

A person with long dark hair, wearing a white t-shirt and a dark jacket, is holding a green plant branch with small, oval-shaped leaves. The person's face is partially visible, with their hand resting near their chin. The background is dark and out of focus, showing more of the same plant. The overall mood is calm and natural.

3 steps to healing

by Linda G. Riddle

welcome

Thank you for downloading this resource.
This eBook serves as an accompaniment
to a video testimony I shared on my
website at LindaRiddle.org.

These three steps, I would say, were
crucial in me stepping into freedom and
experiencing healing from a past of abuse,
rejection, betrayal and abandonment.

Wherever you are in your journey of life,
I pray that what I shared in my testimony
and in the pages to follow, you will find
strength, encouragement and hope to take
your next step.



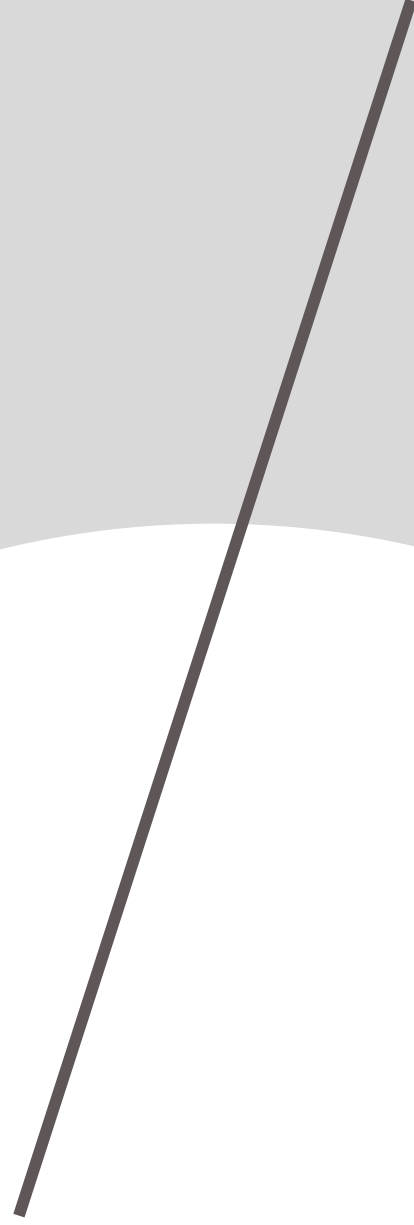
contents

Step One
S U R R E N D E R

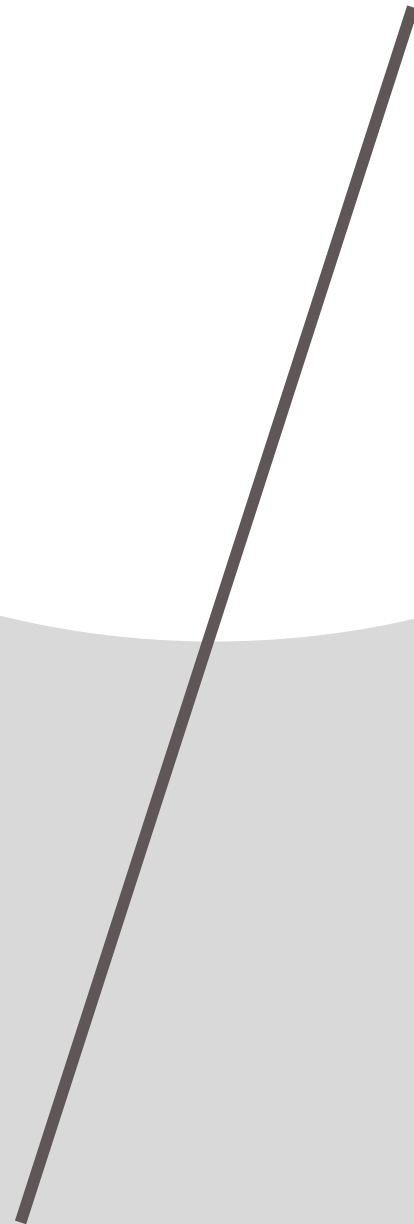
Step Two
F O R G I V E

Step Three
T R A N S F O R M

01



S U R R E N D E R



01

Surrender is a hard word to deal with.
Especially for someone who had
experienced abuse.

I was a fighter, a survivor. My daily
priority was conjuring up the energy I
needed to stay alert. I had to make sure my
defenses were as strong as they could be
and get ready for whatever may come my
way. All without giving off any outward
clues that any of it was going on.

I was constantly thinking ahead,
anticipating every twist, every turn, every
single possible outcome in order to prepare
and protect myself from it. Of course, there
were days I felt completely depleted and
weak. But for the most part, I did whatever
was necessary to make it through.

The thought of surrender had never even crossed my mind. I'm pretty sure that would have made me feel more vulnerable, or like I was giving up. Or worse yet, giving in. As a survivor, the number one unsaid rule is that you never - ever - drop your guard. And I never did.

Until I experienced what it felt like to be embraced by the Presence of safety.

In the video where I share my testimony, I talk about the experience of walking into that church in San Antonio, Texas on a Sunday morning and experiencing the Presence of the Holy Spirit through worship. Before anyone said a single word, I felt Him. And my first encounter with the Holy Spirit was one that produced **safety**.

A safety I'd never experienced before in my life. It was like being embraced both inside and out. Comforted, known, seen, and surrounded with a love that was powerful enough to loosen my deepest tensions, allowing me to drop my guard and take what felt like my first breath.

Safety is what allowed me to eventually surrender. Not surrender to the people who'd hurt me. Not wave a white flag in defeat to what I had been battling my whole life. But surrender to the love of God. The One who created me. The One who knew what had happened, but had already made a way for me to experience freedom and healing from everything in my past.

Surrendering to God was the best decision I've ever made.

I know 100% without a doubt that none of the healing and freedom I've experienced would have ever taken place had I not given my life to God and asked Him to come into my heart.

This experience will look different for each one of us. *How* we let go may be different, but *what* we let go of will lead to the same place: **FREEDOM**.

This is why it's number one on my top three. And I really pray that you make the decision to let go of the ropes you're probably hanging onto as tightly as I was, and reach for the One who loves you, who is for you, and who is waiting for you with open arms. He is safety. He is freedom. He is healing.

How do you do this?

“God’s living message is very close to you, as close as your own heart beating in your chest and as near as the tongue in your mouth.” Romans 10:8b TPT

You can take the same step I took wherever you’re at. It starts with **believing** in your heart that God is who He says He is. Then **deciding** you’re going to follow Him and that you want His presence with you, leading the way.

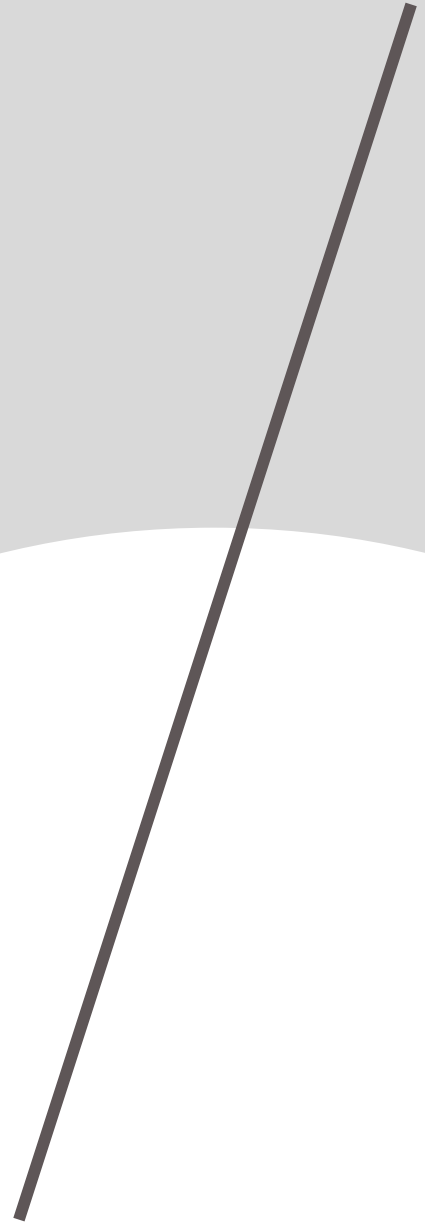
If you believe and if you’ve made that decision, then simply seal that decision by **saying** it. Put it in motion with your words. Don’t just think it. Say it out loud. To Him.

If you’ve moved forward with this step, I pray that God will make Himself known to you in a way that is unique and personal to you.

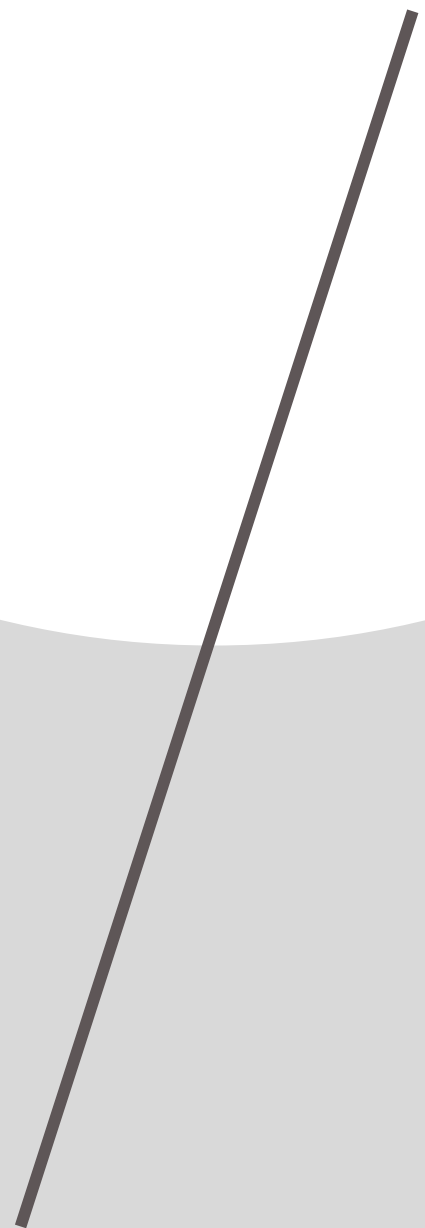
Our words are like fire;
they can destroy or
they can spark a flame,
creating a new path to life
we never saw before.

Linda G. Riddle

02



F O R G I V E



02

Even after that initial experience of forgiveness I shared in my testimony, there was a lot more forgiving that had to take place in my heart. There were the other people who'd hurt me. I also had to forgive the people who I felt, should have been there for me (including my mom). I had to forgive myself. And lastly, I had to forgive all the circumstances surrounding everything in my past.

I remember telling myself, over and over, "*If only things had been different...*" I had to let go of even entertaining that thought in order to move on. I grieved it. But I didn't stay there. What allowed me to move forward was that I trusted God was bigger. I believed His promises to give us a future and a fresh hope was still valid for me - not revoked because so many things had gone so wrong.

“For I know the plans I have for you,” says the Eternal, “plans for **peace**, not evil, to give you a **future** and **hope**—never forget that.” Jeremiah 29:11 The Voice

Forgiveness, in a way, was like letting go of all the “should-have-beens”. I walked through a process where I allowed God to help me x-ray my heart and identify all the wounds, bruises and places of hurt.

Some of those hurts involved people, some involved circumstances, but in all honesty I was well aware that some involved my own choices. One by one, out loud in prayer, I told God, “I choose to let go of these and I’m going to lay them all at Your feet. And I’m trusting that You will take care of whatever needs to be taken care of.”

It was an act of **release**. It was an act of **trust**. And it was a step that removed the deep seeded roots of **bitterness** from my heart.

I know it's sometimes hard for people to forgive. We each have our reasons why. But I can honestly say that in my experience I've learned that typically, it's because we know that a wrong has been done, and there's this inner sense of **justice** within each and every one of us that knows something has to be done to make it right. It's like a debt has been incurred and there won't be any relief of that restlessness and pain until someone pays the price.

There are times we simply must engage our legal system to pursue justice. Absolutely. But I'm speaking more to what takes place on the inside of us.

That inner fight to let go. Just because we obtain legal justice doesn't mean we've experienced the freedom of forgiveness. If we haven't released the person in our hearts, no matter what conviction or sentencing takes place, we can still be bound to them with a cord of bitterness in our hearts and we won't experience any peace.

As I wrestled and fought with this in my own heart, I learned something. I was holding the invoices for all these things that people had done *to* me or had failed to do *for* me. My feelings were valid. Yes, I had been wronged. But none of those people who were my "debtors" were qualified or capable of paying the price that would have given me freedom or peace or that would have healed me.

Jesus paid that price.

He didn't just cover the cost for my own failures and shortcomings. He also covered the cost for any "debt" incurred towards me. But I had to make the decision that I wasn't going to keep holding the bill and the people hostage in my heart.

In receiving His life as payment for mine, and in giving my life to Him in exchange, with that, I handed all the "accounting" over to Him. I had to trust that again, He is who He says He is: **Just** and **Righteous** in all His doings.

"You are fair and righteous in everything You do, and Your love is wrapped into all Your works." Psalm 145:17 TPT

I had to believe that He would take care of balancing out whatever debts or whatever wrongs had been done to me.

And in letting go, I was turning the people, the circumstances, the decisions, all of it, over to Him. Ultimately, **forgiveness is letting go of control.**

Friend: Whoever you are, wherever you are...forgive. Identify each of those things you need to let go of. You know them well. I'm sure of it.

Whether it's people, circumstances, choices. All the "should-have-beens". List them, label them, do whatever it is you need to do. But then bring them all before God and lay them out in front of Him and **LET...THEM...GO...**

Sever the ties once and for all that keep you tethered to your past.

He knows exactly who did you wrong. He knows exactly what went sour. He's well aware of the people who should have been there for you, who maybe even said they would be, but weren't.

He will not let any of it go undealt with. But don't make the mistake of trying to step into that arena and control *how* He deals with it. He is God. We are not. But know for a **fact** that He loves you and He will not simply turn a blind eye.

You keep track of all my sorrows.

You have collected all my tears in Your bottle.

You have recorded each one in Your book.

My enemies will retreat when I call to You for help.

This I know: God is on my side!

Psalms 58:8-9 NLT

Over the years, I've spoken to countless women who have shared their stories with me. I've seen many women experience freedom and healing and step into their futures with joy and great hope. Spiritually speaking, you wouldn't recognize some of those before-and-afters.

Sadly, I've also known many women who couldn't get past this point of forgiveness.

The healing simply didn't take place. It couldn't. Not in an atmosphere still poisoned with the toxic fumes of bitterness. Don't make that same mistake. I can assure you, standing here on the "other side", God *will* make it up to you. He will recompense you back for your years of pain. He will add more to your life than you could have ever imagined. Trust me, He is Just. But you've got to hand it over to Him.

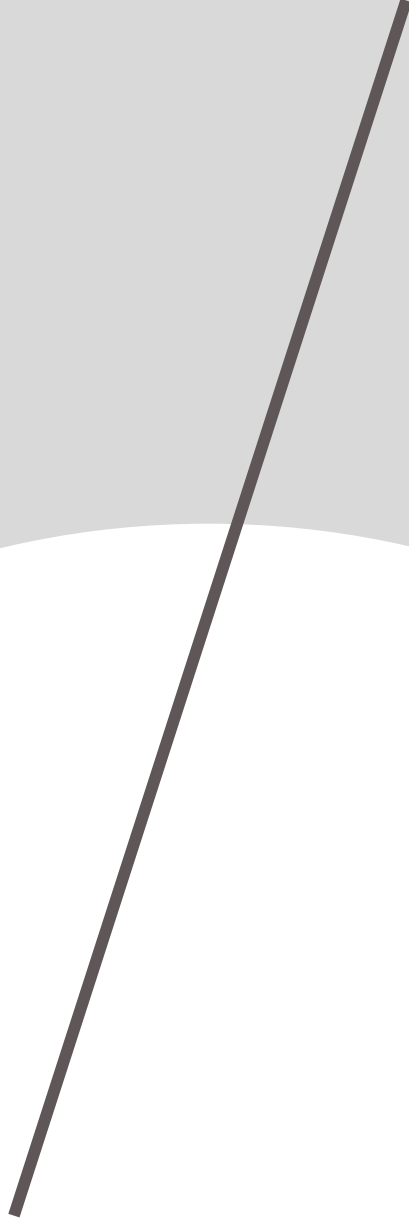
Forgiveness doesn't mean you're turning a blind eye, sweeping it under the rug, or as I was told to do - act as if nothing had ever happened.

Forgiveness means you're giving it to the One who can actually do something about it. He will vindicate you. In a just way, in a righteous way. Just trust Him and release it into His care.

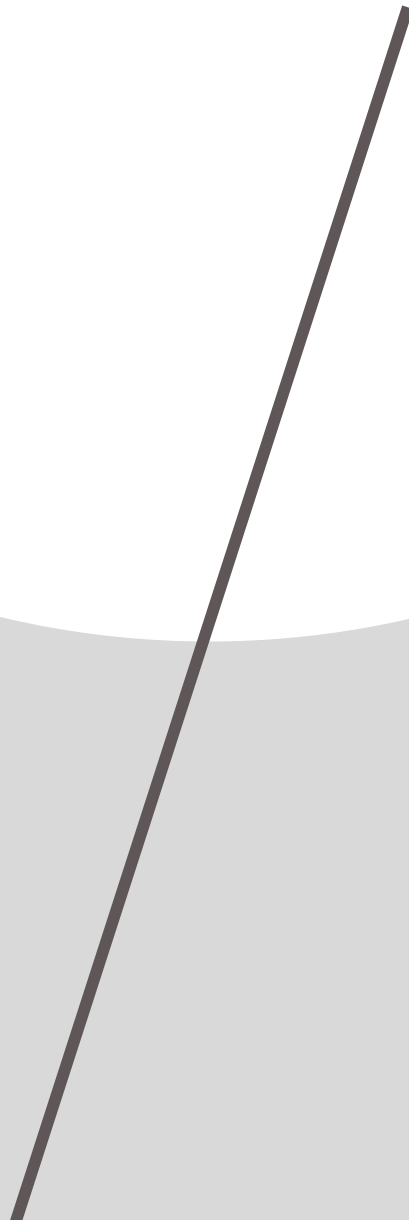
Forgive us the wrongs
we have done as we ourselves
release forgiveness to those
who have wronged us.

Matthew 6:12 TPT

03



T R A N S F O R M



03

When I gave my life to Christ, I felt an immediate change take place on the inside of me. It was as though oxygen had just been pumped into my being and I had been revived. The shame I'd felt for years was lifted off, and joy rushed into my heart. I felt energized and I felt great. But one of the most significant things that began changing was the way I **thought**.

When we give our lives over to God, His Presence comes and dwells on the inside of us and suddenly, His ways are written on the tablets of our hearts. In giving us Himself, we're given access to the “navigation system”, if you will, of how to live life according to the ways of His Kingdom - the Kingdom of Heaven.

When this took place for me, I all of a sudden couldn't go on living the way I had always been living. Instinctively, if I started responding to circumstances and decisions out of my old nature, I felt like I was going against something inside of me that was telling me the old way wasn't the right way. That "something" was the voice of God.

"My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me." John 10:27 NKJV

When that started happening, I had to start learning how to recognize His voice, pause, and then pay attention to what I felt Him leading me to do differently.

This my friends, is called **conviction**.

And it's one of the primary elements that played a huge part in my life transforming from what it had been to what I was becoming. But I had to respect and honor that tug in my heart. I had to listen, and then I had to choose to go in the new direction I was being led. Even though sometimes, it was a completely opposite direction than what I had become accustomed to my whole life.

Every time I heeded that Voice, I got this inner sense that I had just given **life** to the new me I was becoming. I grew stronger with each of those decisions. But the times I didn't heed it, I felt a sting in my heart. A sting that went away only when I'd realized where I'd gone wrong and then I'd ask God to forgive me. He did and still always does. He is ever so patient.

The goal here is not perfection. We all mess up. I still do every day. And God doesn't love us any less when we mess up. This is not about performance or trying to earn your way into God's good graces. If you've given your life to Him, you already have that.

The goal I'm trying to get you to focus on is **guarding that place and posture of response**. You're already a new creation. This is more about living out the newness He's placed inside of you.

This is my number three step because it's one of the primary ways God led me and taught me. It's one of the primary ways my life transformed. By listening to His voice, being sensitive to the fresh convictions in my heart, and choosing to do the work of retraining myself to live life a new way.

He is with you. He will lead you and He will guide you. He won't go faster than you can keep up with and He won't go so slow that you get frustrated with your progress. Just keep tuning in and keep responding.

In closing, I share with you one of my favorite verses that early on became so very real to me. It's found in Isaiah 30:21:

“Your own ears will hear Him.

Right behind you a Voice will say,
“This is the way you should go,”
whether to the right or to the left.

Thank you for taking time to listen to my testimony and for reading through these steps I've shared with you. I hope this has encouraged and strengthened you.

I also want you to know I'm praying for you. Even though I may not even know your name, that's how the Kingdom of God works. There is no distance in prayer and the important thing is, God sees you.

He knows exactly where you're at and He's ready to help you move forward so that you can step into your future from a place of strength and freedom.

God's grace and peace to you,

Linda

I will put My laws in their
minds, and I will write them on
their hearts. I will be their God,
and they will be My people.

Hebrews 8:10