out what my fears were and **where they came from**. I found out why I reacted in the ways that I did and why certain false messages were stuck in me as a result of the damage. I learned to reassure myself that those messages about me were all lies; they were not about me, but about the ways abusers and abuse/trauma defined me. The ways that I had been falsely defined were actually far more about the abusive, controlling and manipulative people and their motives.

We crave to be validated; we NEED to be validated. But I had to learn to stop seeking validation from the same people who caused the harm and invalidated me in the first place. Our very lives have been minimized by them and it is time to take back the reins and learn how to fill in the blank empty spots for yourself. I talk about how I did this at the [Emerging from Broken website](#).

Thank you for downloading this free report and for being a part of the Emerging from Broken network. Please watch for email updates about Emerging from Broken as I have some new things to offer this year! My first e-book, a compilation of some of my earlier work focusing on how I tore down the old foundation, learned to see through a new grid of understanding and started to build a new foundation, will be published within in the next few months. Shortly after that my second e-book will follow with more specific info about dysfunctional relationships. Both will be full of fog busting examples of how I came to see the truth about where I was stuck and how I could proceed with healing.

To your healing and to finding your best *you!*

~There is freedom on the other side of broken~

Darlene Ouimet