

BELOW IS 50 PAGES (47,415 words) of Comments by 358 Professionals, Survivors and Victims in response to the Forum in which the below question was asked,

PLEASE COMMENT AND ADD ANY SUGGESTIONS ON "REASONS WHY PEOPLE DO NOTHING ABOUT SEXUAL ABUSE" .

- 1/. They are guilty
- 2/. They have skeletons in their closet.
- 3/. It impedes on their comfort zone.
- 4/. They don't understand what is trying to be achieved.
- 5/. They lack empathy, they just don't care... if it isn't happening to them they don't want to know.
- 6/. The problem is too big to solve so just give up. Those who believe it will always be a part of life, so there's no point in trying to end it.

Victims comments are highlighted in green.

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KOALA AND BUNNY ENDORSEMENTS

(See more at www.KOALAandBUNNY.com)

The Salvation Army in the Australia Eastern Territory is pleased to endorse "Koala and Bunny" as a valuable asset and helpful resource for teaching children protective behaviours.

James Condon, Commissioner, Australia Eastern Territory, www.aue.thesalvationarmy.org

“Rotary Club of Nundah is pleased to endorse Koala and Bunny as a valuable tool in teaching children protective behaviours”.

Bill Sherwood President_2013/14. Rotary Club of Nundah. <http://nundahrotary.org.au/>

I'm happy to endorse the Koala and Bunny as a useful tool in teaching children.

Chancellor Leneen Forde, AC, Chancellor, Griffith University. Queensland, Australia.

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Leneen_Forde

Sexual Assault Clinic (South Africa) is pleased to endorse Koala and Bunny as an exceptional tool to use with children for teaching correct behaviour. Michelle Bellion, Director, Sexual Assault Clinic, Benoni , Gauteng, South Africa. <http://www.sexualassaultclinic.org>

“I highly endorse Koala and Bunny to help teach all children the importance of appropriate and protective behaviors”. **Mary Romero**, '2014 Executive Woman of the Year' by NAPW (National Association of Professional Women, USA).

<http://mmmconnell.wix.com/live-life-coaching>

"I am pleased to endorse Koala and Bunny as a useful resource to help prevent children from becoming victims of abuse". **Barry Watson, Elder in Residence**, Communities for Children Life Community, The Salvation Army. <http://salvos.org.au/communitiesforchildren/>

THE COMMENTS

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Having spent some time reading through all the comments on here can I say the following. There are some deeply caring professional people who in my opinion offer some really, really good advice. Some of the ideas they put forward are so helpful and constructive and they can really make a difference. They understand some of the problems. I have also read things from people supposedly in the know which scares me to death!

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As we all know and understand, 90-93% of all child sexual abuse is perpetrated by someone the child knows, loves or trusts. This creates a dynamic for not only the child but also for the adults involved in the child's life. This dynamic can cause adults to doubt the validity of their gut feelings. Many skilled perpetrators will groom the family and community as much as they groom the child. This grooming will create disbelief and doubt that the perp would even consider abusing a child. Some adults will even approach the perp and ask, which can allow the perp to convince and discourage the adult from reporting suspected abuse. It also allows the perp to sharpen their skills at covering their

tracks. The dynamic, if the perp is a family member, causes a whole different set of consequences. Ramifications to relationships, finances and long term stability of the family unit can/will suffer. The fear of this will cause many families to attempt to work out a solution without contacting authorities. This route will often lead to denial and additional harm to the family and the victim. Perps will agree to almost anything to prevent a family from reporting the abuse. Once this agreement has been reached, many families will turn a blind eye to future warning signs. This "blind eye" acceptance of a perps activities can and will lead to what is commonly called the "cycle of abuse." It's my belief that the huge numbers of past unreported abuse has led many adult victim/survivors to rationalize and create the "cycle of abuse" within their own families. If an adult was abused as a child by a family member, and it was never reported and that adult didn't receive help, they will not see the benefits to breaking the cycle. They will attempt to handle the situation within the family to avoid embarrassment, shame and even the fear of exposing their own past abuse. These fears are powerful motivators to keep abuse secret. As an outspoken advocate against CSA I am involved with an organization that reaches out to youth to encourage them to "Be your own hero" and Just Tell. I also understand that the reaction to a child "just telling" has a huge impact on how and if the child will continue to reach out for help. The wrong reaction can shut a child down and will force that child to retreat to their own private hell. It is imperative of us, as healthcare workers and advocates, to educate adults as well as children to the importance of breaking the cycle. We also need to educate adults on the proper way to react to a child's disclosure. At the same time, we need to teach children that if the adult they tell doesn't help, they need to continue to find a trusted adult and continue telling.

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Perpetrators foster the silence with their power and the fear they personify. If you are the victim, how will telling authorities wash away the dirt, the pain and the horror? In many cases it takes years before you can talk about it, and even then your internal self-defence eradicates many of the details whilst others details, smells, noises and images remain crystal clear till the day you die. Substance abuse makes the images in your brain a bit foggy and dulls the pain but it comes back like a persevering debt collector. As a child I met a man who raped his daughters, urban legend says he disappeared and was fed to the sharks by the gromok, I was told this was traditional law, perhaps if we did the same to all rapists then there would be no problems.

Now the western educated counsellor in me tells a different story, we should help the victim express their feelings, to bring the perpetrator to justice and allow them (the victim) to stand up in court and let the defence slander their entire being and they get raped again but this time under Westminster legal systems. I think the person who asked the original question has never been sexually assaulted or they would know why there is silence. I would hope it is to allow the victim to heal and to allow the families to protect them from white man's legal processes and the stupidity of do-gooder white psychologists and counsellors, however I will never close my door to a brother or sister, I will always allow them to talk and I will comfort and I will wash away the blood and dirt and will always address their spirit in a positive way..... and I do it in silence, it's between me and my kin.

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I think that a lot of people do nothing because it is easier to believe that neither they nor their loved ones would ever be in that position, as to recognize that everyone is vulnerable would shatter their sense of security. This is also why people tend to blame the victims. If victims have "done something to cause" their abuse, these people feel they can remain safe by following a different formula (wearing "conservative" clothes, not going to certain places, etc.). It is such a shock when bad things happen to good people for no reason. The world becomes a more treacherous place.

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I am talking as a non-Indigenous woman. This is a question I think about often. Taking power resides in the victim, how it occurs resides in perceptions (the victim and their significant others; then, those s/he and they involve, i.e. law and justice, etc.). This is particularly difficult to answer when the victim is a child, who relies on the people around them for protection, and guidance. In general terms, sometimes the power lies in saying nothing. A victim is a victim of the initial sexual assault/s, secondary victimisation occurs when Western institutions measure the degree of assault (the type of assault; age of victim and age of perpetrator; gender of perpetrator/victim; familial or stranger relationship; historical factors relating to the victim/perpetrator; and so on...). If saying nothing causes secondary trauma, in the form of institutional involvement, saying nothing can be easier. Further, if coping strategies are unhelpful (alcohol and/or other substances and other forms of physical, social and emotional harm), saying nothing can cause further damage when the victim loses ground in the battle to overpower the after effects of the assault. We always need to ask the victim. There is an empirical evidence-base that informs why victims do nothing about sexual assault. Largely it is due to the negative outcomes they perceive will occur as a result of doing something. It is all about power, therefore. But who has the power? I talk about carrying (remembering) the impact in a powerful way, telling it you know it, and like your best friend and worst enemy you embrace the feeling when it arises, and tell it you are alright, as you tell it to go back there where it belongs.

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I think the statement is a little too general as I don't believe it is a matter of "people are doing nothing" about sexual abuse. I think the better statement would be "Is what people are doing to deal with sexual abuse effective", not only from the view point of the issue itself but ongoing support for the victims of sexual abuse. Certainly it impedes on a person's comfort zone there is no quicker way to kill a conversation than bring that topic up but I don't think people should be judged for having that reaction either it is a volatile, uncomfortable subject. I also think that as it has been prevalent throughout history and different cultural groups that there is definitely a case of "the problem is too big and were never going to stamp it out" as abhorrent as that may be I can identify with that feeling of being overwhelmed and would instead strive to minimise and manage where it can't be extinguished. It is also difficult to ascertain that abuse is occurring where family members or indeed the victim themselves don't speak up. Once that grenade has been tossed nobody escapes the fallout and sometimes people just don't want to deal with it. That doesn't make it ok but you can't fix something if you don't know there is a problem and in the case of kids they may fear abandonment by their parent or that they won't be believed hence why they or family don't speak up. Hope this helps what you are trying to achieve.

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I think one reason why people do little or nothing is because they simply do not know what to do. Or, what they think they know (i.e.: I've got to keep my kid away from the parish priest and unmarked vans.) is incomplete or wrong. Another problem is that people do not want to think about child sexual abuse for a variety of reasons: 1) Folks don't want to suspect that one of their relatives or friends could be an abuser; 2) It's such an awful crime that people don't want to think it could happen to their child or someone they love; 3) It involves "sex" which remains largely a taboo subject in American culture. People don't want to falsely accuse anyone of such a terrible crime. Therefore, unless they have CSI-style evidence, they will likely be reluctant to come forward based solely on a suspicion. Another issue is one of convenience. For example, a wife might not report an abusive husband because doing so might eliminate the family's only means of financial support. Accusing a babysitter would eliminate a childcare option. People naturally want to defend their families. Accusing a family member runs counter to that instinct. There are also cultural issues at play. In some cultures, the victim and his/her family are the ones shamed. In such cultures, the victim and his/her family are reluctant to step forward. Another cultural problem is the notion of the "snitch." To some folks, there's almost nothing worse than being a snitch and, therefore, they won't report child sexual abuse. Well, I probably could go on, but I'll end my list for now. By the way, my involvement with the issue started when I was a juror in a trial involving a step-grandfather sexually abusing his step-grandson. After that, I served on the board of a child advocacy centre.

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Pretty simple - the intimacy of the offence means that the people who are aware of the sexual abuse are just about always family related to the perpetrator and the victim and that is why they usually don't report it.

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If it remains with you and your kin, how are you going to make sure that the children of your kin don't get raped at the age of 10 or younger if you continue the silence? I have seen girls as young as 12 having babies because they are constantly abused by their kin and never told anyone until it was too late. Silence is not the answer. Children have a right to be protected by the adults around them. You cannot protect them through silence. Children need to know that sexual abuse is not normal, nor is it acceptable and academic research provides evidence that child sexual abuse was never a part of traditional cultural practice pre-colonisation. Therefore, this suggests that the practice of sexual abuse of our children was introduced to Aboriginal Australian society by the invaders. In that context that also suggests that the culture of silence was also brought into our society by the invaders, therefore the act of sexual abuse of our children and of women is everyone's problem not just our kin. The culture of silence needs to stop and perpetrators need to be named and shamed and brought to justice, kin or not. Teach our children how to speak up, teach our children what is right and wrong and teach our children to be loud. Perpetrators always prey on the silent, submissive types. Perpetrators do not like children who are loud and speak up. Teach our children not to be victims.

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I couldn't agree with you more! Are there many programs around the country that teach the children to speak up? If there's not, there certainly should be. I think a nationwide media blitz encouraging all children to speak up would be very useful. Aboriginal families are not the only ones with a culture of silence.

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For a program like that to be successful I think it would have to focus on making kids aware that although they can't always control their circumstances, they can always control their responses to them. Kids and young people who are being abused usually feel powerless against what is being imposed on them so they need to be convinced that they are powerful beings who alone control their own emotions and feelings. You need to get to that point first before they will have the confidence to change the things in their life that they want to change with support from others.

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I am wondering if there an assumption that sexual abuse has only impacted Aboriginal people - this issue is universal in all cultures. Having said that I think some of reasons why the issue is avoided are mentioned above, however I think it's a deep rooted problem that is based in the belief systems of cultures towards the value of women and children.

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I was raped at gunpoint in 1998. He threatened to have me killed if I told anyone of the rape. My case was backed by an organisation who has pursued legislation that simply provides that that time period does not run (is "stopped") during any time period that the offender threatens, intimidates, manipulates or deceives the victim. Sex offenders should not be able to use threats and violence to avoid liability for rape. Rape victims should have all the time they need under the law to bring civil charges against their attackers and to seek justice and compensation. And just as importantly, this law will help deter perpetrators from harassing their victims to keep them from bringing a civil suit. This ruined me. The world hated me. I have lived my life in fear even after his death because his family doesn't want me to speak out.

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Unfortunately, money and power often allow people to get away with such crimes. No matter what a person's contributions to the world, they should still be held responsible for their crimes and the harm they do others. I hope that you are in touch with a good counsellor, a survivors group and have a circle of friends to support you.

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Continue to stand up and speak out even if your voice shakes. Remain Blessed!

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I have been on both sides of Justice - police constable and native court worker. Apathy and distrust in respect to dealing with Crown institutions is well earned in Canada. I can remember one instance when a sexual abuse victim was testifying. To escape she jumped off the second story balcony of her apartment complex carrying her child. One ankle was shattered the other broken. She got to a certain point in her testimony and ran out of the courtroom. It was one for the few times that I got to help a victim of crime in my work as a court worker. I stood beside her just outside the witness box. The two lawyers tried to have me removed. The Judge said that the accused have counsel, and access to all of the services that victims of crime do not so he ordered me to stay. The two lawyers representing the accused tried to intimidate her and made her relive the humaneness of the crime against her. They tried to get her to make a mistake that they could use to make her look like she was wrong. In effect she was traumatized all over again. The two lawyers kept bumping into me and losing their train of thought and you could feel energy in the room change. She made it through her testimony and the two were found guilty. A few days later the Judge called me and thanked me for my intervention. He said it was the first time he had ever seen the balance of justice change so quickly. In the history of Canada and BC Justice for FN has been non-existent. We live in a foreign system that has been used to criminalize, dehumanize, make us dependent, and in poverty. Unlike many Eurocentric cultures where women were chattel our women once held the seat of power through her blood line. It has only since residential school that sexual abuse has become so prevalent. We learned how abuse can be used to control people only too well and many outsiders come to help under the guise of friendship fan the flames so that our dysfunctions continue to burn us. The worst ones are the ones that 'whisper' to the business community or government the lies that make them look like they are our great white saviours and friend of the noble Indian. Worse still is the chief who looks the other way when the abuse continues unabated. Do we believe that we have a cornerstone on abuse? No. We really learned that in the government schools run by the churches.

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At each stage show defensive psychological reasons, when most of the people towards the subject of sexual abuse, through my work in this regard people feel angry but customs and traditions and lack of confidence, including applicable laws and fear of scandal that prevents them from doing any action

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I believe its taboo too many people and very uncomfortable to accept. The media loves the initial impact but then the victims are left to continue to suffer in the shadows. The cycle of abuse is also misunderstood and not offered as an educational topic in public health or any other forum.

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They are afraid that justice won't be done, the child won't be protected, or that the perpetrator or someone else may harm the victim or reporter for saying anything. Also many people "suspect" someone but fear making accusations. Also, if people are living with relatives or relatives or receiving money from then due to hardship, they may fear they will end up homeless if they don't report it. Where I worked only 5% of child sexual assault disclosures by a victim went to trial and those were almost always older teen Romeo and Juliet cases brought forth by an angry parent. The rest of the children were sent back to their situation, including parents or guardians they claimed

assaulted with no follow up. Authorities told several parents who brought their child in multiple times, that they would lose custody if they kept bringing them in to report cases that could not be confirmed. As an advocate I always strongly encouraged reporting. Now knowing how some of those cases turned out, I'm not sure I did the correct thing.

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I have to agree with everyone's input here. It is such a dark subject and sadly society is very desensitized. I find this not only regarding sexual abuse but even missing persons. The attitude "it won't happen to me" is an irrational buffer to deeply disturbing issues it seems. Also, family dynamics play a part in protecting the perpetrator. In my own family, I am very outspoken about my experiences but my family doesn't acknowledge my efforts to raise awareness. I've never asked them to choose sides but support would leave me feeling less isolated. I guess if they pretend they don't hear . . . they don't have to see. It is up to us to break down the numerous barriers. We can!

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The end of your message really resonated with me: "I guess if they pretend they don't hear . . . they don't have to see. It is up to us to break down the numerous barriers. We can!" You reminded me of something I've long believed. Part of the problem is the need to break down barriers to get people to hear. The issue of drunk driving faced a mildly similar problem. People did not perceive that drunk driving was a problem. They thought they could drink and drive without being impaired; impairment might happen to someone else but not them. Alcohol abuse was not viewed as a problem. For example, movies, with only a few exceptions, portrayed drunks as humorous, lovable figures (i.e.: "Arthur"). Then, Organisations came along. They made people aware of the problem. They got people talking about the problem. And they offered relatively easy solution. One Organisation has been enormously successful at reducing drunk driving deaths. For the issue of child sex abuse, we need an effort that is similar to what this organisation has done. We need to get people talking about the issue and get sex abuse out of the shadows. We need to make it acceptable conversation for polite company. We also need to give people hope by offering concrete solutions to the problem. We need people to be hopeful, feel that they can take action, and empowered to take action. Unfortunately, in the child welfare community, there is little consensus and limited research when it comes to prevention of child sex abuse. Until the child welfare community gets its act together, we can't expect the broader society to do so. However, the problem needs a more robust, strategic solution.

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When your concept of sexuality for thousands of years has been violated by Victorian colonization the norms and values regarding kinship and procreation are compromised and demonized by non-indigenous modalities, therefore any attempt to reset to Natural law is considered abnormal in relation to western realities of today

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I really believe the way to impact sexual violence, domestic violence and other kinds of violence is to impact cultural norms. People abuse because they can and people don't speak up against it because that is not safe or popular in our culture. Everything in our culture supports violence. There are so many variables that impact violence indirectly, too. When we can get people to see how telling that sexist joke at the party, or watching that porn film in your hotel room ultimately contributes to a culture that makes sexual violence more likely, than we are headed in the right direction. I believe we can do this, but let's face it; people put their personal comfort and convenience ahead of what's best for everyone. And what specific things have we as individuals really done to affect global warming? I am starting with personal connections and relationships. I make certain that every student I visit understands that they DESERVE respect, no matter what. They even deserve respect from themselves and NO ONE regardless of age, position or power including them, has a right to hurt or disrespect them. I think this small step is having a big impact in our community. I am seeing our youth stand up for themselves and others while respecting those who are hurting them. Keep on discussing. This is very helpful!

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My, my don't we have an axe to grind prior to the "Royal Proc. era which is not even close to where I come from in terms of historical content. I have never concluded that we accept the formality of the nonsense, so let's get a grip of our rhetoric and do something about it so that next generation has a better chance, okay.

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Clearly not enough is done to stop sexual abuse; I believe that too often people only concern themselves with issues/problems that directly affect them. Historically we have learned to allow ourselves to ignore signs of abuse or convince ourselves that the MONSTERS who commit these crimes are few and not close enough to us to affect our lives and therefore we leave it up to someone other than ourselves to take action. Like so many problems in our society and world, we must realize that what affects others may someday affect us and the ones we love. Recruit one person in the next week to commit to do something about this problem (report a suspicion, join a group that is trying to do something to stop abuse, encourage others to become more knowledgeable, etc.)

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I think most people do not realize the horror and consequences of sexual abuse. They think it will go away on its own leaving no scars on the victim. Many especially in Egypt where I live think that reporting will not amount to anything. I teach children anti sexual abuse drills, we teach the teachers, social workers how to spot the signs of abuse and what to do when a cDe is reported , then teach parents. You can never imagine the resistance we are facing, the ministry of education does not want to implement this ad part if the school curriculum although one on every 4 girls and one in every six boys are sexually abused before the age of 18. Schools do not want to pay a dime for the training. This makes us keep trying to come up with funds to go onto schools for free. On a nutshell, people do not have sexual abuse on their list of priorities. It is sad

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All valid points. What I find is that much of society focuses on the horror stories. They like the graphic details and then move on to the next sensational story. There are ways to recover from sexual abuse. I am discovering, however, that it is an underground movement directed completely at survivors who are seeking out healing.

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I think that this one is a big question. I have seen a lot of violence and abuse and I have seen the culture of silence. I do not understand the culture of silence, I do not understand why Aboriginal societies continue with the culture of silence and I do not understand why perpetrators are protected because of the culture of silence. When does it stop? I don't have answers, but I do have some thoughts about this topic. Maybe the victims of violence and abuse are afraid, maybe they are caught up in something that they feel they cannot get out of, maybe they have some insane obligation to the perpetrator? As I say I only have thoughts and not answers. It is not something that can be easily explained. If we lived in a perfect world perpetrators would be charged for their crimes, but for some reason the Aboriginal community seem to be afraid to lay charges. Maybe for Aboriginal people there is nowhere to run to because our people have no faith in the non-Aboriginal world that holds down some of our people through oppression and threatens to destroy what's left of us. Maybe it's too hard to deal with, emotionally, physically and spiritually? I have no answers just more questions...

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Afraid of authority figures.
Being abused themselves and are afraid.
There were no signs.

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I suggest familiarizing yourself with Prosecutors and Psychologist who sentence pedophiles, perpetrators & repeat offenders. Perpetrators know their victim. They know what they are doing. They set-up victims in such a manner as to have their victim take the responsibility especially repeat offenders. Worse typed of violation one can imagine as victims fall prey and feel it is their fault. #1 killer is the shame the victim feels and isolates.

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Very true! The problem needs national attention and legislation to try and deter this epidemic! Mandated reporting is really not the answer in itself. God bless our kids.

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Great topic, but I think many are missing the mark on the question asked....

PLEASE COMMENT AND ADD ANY SUGGESTIONS ON "REASONS WHY PEOPLE DO NOTHING ABOUT SEXUAL ABUSE"

- 1/. They are guilty
- 2/. They have skeletons in their closet.
- 3/. It impedes on their comfort zone.
- 4/. They don't understand what is trying to be achieved.
- 5/. They lack empathy, they just don't care... if it isn't happening to them they don't want to know.
- 6/. The problem is too big to solve so just give up. Those who believe it will always be a part of life, so there's no point in trying to end it.

1. They are guilty. If the person is guilty of sexual abuse that person is definitely going to keep mum on sexual abuse.
2. We all have skeletons in our closet. To keep those skeletons in the closet is to feign ignorance, and ignorance in this form is still a sin if we want to go so far as to do what is morally correct.
3. We all would love to just coast along through life with no issues by others being brought into our tenuous little worlds. Often that is it...we are often protecting our own little worlds so much so that we cannot allow the circumstances of another to enter. This is the apathy.
4. People are generally good, to assume otherwise is wrong. People do have empathy; the problem is that most of us have our own lives going on.
5. Thinking small is often better than thinking big - even a 'one child at a time approach' is better than no approach at all.

Sexual abuse is not just an aboriginal issue, it is everyone's issue. Something got very twisted when European societies colonized the world. It became a method to control people - rape is still used today as a method of torture, genocide and control by dictatorial governments. Now perhaps we could look at Canada as being a dictatorial government since the residential school system was used to not only control the First Peoples of Canada, but to wipe out future generations. This happened pretty much everywhere in the world that Britain or Europeans colonized. Far too many solutions are reactive than proactive. Many comments (and this is everywhere) are simply a reaction to this age old dark side of humanity. We react to what happened in the past. Such reaction is often accompanied by a set of triggers of experienced traumatic events. (Perhaps a relevant question to ask associated with this is to simply ask the question - Do you know someone who was sexually abused and what did you do to support that person? I think the answers may shock everyone!). The proactive solution is education and healthy communities- we need to educate our children at an early age on concepts of appropriate touching, the sacred nature of the body, what to do if..., and building self-protective capacity in our children. In our communities we can host workshops on recognition and prevention of abuse (such programs should be more than a couple of advocates that sit at their desk designing prescribed brochures for hand-outs. These people need to be actively getting into schools, daycares, preschools to teach about self-protection), provide safe places for children to run to such as Block Parents,

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In fact there are many of us who have and are doing something about abuse. Having survived some of the worst that can be done to another human being, I have worked through the darkness and have found solutions. Implementing the solutions are being completed through my family business. I purposely chose to act on a family level because that is where the most effective damage has been done. Despite being a believer in the quote, "A leader takes people where they want to go. A great leader takes people where they don't necessarily want to go, but ought to be," it is too difficult to make effective change at such a large community scale. While it is not impossible, with the funding and programs available, the politics is too severe and it is not in the interest of governments to change the status quo. I have decided to act at the family level because my family is tired of the dysfunctions and politicization of what should be an inherent right to food, shelter, clothing, sustenance, and wealth. It is far easier to adapt my model so that the social dysfunctions are planned for. We develop the structure, policy, and programming within the enterprise and capacity building so that they become key success factors. My philosophy is somewhat in "The most significant opportunities for converting social problems into business opportunities may, therefore, not lie in new technologies, new products, and new services. They may lie in solving the social problem, that is, in social innovation that then directly and indirectly benefits and strengthens the company or industry. **So it is how to innovate to deal with the issues and turn to our own enterprise to deal with it at the family level.**

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I actually see that people do a lot of things about the issues involving child sexual abuse, and also am not blind that enough is not being done. Why? Money. Yes, to stand up for the rights of children and any form of abuse takes money and community support, money to fund programs to assist those who have been traumatized, money to educate that certain acts truly are abusive, money to treat those who offend. Next, an issue is what one other person indicated may be a psychological block of sorts. People who are not assisting survivors or those who may not know of anyone who has been abused are afraid to think too much about this and like to think that it really can never occur. It is a psychological barrier that I, as an attorney, must break through when I pick a jury in a sex abuse case. I have to enter the courtroom with the absolute knowledge that people do not like to think, hear or imagine the atrocities. Finally, I believe that certain families do not want to bring it out in the open because it may embarrass them or somehow further hurt the survivor. This, of course, is a huge mistake, in that the survivor may believe it is something that they themselves should feel shame instead of holding the offender accountable.

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I have encountered this problem of 'speaking up' not personally but whilst I was a worker. One is shame, not the shame of being a victim but the shame it brings to a family. The second is fear; a young person I knew very well who spoke up in court was later beaten quite badly for speaking up and bringing shame to the family. Shame plays a big part in the problem, shame for the victim, often accused of leading someone on, shame for the mother or whoever is the carer for not knowing what was happening or if they did the shame that they had not protected the one in they care for, and of course fear, how can the person be protected, even if the perpetrator is imprisoned there are others who, will in the case I know of, beat the person who spoke out for bringing shame to the family.

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I think the statement is a little too general as I don't believe it is a matter of "people are doing nothing" about sexual abuse. **I think the better statement would be "Is what people are doing to deal with sexual abuse effectively"**, not only from the view point of the issue itself but ongoing support for the victims of sexual abuse. Certainly it impedes on a person's comfort zone there is no quicker way to kill a conversation than bring that topic up but I don't think

people should be judged for having that reaction either it is a volatile, uncomfortable subject. I also think that as it has been prevalent throughout history and different cultural groups that there is definitely a case of "the problem is too big and were never going to stamp it out" as abhorrent as that may be I can identify with that feeling of being overwhelmed and would instead strive to minimise and manage where it can't be extinguished. It is also difficult to ascertain that abuse is occurring where family members or indeed the victim themselves don't speak up. Once that grenade has been tossed nobody escapes the fallout and sometimes people just don't want to deal with it. That doesn't make it ok but you can't fix something if you don't know there is a problem and in the case of kids they may fear abandonment by their parent or that they won't be believed hence why they or family don't speak up.

My "ministry" / second job is to coach high school kids. I'm more aware than I wish I were about abuse within the schools. I know very little of the statistics generally. In the schools sexual abuse charges are very protected by the unions. This is both good and bad. It's good because some of these allegations are "invented" as ways for kids to retaliate against teachers, coaches and administrators. The kids who do this know how to "work the system." It's bad because abusers -- real sexual abusers -- are "cloaked" and they can move away and continue their sinful ways somewhere else. I personally know a coach whose relative filed false charges against him. (She confessed and was charged with false reporting.) This excellent coach's career has been yanked out from under him. Even though the girl admitted she lied, his official record is stained. He will never coach professionally again. In this man's case "people" and "the system" did too much.

A good point! The very idea of politicizing abuse and sexual abuse is a scary one. Healing activities need to have community involvement in order to work when planning for taking action and providing support.

Although more communities are taking action and providing support for victims of sexual abuse within their own communities these days, many of our "Leaders" that chose not to get involved, for personal or political reasons.

Often sexual abuse offenders are part of one of the families in political power within a community. The "leaders" within that family create alliances to gain greater power & eventually it becomes a machine within the community that runs over & crushes anyone that dares even hint about the offenses of the guilty party. You still find discussions going on in the community, but they're hushed comments made in fear of being heard by the "powers that be."

It can seem horrific to bring it into the light. I have worked with both juvenile/adult sexual offenders and with victims of trauma/abuse. I think a lot of people are afraid of even talking about something this sad. It is a very emotional topic. I think there need to be more voices saying we accept that this happens, and we want to help prevent it from happening again. The more judgmental we, as a society are, the more it stays hidden, unfortunately. Sexual abuse happens because in many cases it happened to the offenders, themselves when they were young, and they never got treatment. They need to accept responsibility for their actions and learn how to get their needs met in healthier ways. However, judging them interferes with treatment and only perpetuates the problem.

People do nothing because sexual abuse is a criminal and violent behaviour at victims and advocates of sexual abused persons are at risk of life threatening tactics of those who commit these crimes against children, elders and adults. The historical methods of dealing with sexual abuse in our society have been to not identify the victim and perpetrators alike which becomes a statistical reminder of issues to come.

Having been a supervisor of Child Abuse Investigations and a Forensic Interviewer in cases of sexually abused children I have found that there is often little difference in attitude and response. Quite often there is much pressure from family members to not disclose the perpetrator due to the guilty feeling for failing to protect the victim(s). Whether intentional or not this does have an effect on how the victim deals with the trauma. This is shown when a child is so reluctant to disclose the truth about their abuse. The child often suffers from the trauma from abuse and the lack of support from those who should be the first to step up and protect them.

Sexual abuse is seen, in this society, as an issue originating from the individual, whereas it is systemic. Solutions can therefore only be systemically oriented. Society, for example, does not value children so when persons violate them; the system initiates invisibility, an overlooking of these violations. Sexual abusers are seen as anomalies. Are they really?

As a survivor of over ten years of sexual abuse as a child and three separate sexual assaults as an adult, I think there are several reasons people don't "get involved". First off, people do not want to fathom that the people in their

circles of life could possibly be perpetrators or BE perpetrated upon. It's easier to just think, "Those kinds of things don't happen to people like us". Secondly, most people (in American Society) are squeamish about sex in general. They avoid the topic altogether and instead choose to "stick their head in the sand about the issues we see and hear about and pretend it doesn't happen to people like us". In my case, I was so brainwashed to fear the "stranger dangers" in the big, bad, outside world that I never thought twice about the danger in my own home. Because of this misguided way of thinking, there were 6 other victims (younger than myself) that were also abused over a long period of time. We are all on various paths in life now because of the abuse we endured, some thriving and some STILL living a life and fear and mistrust. I have chosen to share my story publicly to promote awareness and to educate and highlight the importance of not only the idea that children need to know safe body boundaries (EARLY) but also how service providers can have a more trauma informed response to sexual abuse and assault. In this day and age of "Rape Culture", there is a lot of victim blaming and judgment rather than accountability toward the perpetrators. Male entitlement, power, control and how boys are taught to view women play a huge role in the incidences we are hearing on (almost) a daily basis, around the country and the world. Historical and Generational Trauma also play a part in how and why people choose to respond to these situations...this mentality of "if it's always been done this way, we should continue to follow suit." no longer applies. Now is the time to change the way things are talked about, handled and understood so that generations to come will not have to experience the horrific things that are happening to far too many people in this world every day. We DO NOT need to teach women/men how NOT to be raped/abused, to be victims...we need to teach people NOT TO RAPE.

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Reasons:

1. FEAR
- 2, family loyalty
3. Shame
4. Death threats/ verbal threats to say quiet or else
5. Denial
6. Don` t remember
7. Self-blame
8. Deserved it
9. Misconstrued ideas and beliefs
10. Don` t know that is going on or what CSA is.

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I found that people got antsy when the topic is brought up. I understand that there is a time and place for everything. The problem was finding when to bring up the subject. It is always being shuffled to the back burner, because no one wants to talk about it. The survivors do. We were told that we needed to fix the symptoms first then we will look at the underlying issue - in other words just drain the boil and bandage it. The Leaders did not want to touch this hot topic.

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I found advocates and civilian forensic interviewers not directly are barely tolerated and otherwise ignored by law enforcement, prosecutors, and CPS. Even if the case does go to court, the advocates are usually exempt from testifying. There is a mandatory system in place but it has no real power. I've found absolutely nobody at any level of state government willing to seriously investigate complaints within the system. I used to write suggested replies for criticisms directed to the governor's office regarding social services. There is no investigation, the supervisor says everything was done correctly and that is the end of it. The federal, local, and state government contracts and funds organizations and businesses to provide child advocacy and forensic interview services. If those contractors stand up to the system their referrals and funding disappears. The system has no power in my experience.

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These reasons above make me mad. As a victim myself and an advocate. I believe in forensic testing dna and getting evidence of csa. Most times the children do not come out straight away or are not listened to. The child becomes an adult then discloses. Then nothing is done. I was part of an organisation who helped brought down the statute of limitations, my name is in the report, the inquiry and the cemetery act reviews yet nothing has been changed towards csa. As I have been outspoken on this matters then no one wants to employ me. Especially fsa. My life experiences and myself as a survivor would be very great at working with csa cases. The legislation stinks. The suppression orders stink as this protects the criminals not the victims. If their name was out in the open then maybe more victims might come forward. Also if a victim comes forward and has a disability then their disclosure doesn't stand up in court.

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In Pakistan it's a cultural and religious reason. In our society sexual abuse is not discussed openly although now in our schools and villages we have started giving awareness sessions to the children so that they are able to protect themselves.

Child development has priority over whatever we say collectively and it doesn't matter whether you are pro or con on the issue. (Sexual Abuse, antifem or the workings of the anatomy) **They are afraid of being associated with something so painful.**

There is no consistent empathy with the victim. Society, through media and court systems continues to throw the girls and women under the bus when it comes to justice at any level. First the female of the races is intentionally used to attract sexual assault, then the court system usually male agents, makes huge waves to convict her for the same reason. My granddaughters are moving out into a society that has set them up as sexual objects. Not only are they presented as sexual objects but if they are the least bit attractive they are automatically at risk and/or fault. Add to that the fact that as her grandmother guardian, it has been extremely difficult to buy clothes that are appropriate to a 6,7,8 year old. What with belly shirts, hip waist-ed pants, spaghetti strap tops she has had to take on habits to protect her privacy that should not have been a burden until she was at least a teenager. On top of that, because of the toxins in the meat products little girls are having to contend with bras and early menses. They are not mature enough to talk freely about all of this. How are they to speak of sexual activity?

I believe that most people do not to admit it is happening in their families. In many cases is a mentality that if we don't act upon it then it is not happening. As for those in the community it is the fear of becoming involved and being named as the reporting party.

Why do people attempt to ignore this subject? I can think of two reasons. First has to do with Victorian sexual attitudes. In other words, if it has to do with sex (consensual or otherwise) keep it in the bedroom. The second is facing the fact that the perpetrators never act alone, but always with the aid of others. How many victims are told not to lie when they come forward with their story? Did the directors of the IRS ever do a complete background check on staff? The truth is society is an accomplice in the very act due to our refusal to believe in the best of the victim and our faith in the goodness of the perpetrator. Why don't we want to face this? **Because we are guilty too.**

As someone who was violently and viciously sexually assault as a 16 year old, I can say that I would not let anyone talk to me about it because I carried the shame and guilt for years. I now realize that that was not a sexual act but one of violence. I was the victim and had no reason to feel guilty. Victims need to own their own healing. Professionals, the rapists and social need to know that they cannot "heal" anyone. All they can do is help people along their own path to healing. It is a rough and painful road but the journey is worth it.

The prep is often a father or a husband who is the main support. The parent is loved and telling would be imprisoning a loved parent. The victim won't testify because of fear or guilt and it is a very hard topic to discuss with others. The experience often destroys self-esteem and can come with physical threats for the victim.

Hi, I would agree with you to a point. I see cases going forward, especially those that have forensic interview or physical evidence available but I also see cases that do not go forward. Sexual abuse of children has been and is a huge cultural secret and source of shame for the victims and all associated with it. And that is where the problem needs to be directed--**our culture needs to go through a transformation of talking about the abuse, raise awareness of the costs.** I got involved through my work with and have trained some of our volunteers in how to prevent child sexual abuse and to raise their awareness about it. One way to prevent it, which is often ignored even in the most professional of people, is to **limit one adult/one child contact.** This goes for churches, schools, sports, temples, mosques, tutors of all sorts, caregivers and service providers that have not been closely vetted, neighbours and family. This prevention is often ignored by the best of parents/caregivers. But it goes without saying that if abusive adults are not able to get contact, with potential victims then much of the abuse will stop because there is not chance for it to occur. And if that abusive person is in our family, then we need to address that as well. Even if relationships are not totally severed, then we need to make sure our children have no contact with that person even if it means not going to family gatherings, reunions and holidays.

While I do not mean to demean anyone's input here, you are all just scratching the surface and simplifying a very complex issue. Victims often do not come forward because they are ashamed, self-blaming, and afraid of having their lives (and perhaps even their sex lives) put under the microscope. Family members often do not come forward

because they believe they can handle the situation within the family, without the public exposure and everything that brings. Additionally, consider if the perpetrator is a husband/wife/paramour. You have trusted your life and the lives of your children with this person. What does that say about your judgement and your worth as a human being (to you)? The devastating effect of believing that someone has injured your child and that you introduced this person in to their lives, the impact on your self-esteem when you consider your attractiveness as a sexual partner and the fact that someone preferred your child to you, and all of the fallout from such a disclosure is a lot for someone to consider. If the perpetrator is not someone related to the family, people are less likely to fear coming forward, but then one still has to be prepared for any legal ramifications. Having said all of that, and perhaps preaching to the choir, **every state has a child abuse hotline and reports may be made anonymously to that hotline.**

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As difficult as it may be to accept, there are many genuine, compelling reasons that it can be challenging for adults – even otherwise loving and caring adults – to take protective action, or even to notice, when children are being sexually used or abused, or at risk of being harmed in that way. **These reasons or causes include Fears of various consequences of acknowledging betrayal by a trusted and respected person, of being wrong, of being right.**

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My favourite province, glad to see your still kicking up a storm and be good 4 now.

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"suffer not the little children" it is the responsibility of every adult to protect the little world of children called childhood; even those who were deprived of one from systemic violence via the genocide committed by colonization and the residential school syndrome and of course historical trauma transmission. The fight for self-determination and government is a righteous one and I am proud of being an ally in this libatory movement of Indigenous people in Canada and around the world. I am here for liberation not assimilation. At the end of the day we must activate and charge the roles of the uncles, aunts, grandparents, and so forth, as well as professionals and community members to do what they can, where they are, with what they have, to protect children from being sexually abused!! **When caught, courts must punish hard because they will not stop until caught and always deny guilt.** We know who the perpetrators are, this is not cultural or acceptable in anyone's society and we must take a stand, because children cannot. There is no honour in hurting a child or protecting the guilty parties. Warriors and allies in the liberation movement must also take the lead in starting healing programs for those who were violated against when they were children at residential concentration camps, do not do what was done to you, seek help!! **Paedophilias pray like wolves (my apologies to real wolves) around a flock, waiting for little lambs to stray, and then they pounce.** I live on the highway of tears, and have lost friends from these predators. Bad people prevail when good ones do nothing. Violence against children and women must end!!

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Great discussion. I think that so much more could be done about sexual abuse but for the added layer of shame that follows the victim rather than the perpetrator. This allowed space for those who were hurt to share and teach. But since there is a perception of shame in rape/abuse/molestation there are no lessons shared, no lessons learned. Somehow we have to find a way to support people who were victims of rape & sexual abuse who are often silenced and treated as damaged goods. We have to allow victims to openly share and teach lessons about the deception and misinformation surrounding sexual violence.

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The people who have most often told me to stop talking about my own incest issues were themselves incest survivors who wanted to stay in denial of their own issues. They don't want to face and deal with their own issues. If I talk about mine, theirs then tries to surface and they don't want that. I tried living in denial myself for about 10 years hoping that if I ignored the pain it would go away. It didn't. The pain just grew bigger until I could no longer pretend that I wasn't still being affected by my issues. You can't leave the issues behind until you face them and feel the pain. Something else it took me time to realize is that incest is rape too. Rape is any circumstance where the sexual act happens without your permission. I was a child who couldn't give my permission. I never wanted to be raped by my uncle or by my dad but I was. I started healing in 1989 and still today have issues occasionally come up to feel and deal with. Healing is possible but I am not sure we are ever 100% healed. I am moving into a new stage of thriver and I love my life because I learned to love myself. **People in denial usually hate themselves and are disconnected from their inner being.**

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It seems to me that most of you are just skimming the surface of the issues. An assault by a stranger is difficult in terms of the shame the victim feels, the potential for self-blame, and the embarrassment of having your life and possibly your sexual habits, put under the microscope. For those children who are the victims of abuse by a family member, it has much the same impact, coupled with identity issues (if the perpetrator is genetically related, will I become like that too?), it is also a person whom they have likely loved and trusted, so what does that say about

trust, and it likely has an emotional impact on the entire family, possible financial hardship when the perpetrator is arrested, and the possibility that the victim will be removed from their family of origin. **While the up side of reporting is that the abuse may stop and justice may be served, there are a lot of potential negative consequences to the victim and/or the family if a report is made.**

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The reason not much is done about child/adult sexual abuse is because **there is not a big or strong enough lobby group.** I do not think that you have a degree in "lobbying" just an undying, incessant, unyielding desire to stop such a travesty. We need that angry force of those connected to summon the courage to sit outside the Congress' doors with their petitions. Include child abuse and I think it could be a winner--it has been far, far, far too long that people have turned their heads on this issue. I never hear of Congress getting hit with new child abuse prevention legislation. And as long as no one makes congress look at this insanely unbelievable issue, with all of its details, they will do nothing--just like they always do. **It has to have media attention and be ORGANIZED.**

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It is SO important to first love yourself. You cannot love anyone else or really have any sense of a good life without that. But so often the one raped feels so ashamed, dirty, guilty by no fault of their own, that they cannot shake the terror and fear. It is a double edged sword, realize it and **have therapy**, thereby going through hell, or living in denial which incurs the same life of hell. At least with therapy there is a, at first unseen, light at the end of the tunnel. I believe that, with the help of the Most Powerful Force in the Universe, one can come to accept and move on.

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Stigma & embarrassment to the family, the perpetrator is a respected member of the community & people don't believe it or don't want to rock the boat, it's children & many people do not respect or believe children & they are told NOT to tell so no, or late, disclosure, the process can be long and tedious, most DCFS workers have too many cases and work long hours so some suspensions fall through the cracks. Just to name a few.

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Parents have a difficulty doing anything because most sexually abused people come from a parent who has had sexual abuse in their life, and don't want to talk about it. The victim won't testify due to fear and shame and the police can't pursue it. They are threatened and made to fear and feel worthless and at fault. Women as parents often don't believe children because that would mean giving up their mate and his support. It is a very difficult subject to talk about and is hard to prove unless it is a small child or a victim who also has physical damage. Parents often think of children as property and children are conflicted on breaking up a family, particularly if it a parent they love. Often young women have said they feel some pleasure so they feel guilty as they don't it's a biological response, not a pleasurable experience.

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Every opinion above is legitimate because it is every individual's truth from their perception and experience. I, too, am an advocate and board member in Canada. Our government is taking huge steps this fall to create a bill for Victim's Rights. Some comments explain the complexities surrounding this issue as it involves awareness and the desire to change our present consciousness level around admitting the truth of abuse and feeling the guilt of ignoring that presence. Emotionally it is difficult to overcome when you take into account all of the responsibilities a person must face, emotionally, physically, and financially. Each person does the best they can with the knowledge they have. As Canadians, we struggle to obtain sustainable funding but hope to change that over the next few years. Why is it such a battle to protect children's rights? A lot of history and psychological patterns are imbedded into our society and we rely on the individual to find the courage to step up and speak out, facing a lot of rejection, denial, shame, unworthiness, and other deeply entrenched emotions depending on the support/lack thereof, and length of time suffering. It is complex, without simple solutions, but I am grateful to know there are so many out there working to change the misnomers, attitudes, and the laws. **We do truly need the support of community** and may the support grow as our laws and rights of victims gain momentum.

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I was sexually abused for 14 years from age 3 to 17 and everyone looked the other way because they did not want to get involved. Child Sexual Abuse is messy and every piece of the puzzle is broken. Our system is broken. Many lack courage to stand and fight for what is right. It is going to take radical reform to protect our children and I don't see many fighting for that reform.

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Sexual abuse carries so much shame, not only for the victim but for other family members. **There are people out there that don't think it's that big a deal and why don't we just shut up.** I have a granddaughter that pretended I was invisible for years because she was so embarrassed and ashamed of the work I was. To some people, coming forward with the truth would cause more problems than keeping it inside. It takes courage to speak out and yes, as these previous comments indicate the subject is so taboo that even a witness to such a crime would be

uncomfortable in telling others. Only by continuing to speak out about what happened to us will bring relief to some degree. We must especially be watchful of our children. Children of an untreated incest victim stand a five times greater chance of being molested themselves. I know as my 2 older daughters were sexually abused by my ex-husband and my youngest daughter was raped at gunpoint while she worked at a fast food place. I confronted my ex-husband as he lay dying (with only 6 weeks left to live) about what he had done to my girls. He admitted it but said it was their fault (they were 4 and 5 years old). If someone getting ready to meet St. Peter cannot see the terrible harm in what he has done then our job is bigger than we thought. Together we are strong. We must persevere.

You are so right. All organizations that are fighting child abuse, or any abuse for that matter, must rally, get angry and organize. Solicit donations for the organizations, if not \$, then time, food, mentors, anyone who deeply cares about this issue. **REFORM** is the only way to even begin to get a handle on this seemingly impossible answer to such a God-awful situation. Oh yes, and pray--pray, pray, pray for intercession by the Most Powerful Force in the Universe. He is within us all--pull Him up.

What can I do to be more involved in making changes?

Denial.....plain and simple! There are just far too many people who would rather stick their heads in the sand and pretend it isn't happening because they are too cowardly to hold the perpetrators accountable!

A few days ago a child was in court and explained that she did not know that she was being sexually abused. It wasn't until her friend mentioned similar happenings to her by the same perpetrator, then she realized that she was being sexually abused. **Unfortunately, perpetrators have become even more skilled at manipulating their younger victims that the victims are clueless.**

Parents are not aware of the signs and those who are aware are trying to make ends meet in providing for their families. Are these excuses? No, but it is reality.

Prevention and awareness is the key for everyone, from parents to the next door neighbour who sees and knows everything that goes on in the neighbourhood.

Thank you for the "awareness" information. It's amazing how many people do not know how common sexual abuse is. I hope the ignorance will end and there will be commercials, ribbons, more education, more mandatory discussions, and more awareness. This conversation is fuel for me to keep up my prevention mission. Thank you!

Far too often the abuser is in a position of leadership and they are believed instead of the child. When children are threatened, it is nearly impossible for them to come forward and ask for help **when the abuser is in a position of power:** Teacher, Minister, Parent, etc.

That list of reasons why people do nothing about sexual abuse of children lacked, to my way of thinking, empathy for those who might find this a difficult cause to lend their support to.

Each category was accusatory - and that is no way to support those who might otherwise come on board. Yes, and absolutely, it is necessary to address the issue and work hard at putting right the wrongs - but no wrong was ever put right by wronging another. If I were to add a reason to your list it would be 'Fear'. **And we do need to respect that fear which surrounds the subject and work so as to help others feel safe to talk.** Yes?!

Many of the perpetrators of the act see it as normal. **They simply see their victims as objects of sexual gratification who should not complain.** They attach little or no value to their victims. It's orientation problem.

Victims/families are economically dependent on the perpetrators, that is why disclosure is difficult. **Any disclosure would mean disruption in support.** Secondly is how the people would perceive poorly the victims/family.

Abuse of any kind is troubling to me but when children are involved it really stirs up feelings within. I believe there are many reasons that people don't act when they know sexual abuse (or any form of abuse) is taking place. I find that people just don't want to get involved for **fear of repercussions or they don't want to be so "involved"** because it's more than just a phone call. Honestly, I can imagine being caught up in the situation- having to answer numerous questions, perhaps even having to testify with the victim and culprit being my neighbours. Now I'm "waist-deep" and

my family has been impacted. So many people are in denial too especially if it's happening within their home. Also many people have been raised with the old adage "**what goes on in this house-stays in this house**" which is a sick form of "**cultural wisdom**" among certain populations. I think it's easy on one aspect to have a strong conviction and say "I would report this" because it's just a thought. On the other hand when it's a reality people become afraid and look for someone else to do it. So true about the lack of education within the communities, homes, schools. It's also heartbreaking when the system fails and orders of protection aren't recognized and social workers don't follow through on home visits with the children.

Just that, they don't act. It's not always a matter of lack of education, it's collective of the aforementioned - especially the matter of **comfort zones**. Additionally, people may be overthinking "what can I do?" They need to know the wise words regarding changing the world **one person at a time**.

What if the perpetrator is an 8 year old girl? What if the 8 year old girl had her own perpetrator? What if getting help was impossible? What if the taboo of talking about this is too taboo? Can we share the focus on perpetrators of all ages? I'm grateful for this conversation! Thank you, thank you, and thank you!!!!

A quick look a few myths and facts might be helpful for those who cannot fathom why people do nothing about sexual abuse. Myth: Women who are sexually assaulted "ask for it" by the way they dress or act and rape only happens to young women. Fact: Many women are led to believe that if they are not part of a certain category of women then they are 'safe' from being raped. Women and girls of all ages, classes, culture, ability, sexuality, race and faith, are, unfortunately raped. Attractiveness has little significance because sexual violence is not about sex, IT IS ABOUT POWER AND CONTROL. Myth: Everyone knows when a woman says no, she often means yes. Fact: Rape is a terrifying, violent and often life changing experience. Any person has the right to change their mind about having sex at any point of sexual contact. If someone does not stop when the other person says no, this is sexual assault. So no means no. Myth: The woman was drunk/took/drugs/had a bad reputation/wore tight clothes... Fact: If a person is unconscious or their judgment is impaired by alcohol or drugs, legally they are unable to give consent. Having non-consensual sex with a person who is intoxicated is sexual assault.

Let's take a look too at people of all ages and false reports- the majority of both female and male victims, regardless of age, knew the person who raped them. According to the American Prosecutors Research Institute, only 2.8% of all sexual assault accusations reported to law enforcement turn out to be false. This is the same rate as other types of violent crimes. (Source - Lonsway, L., Archambault, J., & Lisak, D. (2009)). False reports: Moving beyond the issue to successfully investigate and prosecute non-stranger sexual assault. American Prosecutors Research Institute, 3(1). Hope this is helpful to the ongoing conversation.

To be very clear, I witnessed an assault, called 911, and was dragged into to a situation. The police, their questioning and asking me to identify the perpetrator placed me into, what I thought to be, **a dangerous position** as they were all my neighbours. I didn't know them prior to witnessing this event. The victim came to my home after the police left. She began to tell me details of violence that had occurred throughout her life. As a victim advocate I referred her on to experts in different agencies. As a community advocate I felt responsible to not turn my back. There continued to be evidence of ongoing harassment by neighbours who were responsible for the assault I witnessed. She broke many barriers and boundaries but continued to seek me out as new violent attempts took place. In spite of my best efforts it seemed a need for help/advocacy continued. It is very different when you are a community advocate, in that people seek you out when they are in trouble. Traditional agencies place strict boundaries and that is understandable. People began to seek my assistance years before I entered a traditional agency. They would give me a call or show up at my home. I would listen, affirm, and refer to experts. They came because someone told them I could help, not because I had advertised services. I just want to be very clear about that. I didn't want to help other than making a report. ! Got dragged into this situation that was almost impossible to get beyond. The neighbour who was a victim, hung herself in her garage, and the perp still lives in the same home, all of which are a few feet from my home. I just want to make it clear that I now understand why people are hesitant to do more than hear a disclosure of domestic or sexual abuse. It can take the life right out of you!

This becomes extremely difficult when you become **personally involved**. The topic is painful enough without personal involvement and once you are involved on any type of personal level the topic is excruciatingly painful. To be most objective and effective it would probably be better to have not been personally impacted by sexual abuse. Yet, most people that I know that care most about this stopping sexual abuse have been personally impacted and that is why they seem to care the most.

I am a survivor myself which makes it triggering at times and some of my family member have been through legal proceedings. These proceedings were not successful because it was the child's word against the perpetrator with no other proof so the court would not even take the case because of lack of physical evidence. But I believed (and still believe) the child and initiated and supported them through the legal process and took them to therapy. My own parents did not believe or support me until many years later and it took me many years of therapy to be able to stand up to my parents and voice the evidence that they needed to finally break down and admit I was right. I was not capable to doing that as a child. It took me decades to put words to the horrible memories in my mind. **Denial is thick when sexual abuse is involved.** Although, I think I am preaching to the choir.

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It calls for taking some kind of action. It is far too easy to talk about what one would do if confronted with this situation or to talk about what someone else should do. If it is someone that you know who has been abused chances are great that taking a stand will cause **a lot of change to occur within the family or the people you know.** Chances are great that you will be pulled into the situation and called upon for more than the initial reporting. That is tough! I witnessed a neighbour being abused and called 911. For the next ten years I was called upon to testify in court as well as advocate on a personal basis for an individual who was continually stalked and harassed. This person sought help from experts of every referral I recommended and still came back to me on the other side of the visit(s). She ended up taking her own life a few years ago. She experienced a lifetime of abuse and had some mental problems. I gave all that I had but it wasn't enough. I would do it again if I had to help but it was both challenging and traumatic. It is far easier to talk about what others should do than to be in the position of needing to make the call.

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Pedophiles steal a child's potential, who they might have been. Rape and other abuses change the chemical balance of the child. Their developmental stages are skewed forever. It is especially confusing for the child when the perpetrators are family members or people the child has been taught to trust. **The family dynamics are transformed** by pedophiles. Denial, secrecy, and blaming the victim, I have learned in my graduate counselling classes are normal reactions when people do not know how to cope with a crisis. My mother told me that I would be killed if I told what was happening to me so I kept silent and used alcohol and drugs to survive. I know it is my experience that forms my attitude, but I believe that everyone who knows to keep their own children away from 'funny aunt/uncle (fill in the blank)', but stays silent and gives them access to other people's children should be held accountable for the guaranteed sadistic rituals that happen to those other children. Even worse are the ones who turn their back on a sobbing child begging for help and believe the pedophile. We, as a society are making progress. In the past few years a well-known coach was convicted of serial pedophilia. His colleagues and the college were also held accountable. Religious organizations are now being investigated to hold the pedophiles' supervisors accountable for moving them from community to community to give them access to more victims. Oprah offered money to people who turned in pedophiles years ago on her program. Three young women who had been held for a decade were just saved a few months ago and the pedophile was convicted. Parents of children who are kidnapped, raped and killed are setting up organizations to lobby their representatives to change the laws. Progress is good, even if I don't think it is fast enough.

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I did some research today on this question because I have been pondering over your question. What I discovered should in no way shock you. Historically, society has chosen to turn a blind eye, whether it is the discomfort of themselves or others and/or their complete **inability to know what to do when the question of childhood sexual abuse has been buried as our dirty little secrets.** There are a variety of reasons for this. The societal history is gritty, like the grains of sand that build up over time eventually the topic will tip the scales or alter the terrain. Progress will come slowly through education, it is our best bet. Until then we have a moral imperative to raise our voices, speak up and do the right thing at the right time because it is the right thing to do.

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Listen to them carefully when they disclose any abuse.

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I grew up trying to keep me and my little sister away from my **pedophile grandfather.** I told my mother what he had been doing when I was nine so he wouldn't hurt my little sister. Her denial culminated in cycles of deafening silence that warned of impending physical, emotional and mental outrage toward me. She told me that she would kill me if I ever told anyone what was happening to me so I ran away a lot, drank as much beer as I could find, and prayed that she would die. I wrote checks on my account after the money was gone and received a seven year sentence "at hard labour". I was eighteen. Pedophiles steal a child's potential, who they might have been. Rape and other abuses change the chemical balance of the child. Their developmental stages are skewed forever. It is especially confusing for the child when the perpetrators are family members or people the child has been taught to trust. The family

dynamics are transformed by pedophiles. Denial, secrecy, and blaming the victim, I have learned, are normal reactions when people do not know how to cope with this crisis. I know it is my experience that forms my attitude, but I believe that everyone who knows to keep their own children away from 'funny aunt/uncle fill in the blank' and stays silent to give them access to other people's children should be held accountable for the guaranteed sadistic rituals that happen to those other children

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You're so right that entrenched school bureaucracies have such power. I've worked in school board elections and had to fight to get in sex Ed. But I still think that a program like "Nobody can touch you under where your bathing suit goes" is a brilliantly simple move to get by the resistance of adults, doesn't require making pictures in our minds; the bathing suit drawing I've seen has a cartoon innocence about it that bypasses a bit of the fear image. **What we need to fight is the apathy of those who need to push such programs.**

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THE INDIVIDUAL IN THE HOME:

- * They don't believe the accusation.
- * They don't WANT to believe the accusation.
- * They don't feel as though sexual abuse or assault is that bad of a crime - they are uneducated on the lasting effect/s on the victim (and the victim's loved ones) physically, emotionally, socially and psychologically.
- * They don't understand or know what constitutes abuse.
- * They believe that it is normal on some level.
- * They don't want others to know - They don't want to bring "shame" upon themselves or their family/ies.

THE INDIVIDUAL IN SOCIETY:

- * Getting involved in anti-violence initiatives is too much work and feels hopeless.
- * They do not get involved in anti-violence initiatives because they think it is a woman's/feminist issue that is being "blown out of proportion." - It doesn't really happen to the extent, or in the manner, being presented to the public.
- * They believe working to end sexual violence or child sexual abuse is an attack on men.
- * Insecurity.
- * They don't want to disrupt gender privileges by fighting for women's right, anti-rape, or equality.
- * They believe that sexual assault, abuse and violence is the individual's fault, not the perpetrator and not society's.
- * They believe in, or rely too heavily upon, law enforcement interventions - If something isn't being done it is because the victim/s doesn't want anything to be done or it's because the victim was proven a liar.
- * It didn't (or hasn't) happened to them or anyone they know so, "why should I care."
- * Don't see it as pressing issue that impacts their community - too many other personal issues to concern themselves with.
- * Don't view it as a social justice violation.
- * They still believe in the "masked stranger in the bushes."

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So the only question is: what do we do about this? What can we do to get past the above and support things like Erin's Law so that not only is the law passed, but the **education gets into the schools very young**? What works?

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To get education into schools we need to get passed,

1. The convenient ignorance of the bureaucrats high above who claim to be working to provide the best for our children.
2. Convince parents that introducing discussions to their children that include and highlight their rights over their bodies and they are important enough to be respected, listened to and believed will empower their children. Sadly though too many parents feel threatened by the sheer thought that their children could possibly have rights let alone hold the power to execute these rights.
3. Whilst we empower children, the law needs to support this and show it means business and treat child abusers and rapists like the scum they are LOCK THEM UP UNTIL THEY DIE, in institutions where they will suffer so badly they will want to die.

This may sound harsh and vindictive but, horrific life destroying acts deserve horrific life destroying punishments.

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The fact that "some" people don't do anything about child sexual abuse truly bothers me, however we have to understand first where these people come from and only **educating our communities** will eventually make a positive difference. Our society/legal system is designed reactive as opposed to proactive. We step in after the fact; I have a problem with that. I always believed if a pregnant woman can go to classes to prepare her better for labour why can't we do the same thing with these couples and prepared them to be parents. Understand there is no text book to teach anyone how to parent, we handle our kids with the uniquely personality they bring along. However,

preparing parents on how to teach their children to protect themselves, how to develop and maintain healthy channels of communication is not (in my opinion) a waste of time.

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Loneliness makes people tolerate a lot of things. The song says, "One is the loneliest number in the whole world. Two can be about as bad as one."

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I think there are so many variations of the situation, why people do nothing about abuse, starting by not understanding what that is, finishing to adults guilt. But the most important is that every child would be acquainted with **what is inappropriate touch** of his/her body or personality and that child should say no, tell others immediately, be sure, that it's not tolerated by the society.

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This reminded me of a few websites that I have visited before that draws out the myths of child sexual abuse. I thought you might find them helpful. I think another reason people do nothing about sexual abuse is **because they believe these myths.**

Myths about child sexual abuse

Myth: Sexual abuse only happens to girls

Myth: Strangers are more dangerous to children

Myth: Most rapes occur to adults

Myth: Children who are victims will usually tell someone, especially their mother

Myth: Perpetrators usually pick out one child to abuse

Myth: Children who have been victims of sexual assault always hate the perpetrator

Myth: Children are partially responsible for sexual contact with adults. Telling the offender to stop is all that is necessary. If the child didn't want it to occur they could say stop.

Myth: Only men sexually abuse children

Myth: Child sexual abuse/incest/child rape only happens in poor families.

Myth: Child sexual abuse hardly ever happens.

Myth: Child sexual abuse is unacceptable in our society.

Myth: In the rare instances where it did happen a child would only have to tell someone for it to be stopped.

Myth: Child sexual abuse – 'incest' – is an expression of unique love and does not harm the child.

Myth: It is only abuse when a violent physical attack occurs.

Myth: Child sexual abuse only happens in dysfunctional families.

Myth: Sexual abuse (when it happens) will only occur as a single, isolated event.

Myth: Most children are sexually abused by strangers.

Myth: Girls fantasies/make up stories/lie about being sexually abused.

Myth: Only adolescent girls are sexually abused.

Myth: Little girls are provocative, seductive and 'ask for it'

Myth: All girls wish to seduce their fathers.

Myth: Mothers should have protected their children from the abuser.

Myth: Men are forced to turn to their daughters for sex because their wife/partner is either denying them sex or is unable to provide a satisfying sexual relationship.

Myth: All mothers collude with the abuser and know either consciously or unconsciously that abuse occurs.

Myth: Abusers are 'sick', 'deviant', and 'mad'.

Denial! This really does not happen in most families.

Secrecy/Embarrassment. What will people think?!

Avoidance. This is not the type of thing people should talk about because it is inappropriate conversation. TMI (too much information!)

Minimize. It is not as bad as you think it is.

Sympathizer. They sympathize with the abuser or are trying to protect the abuser.

Blame the victim. They believe the victim is to blame or they don't believe the victim and victim should get over it
Normal. I was sexual abused and that is something that just happens to kids.

Somebody else's problem. This is between the victim and the offender. I should not get involved.

Adults assume kids can take care of themselves. The child should know better or protect themselves.

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The one I would add is that **tolerating someone else's sexual abuse** can be a way for a very damaged survivor to validate their own pain. My mother was a CSA survivor- eventually; she learned about my sexual abuse from a relative and chose to do nothing to stop it. She also has said, many times, that there is nothing damaging about

sexual abuse. And it's not unheard of for some mothers to choose life with their partner sexually abusing their children as opposed to life without their partner. People usually frame those situations as a DV scenario, and there is likely to be an element of that, but upon study, most of those mothers are, indeed, survivors.

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Sexual abuse and rape are ugly words yet, sexual abuse and rape is a form of torture. Would the word torture get the public's attention more? **Because torture is really what is happening.** Too many people hear the word "sexual abuse" and it brings a vision of another person on a talk show crying about how somebody touched them wrong with the expectation this survivor needs to get over it. If these same people were to hear about the torture of an animal (perhaps even the same extent of damage done to a child); suddenly there is a public outcry to help the poor tortured animal. Some people place a higher value on the lives of animals than they do people. I am not in any way trying to say that abuse of animals is okay but until we get to the point that we care more for the life of a child than we would for a dog or cat then people will continue to turn a blind eye to the torture of children. Even if the public was upset to hear news of a sexually tortured child, they really don't want to hear anything more about it other than maybe that their own children are safe from the predator. There is little concern for the welfare of the abused child. It is not appropriate conversation for a survivor to discuss in the general public, at work, at home, at school, or anywhere except a therapist office. It is something many survivors hide in the dark as a secret and then the public or family wonder why this same person is having PTSD and other after effects (as if they have no reason at all to have any scares from a painful past). For my parents, they were abused so for them when they heard about the repeated rapes by my brother. They excused this with the myth that everybody goes through these bad things as children and you just need to suck it up and get over it. My mother was sexually abused by her father and she was definitely not able to just get over it considering the classic Adverse Childhood Events (ACE) type health problems she died from. But before she died a few months ago, she told me it was wrong to try and force me to keep secrets like this because now she realizes what it did to me. My father said at night my mother still experienced nightmares where she was fighting off her father.

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Many of the people who are not reporting child sexual abuse are adult victims, know it is in their family, and cannot face the shame of reporting and doing something about it. That is why awareness is so important. There is a reason some people behave in cowardly fashion. All we have to do is look at Penn State to see that reporting this kind of abuse in regard to persons who are viewed to be above the law/moral standard is rampant--now and in the past--and exposing them can have very unpleasant financial, professional and personal repercussions. In addition to holding perpetrators responsible, we also need to build structures to allow children the care they need to be resilient and to mitigate long-term consequences. And one way to start that is to hold caregivers who "don't believe" the child that discloses to them responsible for their lack of appropriate supervision, protective parenting. I am seeing this more in court where judges are coming out and asking people if they knew this was going on and to get children assessed for therapy right away. This is only true for the children whose families are engaged with CPS, but it is a start. Also seeing judges rule in a civil court (family court) that though no criminal prosecution is taking place, the civil finding can have sanctions imposed--like no contact with children under a certain age and particularly the child in question. And though this may help some families, the courts also know this is putting pressures on the child to "stick to their guns" and risk making them a scapegoat for family problems. **Ultimately, it is a cycle that requires more than reporting--that is just the beginning!**

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That it hasn't happened to them, and they are sceptical that it has happened to as many people as claimed. DV advocates seldom want to deal with the reality of **false allegations**, but there is a growth industry in making abuse claims as part of divorce settlements, to which anyone involved in the divorce business, can attest. Abuse allegations are a fast track to sole custody, child support and alimony rulings, AND false accusers only do harm to the credibility of those who truly are victims. Frankly, though, there are so many false and exaggerated claims that they are indistinguishable from true ones, to society as a whole, and to the justice system.

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This is a great question and an important one. I agree with the comments already submitted as to why we allow child sexual abuse to continue. I have a couple of other ideas. For one thing, many times survivors remember the acts themselves, but cannot allow themselves to remember the feelings--**the terror, the immense loss, the confusion, and the self-blame.** When the feelings are denied, it is possible to minimize the harm done to other children when they are sexually abused, and that is when we are likely to hear people say things like, "Oh, that's not so bad", or "It happened to me, and I turned out okay". Sometimes survivors, not allowing themselves to remember their own feelings, identify with their abuser and begin abusing other children. When we are willing to feel the feelings that accompany child sexual abuse, then we will prevent it because anything else is unthinkable. Also we know that the brain structure of young children, particularly 0-3 years old, is still developing. When children are sexually abused at

these very young ages, in the absence of healthy experiences, the parts of their brain that allow them to feel empathy for themselves and others are not adequately formed. That plays into the willingness to actively abuse other children and/or allow child sexual abuse to continue.

There are different reasons why people do nothing about sexual abuse. It depends on the age of the person or the cultural background they come from makes it hard for them to tell anyone. Lack of awareness also can make them feel **insecure in telling** because if they are young no one will believe them and they do not have enough words to express the act. They are also confused because mostly sexual abuse happens within the circle of trusted relationships especially with children and young girls. Also in Indian culture if it is a girl she will never find a husband and she will be branded as a person with bad character. The stigma is a killer for a lifetime. Especially in Indian context saving face has a higher priority than getting justice, so it is always hushed up and covered up, which gives freedom to the abuser to continue doing the ghastly act with more innocent lives. The awareness is slowly spreading and people are beginning to think outside the box. Also programs like "Satyamev Jayate" by film star Amir Khan has thrown light and exposed many social evils that still prevail in our country. His effort is commendable for the Indian audience.

I think that many people are squeamish about discussing various sexual practices as it is.

The main reason for CSA is, it's **unthinkable, not "nice", and one protects the psyche by not noticing**. With rape of adults, the whole society is set up to encourage it (Score! Didya get any?) We are teeming with rape myths like, she drank, and she wore those clothes.... Boys will be boys. And look at the military: conquering the enemy=good, conquering a person sexually=bad? The interesting point is the intersection between childhood and adulthood, where we see even judges occasionally blaming a 14 year old for being "seductive". If you look anything like an adult it's your fault. If you are reading this: Have you taken the time to support erinslaw.org?

I think every one of these points are reasons they do nothing. Other factors are so many have themselves been abused, grown up with it and somehow moved on. So they have the attitude of "you'll get over it!" Then, there are the moms, who do nothing when they should be doing everything: **they "stand by their man"** against their child because that's what religion and culture has taught them to do. Or they are so dependent on the man, financially, emotionally or otherwise, that better with him than without him (in the cases of incest etc.) or they themselves are so scared of the abuser they fear for their own lives more, obviously, than for the child. And there's one more thing: most who have tried know that trying to take the abuser to court ends up nowhere. The justice system wants undeniable proof. How does a child supply that? It's the child's word against an adult's, often a pillar of the community; the person no-one would believe could do wrong.

Basically people are **scared of the word 'Abuse' let alone dealing with it**. Society still to this day even with all the promises and assurances made by governments worldwide, people prefer to keep it at a safe distance therefore it's easier to ignore and continue living in blissful ignorance. However as soon as a case hits the headlines people react with comments, 'Oh my god. 'that poor kid', etc. etc. How pathetic that in 2013 adults are still unable to help, I say unable because I'm sure they would like to help, but just don't know how. Empowering through education is for me the only way forward educating both children and adults

Must be a man thing. I should think it would be that the attacker that should be called cowardly. It's been pretty obvious for a very long time that men, business, court systems and corporations intend to maintain their very low evaluation of the female population. Look at the advertising community! Women at least have the good sense not to go in for the second round of attack, through the criminal justice" system. Who or what is giving our little boys and youth the idea of women as sex objects in the first place?

Blame the victim?

The very idea of politicizing abuse and sexual abuse is a scary one. Healing activities need to have **community involvement** in order to work when planning for taking action and providing support.

I believe that unspoken words breed ignorance and not only that some people feel as though it is none of their business. People are fickle minded and one has to trust the Wisdom n Guidance of God to step out on faith and speak up and make their Voices heard...no you may not gain the ear of everyone but someone will hear you and be

set free...stand tall and make a difference and let God do the rest.

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I'm sorry to hear of all the grief and pain you and your siblings had to go through. I am quite glad though that you were able to seek out a good therapist who helped you through the process of letting go! There are so many who simply do not even reach out for help and carry the pain for a lifetime. So, good for you. My mother probably would have stayed with my father/abuser had he wanted to. As it was, he left and continued on to marry 3 more times.....each one not lasting long and reports of abuse. One bright light in the story...he didn't have any more children after the five of us!

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In my case, my mother was afraid of losing her meal ticket. There were six of us kids, a lot of mouths to feed. I believe she deliberately looked the other way. Recently, I found out that she did know. My second cousins told me that was why she allowed me to visit them one summer. She could not or would not ask him to leave. When I returned it continued. He left when I was 15. Oddly enough my mother married a second man who abused my sisters. We did not know that until after Mom died and we had a round table discussion. I believe that not only are the abusers sick but also the people who marry them. Mom was a child of an alcoholic, (untreated), had very low self-esteem. The cycle went on for many years after I left home. My mother and I never spoke of it and I never got to face my abuser, as he died of liver cancer. However, I was blessed with a wonderful therapist who walked me thru it all.

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These are not normal human beings; these are extremely ill individuals who have no sense of honor, justice, or real love. What I will share with you now is that I received yet another, what I have coined, 'Poison Pen Letters' via a brother from my father about a week ago. Some of his statements prompted me to call him to give him his 'answers' if, in fact, there really were any! What I heard from this "extremely ill individual" was nothing but denial, hatred, bullying, lies, and the realization that those who perpetrate such heinous acts against children honestly believe their own lies and 'justifications'. When a victim finally finds the courage and strength to reach out, speak out, and be a voice for other victims, the retaliation can be devastating. The shame that other family members carry along with all the secrets because they have chosen to either ignore or, it is simply too painful for them to acknowledge not only the deed but the feelings that go with it, can be far reaching. When perpetrators have not been brought to justice via our legal system, they feel invincible and untouchable. They think their 'truth' is all that counts and their victims should remain 'gagged'. By simply saying, "That didn't happen", does NOT make it so! Not until and unless people have the mindset that this DOES happen and action needs to be taken, will the tides change for our children. This is NOT a taboo subject and it DOES happen.....we need to give our children the respect and dignity they deserve.

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We have to stop the abuse! I was 19 when I finally had the courage to ignore the threats and have a conversation with my attacker's attorney. The attorney promised me, with tears in his eyes, that he would prosecute my attacker until the day he died if anything happened to my mother or I. Then I faced my attacker for the very first time and gave him my conditions for not putting him in prison. A year later when nothing had happened and I kept yet another promise to this sick individual, I decided it was time to move on. I approached him and stated that I was willing to forgive him for the years of abuse. His response: "Forgive me; you're the one who wanted it!" That folks is the mentality of the sick individuals who begin to abuse children as young as six months of age. Healing comes from that knowledge. These are not normal human beings...; these are extremely ill individuals who have no sense of honour, justice, or real love. The amount of pure hatred I felt at that moment was cleansing! I am so much better than he ever was...I have the future...I have the respect of my peers and my family. He has no legacy, yet I do. Who truly can win this demented battle? The victims can make sure nothing like this ever gets passed on to another innocent child. Victims who look on their attackers with disgust and with a true willingness to prosecute when possible will reach a level of self-assurance that absolutely nothing will be able to penetrate!

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There is one huge issue to tackle going back to the Constitution and laws within a home versus out in society. Our history is male dominated and women and children were property. I think this is part of the challenge. Generational hidden behaviour is another huge piece of the puzzle. There are so many perpetrators among us who are all parts of society and well hidden to the common eye. What rights do we really give children? These are a view of the problems I see right along with the 1-6 list and as we come together in community, spirit and advocacy it is changing. Government systems do not allow for change and although they have in print what abuse is, there are laws of what abuse it - they leave up to interpretation and dollars to define while victims are left unprotected and open to more abuse. It is a very sad state of affairs but I will continue to do my part. When you dive deep into the issues it is so dark and huge and covered up to the common eye, all change comes in time and as we open up to LGBT and a new

type of sexual revolution, it will be very clear who the oddball sexual perps are even more clearly.

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With LOTS of empathy, respect, humbleness I say ENOUGH! Anyone familiar with child sexual abuse (other abuse, too) has heard all said above. We've heard enough horrendous stories & denial. IT'S TIME FOR ACTION!! Survival depends on it since everything is interrelated & compounding. ONLY way to get action is to INSIST on compassionate, constructive dialogue starting with major media. Pointing fingers won't work. Perhaps media could initiate contests with incentives for creative compassionate, constructive ideas. Babies are born programmed to learn. They learn what they live, with exception if born with chemical imbalances. Is this saying we can't be held responsible for poor behaviour? No! Few dispute kids born into reasonably functional families have better shot to become productive non-abusive adults. Can dysfunctional cycles be broken? Sometimes effectively, but most need good timing, mentors....

Today is anniversary of Newtown shootings. Pres. Obama- "We have to do everything we can to protect our children from harm, make them feel loved, valued, cared for. Sandy Hook will be remembered as a tragedy, inspiring a nation to make communities safer." Let's "Seize the Day"- CONNECT DOTS re all serious issues that prevent kids from developing into caring responsible adults. We must include REQUIRING schools to weave (NOT add extras, but adapting) into k-12 (English or social studies, health, whatever...) programs such as recently NYT reported re teaching emotional intelligence. FAR more must be done to emulate European systems- rehab vs incarceration (kids & adults), child care options including maternity-paternity leave, responsible compensation, more equitable & attainable educational opportunities, fairer LEGAL SYSTEM esp. re family courts. Legal abuse site reported divorce-related issues biggest part civil legal system, impoverishes family or 1 spouse relative to other, & as noted by award-winning documentary, NoWayOutButOne, gives abusive custody/unsupervised visitation in ~58,000/yr.! Congress & some media have copies- mostly ignored! Interview above with former CA family court judge (Salseto- ?sp, resigned to become advocate- realized years later she learned father to whom she gave custody later convicted of other sex abuse), she was required to attend judicial training which EMPHASIZED doubting alleged abuse. FACT- credible studies placed fabrication low- ? < 5%. Guardian Ad Litem & Child Protective Services are poorly trained, some abusive. REPORTS RE ABUSIVE JUDGES GO LARGELY IGNORED. Apr'12, I attended Brooklyn, NY Law Scl. Semina. They discussed training CPS re foster care problems. I asked them to mention training must apply to anyone working in family courts, too. They refused to acknowledge that interrelated need. Noted retired lawyer (father, ? grandfather) was a founder of Amer. Bar Assn. said re 3yr NY Matrimonial Commission- "They moved deck chairs on Titanic!" Can we can get award-winning documentaries, NoWayOutButOne, & earlier, Breaking the Silence & perhaps happier socially advancing film exposed by media, shown in schools, etc. soon in 2014? I'm trying to get NWOBO shown in local theatre that often runs documentaries (just had Robert Reich's, Inequality for All, re how our policies are destroying the middle class, which of course also affects kids' well-being). I emphasize that only way I believe we can get adequate attention paid to abuse of our kids is by linking it with THE BIG PICTURE re a concerted broad effort to turn around U.S. sinking ratings re many serious issues. As Kent Keith (Harvard, Oxford, author in 2001 of Anyway- The Paradoxical Commandments written by him years ago when he was 18 & used by Mother Teresa)- "How our children turn out determines EVERYTHING. If our children don't turn out well, you have NOTHING AT ALL!" He had last 3 words and 'everything' in italics. OUR KIDS 'KANT' WAIT, SO NEITHER CAN WE!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

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Adults may know their partner is "guilty" but they can't wrap their head around it. It might mean that their loved one goes to jail and they will be alone. They are worried about finances, or kids being removed from the home.

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Most do not consider the lion and the lamb tactic. These horrendous truths that become exposed are at times from such great wounds sometimes from ancient days in one's life. One is so busy trying to protect the one that was not a party to the act of violation; they lose sight of their own pain from being the lamb. One must remember how delicate the subject matter is and the one who was violated must be the one to trust to release. To be made unclean so to speak for an already broken system. Only to be unheard because of systematic errors and let them know you did not make the cut for the elite. Somehow chosen to carry a burden by an oath or a vow. I the lamb will not tell so you can live in the clean place with all your truths swept under the rug where no one knows about ones heirs. Some denied access to Justice, schools, housing, loans, jobs, families, marriages, weddings, children, mothers, fathers, grandparents...memories ssh don't tell it's our little secret. Frankly I don't give a damn a about the violator as much as those who don't live a full life as grace intended. Vengeance is mine sayith the Lord. It's deliverance from the root problematic soul tie that one is connected to if lack of knowledge how to pray it through. Does it dismiss the fact it happened? No! Was it allowed? Yes! What is the benefit? There was an encounter with an enemy to prepare a way for one's purpose to pull those through. Most children admit to blacking out or not remembering. I choose to believe Jesus entered in and bore that pain. But the treasure that is carried in the vessel. It is called a testimony. Hey this happened but I live to tell about it so my brother's and sister's might have life. And more abundantly. I did jail

ministry for several years. Lots of hurting people. When the perverse spirit was exposed there was healing. And yes even for the violator. All is well. Blessings and honour.

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This is a very good question and there are many factors that compact the silence that surrounds sexual abuse. When the victim is a child it can be complicated even further by love, affection, attention, gifts, a feeling of being special (all grooming techniques by abusers) and the slow introduction into the sexual abuse. The abuse of a child causes them to have the feeling that this is not right, that this shouldn't be done to them or that they shouldn't be doing this to another. These mixed feeling when coupled with the grooming techniques causes even further confusion for a child. In addition to this it is worth noting that from birth we are all sexual beings and as such if we are touched in a certain manner some nice feelings may be experienced. These unwanted feeling when mixed with the other emotions such as fear, guilt, not being believed, of being a child -v- an adult, together caused a child to begin to think that they have done something to cause this to happen to them or they start to believe that they didn't do enough to stop it. This further compounds the mixed feelings and emotions and when then added to the threats that they will be punished or that someone they love will be punished or suffer; the mixed feelings and emotions are compounded even further. Now add in their mental age and capacity and ask yourself how could a child even start to try and comprehend what has happened to them? How can they tell what has happened to them? Will they think that they did something wrong? Will they think that they will be in trouble? These emotions are too great for their conscious mind to comprehend, so one technique is to dissociate from it and in some cases lock the memories away for years; only for them to resurface later in life when triggered by some event. One has to ask themselves how could a child disclose when burdened by all of these factors, to those who manage to find the strength to disclose usually only tell enough to make the abuse stop. The whole story may never be told unless a professional manages to assist them to tell their stories. The brave victims that do tell their stories I acknowledge as 'ingenious survivors'. I use the work ingenious because they found a way to survive the unbearable. For someone to disclose abuse, trust, active listening, empathy, sensitivity, rapport, attuning, exploration together with periodic and extensive summarising need to be applied before meaningful communication can be created with a victim that will allow them to feel safe enough to disclose their horrendous experiences. The lack of an understanding or the ability to develop meaningful communication is the reason in my belief why people do not disclose sexual abuse.

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Meanwhile, to put this in perspective statistically speaking of those that do report such incidents how many actually obtain justice or protection? On the other hand regarding the 'un-reported' this would inadvertently suggest that the "statistics" as a whole are neither inconclusive nor accurate.

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"REASONS WHY PEOPLE DO NOTHING ABOUT SEXUAL ABUSE" is to me more based on the fear associated with reporting such instances. Why does society as a whole prefer to turn the blind eye and or permeate the negatives with this subject matter is completely beyond my human understanding. When 'subliminally' being fed into the darkness of sexual abuse, human trafficking, or the promotion of such instances; what remains is the consistent nature of doing so through media, TV, magazines, pornography etc. etc...It appears that this is a moral dilemma that has not only existed for centuries yet also has kept the wheels turning in a negative direction. Questions behind the 'why's' of people "not doing" or not saying anything cannot be simply answered due to each individual case, the variables of such are complex. However, regardless of victims being straight or gay whereas the light is primarily not to distinguish the two...Sexual victimization knows no colour, orientation, belief, age, or gender. So why do people do nothing about it? That is a question that many are attempting to answer by bringing it to the forefront instead of allowing it to continue. Perhaps the duplicitous elements of deterrents of not doing anything is more about deeper yet unseen realities that victims often endure in the process where obtaining safety either through legal arena, judicial arena, or what not...Is not always necessarily readily had, secured nor availed to victims. Let's not forget about the re-traumatizing impacts that are also somewhat not even a slight consideration while going through any part of the possibilities of reporting such instances of any sort of sexual abuse. Here are some things to consider while attempting to further understand a very complex issue that is still prevalent today across the globe:

- 1) Not reporting such instances out of fear of retaliation (i.e.: being threatened, harassed, embarrassed, intimidated, either individually or with others by way of any form of further re-abusive technique such as an under the radar method where recourse is also threatened by the perpetrator)
- 2) They are afraid that in doing something or reporting on behalf of self or others could further cause harm or jeopardy and or hardship to those who were victimized.
- 3) They have skeletons in their closet and don't want to re-visit something they've been in denial about(i.e.: re-traumatization of self or others-if we don't talk about it then it never happened-this in itself is very real for many families who choose to deny the incident, just as the LGB population has lived with for years being rejected for

sexual orientation)

3) There is no 'comfort zone' in reporting incidents, which could be source of "why" many incidents go "un-reported". It does not matter the age, gender, race, of the victim. Regardless of the details of incident...being a victim is not something anyone should have to endure-period.

4) They don't understand that by keeping things in the dark and not doing something to change it by being a part of the solution, by default are thus a part of the very mediocrity that has allowed these things to continue.

5) They lack empathy, they just don't care... if it isn't happening to them they don't want to know. This in itself is quite a sad deduction while unfortunate, perhaps partially adequate to assume. However, victims can be your brother, sister, mother, father, friend, neighbour or person standing next to you. There is absolutely no line of demarcation to suggest who has been a victim, who may become a victim, or by whom they are victimized.

6) The problem is "Not too big to solve so don't ever just give up". Those who believe in Solutions will always be a part of trying to change what needs to be changed in this life, no matter how small that effort might be, everyone can be a part of the solution. There is always a point and a moral responsibility towards ourselves and others in trying.

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The preamble to the U.S. Constitution certainly treats women and people of colour as a lesser person than the wealthy white Caucasian male who is allowed to own property while women are chattels and the African American is only a 3/5 person. Logically, female children and children of colour have the same standing. While the Constitution is the law of the land, it sorely lacks in protecting the rights of women and children period. Our laws have come some distance in protecting women in employment and criminal laws are more protective for women if they are raped etc., and in some states are raped in the marital bed, we have precious few laws protecting the inalienable right of a child to grow up as a child free from unwanted intentional touching by another, the right of a child to have sexual experiences at the developmental time and within their control and choice. Childhood sexual abuse infringes on the basic rights of a child to be free from unwanted and inappropriate sexual encounters ranging from actual penetration to Internet trolling and manipulation of a child into taking pornographic photos.

The treatment of women and children in our society is still filled with bias and prejudices that seem to have a lasting stigma as to how we treat the violation of the same. Director Forslund's comment is true when you view perpetrators as monsters masquerading as human beings and sometimes as parents or friends of the family.

Certainly, at first blush, we do not see their perversions branded on their foreheads. There are symptomatic signs in children which often signal red flags that something is amiss and the perpetrator is not quite as normal as we think he is because somewhere along the line his behaviour is off. It takes a careful and discerning eye towards what is appropriate behaviour and what is not. All of us have a moral obligation to be hyper vigilante to what is happening to our children 24/7. Yes, it is a huge responsibility - but then again it is the responsibility that comes from being a parent and a member of society who should never turn a blind eye to what is going on around them. Every individual in our society must step up to the plate and speak up when things are off. If they had done that when I was growing up things would have been different for me, a victim of violent childhood abuse. Best Wishes!

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Two more responses to the original question...

1) They are protecting their business/organization

2) They are in denial that they failed to protect someone in the past

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I think all these post represent all the reasons. There is so much work to be done and yet we, as a society, are talking about it more than ever before in history. It's like building a tunnel, the light will be found.

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There are so many who simply do not even reach out for help and carry the pain for a lifetime.

My mother probably would have stayed with my father/abuser had he wanted to. As it was, he left and continued on to marry 3 more times.....each one not lasting long and reports of abuse. One bright light in the story...he didn't have anymore children after the five of us!

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It appears that we are just beginning to scratch the surface of just how pervasive child abuse and neglect is within our society alone. The trafficking of humans for any purpose is pure wickedness. The trafficking of children purely for the purpose of someone else's sick gratification is an utter abomination.

Children are the future, and WE must do all that WE can to save the future. I do not have all of the answers. I wish that I did. Often the thought of anyone being abused, especially a child can be overwhelming. Yet I've made a conscious decision, and committed myself to fighting against the plague that destroys precious little lives. We must win this fight or they (the abused and neglected) will surely lose out in the end. I thank everyone involved in fighting against injustices around the world and helping to rebuild shattered lives. Thanks for reading this post. PLEASE

CONTINUE THE FIGHT!

Sometimes it's because victims have been rendered invisible by gender ideology.

I agree, and speaking for the immigrant community many families have lost custody of their children for minor issues, the case worker do not make effort of getting an interpreter and parents are made to sign legal documents that they don't understand. We have seen that some have been promised that they will get child care if they confess that they physically punished their children. And before you know it, they are in the state registry. Please the court system has to have concrete evidence before the parental rights are terminated and children are separated from their loving parents. Think of the psychological trauma of the child being given to foster parents without evidence of abuse from their biological parents.

THAT'S TRUE. PART OF THE DYNAMIC OF THE ABUSED BECOMING ABUSERS

Many of the people that were subjected to that system fled here to the Americas &, rather than become champions of justice, assisted the colonizers in perpetrating further injustices upon the indigenous people here.

Child sexual abuse and economic disparity are very clearly linked. The colonizer's view of children was shaped by the industrial revolution. Poor children from overcrowded cities were essentially slaves and seen as property. There is a lot of material on this subject.

But to many of the moneyed classes, the poor were invisible: an inhuman sub-species who did not have the same feelings as their own and whose sufferings were unimportant. If they spared a thought for them at all, it was nothing more than a shudder of revulsion at the filth and disease they carried.

Living conditions were appalling. Families occupied rat and sewage-filled cellars, with 30 people crammed into a single room. Most children were malnourished and susceptible to disease, and life expectancy in such places fell to just 29 years in the 1830s. In these wretched circumstances, an extra few pennies brought home by a child would pay for a small loaf of bread or fuel for the fire: the difference between life and death.

Could you please explain how "economic disparity" is a root cause of child sexual abuse? And how, "in the colonizer's home countries", was "sexual abuse and exploitation" economically driven"? There seems to be an unlinking chasm between these 2 concepts -- of child sexual abuse and economic disparity, as you explain them.

Yes, that's true. Attached to that class system & the paradigm coupled with it is the thought that the people upon whom those crimes were perpetrated were less than the perpetrators. They were not "human" or were other than "human". Thus the acts were not crimes because crimes could only be committed against humanity. That perception is not true, but that was part of the justification for the acts.

I certainly agree with your 'superior race mentality' comment. In the colonizer's home countries, there was also sexual abuse and exploitation that was economically driven. European society was highly stratified and had a rigid class system. Poor Europeans were horribly exploited, sent to work houses, orphanages, mental institutions, etc. which the church generally ran for the state. Australia, for example, was a penal colony.

This is certainly not meant to minimize the horrors suffered by Aboriginal peoples but to point out that the root cause of discrimination and abuse is economic disparity.

I can give you thousand examples of reports, as long as child services do nothing when told about the abuse, since they evaluate each case on if the abuse is bad enough to report or to do anything at all, I guess why should the people report it? Of course it depends on the area, now I see children being illegally removed by child services from perfectly good parents. It seems that it is two extremes and every case is based on the case worker decision and once the decision is made everyone follows them without investigating the truth. I know hundreds of parents fighting extensively to get their children back, proving they have been doing everything possible to please that case worker or judge and it doesn't matter. While their children are being physically abused and raped by their foster parents. Don't get me wrong I know there are many trust worthy people trying to help these children within the system but they don't step up when they see someone corrupting their case. Again I know many children, some now young adults, if still alive, that was raped and physically abused.

Child abuse is a horror. Most abusers were themselves abused. If the abused are not healed they will potentially perpetuate the abuse. Let us look to the root causes and begin healing one person at a time. Forgiveness and

understanding is better than recrimination. If you know of someone who is a perpetrator then you have a **responsibility to act.**

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I took my nieces to the centre that their representative, who they were appointed to after my brother died, they were abused and not believed and then after they had disclosed to authorities it turns out that my nephew was also molested by the mother's boyfriend, he didn't want to report it to authorities as he has two older sisters who have told him they won't believe you. He is 12 years old but was 4 when abuse started and girls 5 & 6, they were abused by two of her boyfriends and neither perpetrator has ever been charged, one file remains open as have all evidence they were abused, just needs mother to make a statement to say she was in a relationship with the man and the address at time, this was the first perpetrator, the kids were taken from her for a short time then given back to her for them to be abused over and over again, they are state wards and the abuse continued until recently as three years ago, the girls are now 17 and 15 and suffer immensely from what has happened to them, they are now back with their mother again after being placed in foster care for a few years, yet not given to family members like us as my brother is one of seven siblings and anyone of us would have taken children in, like we had to do throughout the years when she was drunk, stoned or off somewhere leaving kids alone, saddens me that abuse continued despite our attempts to stop it.

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The 'public in general' are uneasy with this subject for one of two reasons, I think.
Reason 1:- They cannot begin to mentally approach the horror of it - that anyone could do THAT!
Reason 2:- They fear approaching the subject because something about it resonates within them and disturbs their careful attempt at distancing from all thoughts of THAT!
And both positions need understanding so as to build a bridge towards awareness and acceptance that the unthinkable, from both of those perspectives, can happen.

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May be lack of information, negative attitude,
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8.....Superior race mentality of commonwealth countries like Canada and Australia in regards to the ward of state status upheld and perpetrated upon indigenous population's like Aborigine's in Australia, usually held in bondage by Christian, land holding, non-taxpaying charity corporate entities to this day.....commonly called the Ostrich Effect for genocide denier's

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When sexual abuse is disclosed in a family, it brings a lot of pain for family members and it is hard to deal with because you don't know where to go for help to deal with the very hurt feelings and betrayals... other family members begin to disclose their experience too and no help is available with a family that discloses... nowhere to go for help for victims and those that have harmed family members through sexual abuse... mothers feel so betrayed by family member/s because you trusted your own family member... basically, until there is a place where people feel safe and trust that they are going to get help and be able to do something especially when a family wants healing versus punishment... also, for the public in general we continue to support the inappropriate behaviours of others such as; people in power and those that are influential with others through traditional teachings and ceremonies..
Sexual abuse will always remain underground until we have a safe place for healing for families... also; large families are hard to deal with especially if you have 4 to 16 persons in a family unit.

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FEAR

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I think that most people abhor child abuse, but because of the closed nature of the court system, it usually only comes to light in extreme cases. There are more reports in the media of cruelty to animals than there are on child abuse. Having worked in the field for many years, it's my opinion that the public is generally uninformed about the prevalence of child abuse and, when it does come up, it's on an individual case basis that people have no control over. There is a lot of publicity over historical abuse, but **I think there needs to be an awareness campaign about present abuse.**

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All above plus fear by mothers that they won't be believed in court if they accuse father of abusing their kids, esp. if there is big power imbalance & then fear GALS and judges, etc. will take his side, and some of them even with strong suspicion of corruption. Such moms fear losing custody to abuser which would make matters even worse. ETC!

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In sexual abuse issues one problem is no one knows about the abuse until it's discovered. Most often the abuser is a family member and the victim (child) is in a love-hate situation. They don't want the offender (usually a relative) to

get into trouble and at the same time they have no control over what's happening. Stranger offenders are a little different but the majority of offenders are known by the victim. The public on the other hand, often don't want to get involved because they didn't witness it themselves or afraid of blaming someone who might be innocent. For older victims the offender might be a boss, bad dates, and abuse by a perceived friend. **Abusers are good actors.**

Several studies have speculated that 90% of sexually abused children know their perpetrators. This complicates and often gives contradictory messages regarding how the child is supposed to perceive the abuser. If a family member, the term love becomes perverted, extended family and friends often adds shame and fear because the abuser will be in their lives on an on-going basis. An example would be if ones older brother's friend abused you, you would be afraid to report because your brother would be mad at you, you might be blamed as the initiator, or you might not be believed.

From my experiences with sexually abused children and adults, **shame is the main issue**, in addition to repression of his/her traumatic memories. Regarding non-involved family members and friends of the victims, fear of financial destitution (mothers who are financially dependent on the husband, boyfriend, etc.), denial, and not believing the victim because of past lying, promiscuity or troublemaking seem to be common themes.

Another serious consideration is the "Power Position". Who has the courage to step up and accuse the richest man in town, the priest, the teacher, the cub scout leader, the father, the uncle, the boss...this is what gives so many molesters the opportunity to continue. No one wants to step up and make an accusation against a position of extreme power **for fear of the backlash.**

The biggest one for the victim: Shame! Even children as young as 5 or 6 know that what happened is really, really bad and they are afraid to mention it to those they love and trust the most for fear they will get in trouble.

It took decades to have the public see sexual assault as a crime of power not a sexual crime. The outfit of the victim as well as the victim as a seductress (even in a case out east when the victim was 5 years old) is a myth.

2) Offenders are **predators**, they go after people, mostly females they perceive as "an easy target". I mean someone who cannot defend themselves children, the disabled, women with low self-esteem , etc.

3) Main stream media movies and advertisement portray women as sexual beings, and the concept of NO does mean NO is often not portrayed. These may be some of the reasons; we need to change the paradigm.

Stop expanding the definitions of "abuse" to include everything from a glance from across a room to a compliment to someone who doesn't know how to receive one to calling someone "miss" who prefers "miz", and the whole discussion of people being "abused" might take back some credibility. You want to know why people don't do anything. Because those who profit from SAYING they are doing something are too engaged in exaggerations, politicizing, over-reaction and general histrionics for anyone to find them believable, doing further harm to those who do suffer and come to them for help and get dogma instead.

After reading and following the comments on the subject at hand it appears that this problem has existed as long as the abuse has occurred. From many Forensic Interviews I have found that it very difficult for caregivers to believe that their choice of a companion could have been so wrong. The failure to protect their child is often more about their not wanting to accept that they were not able to recognize the evil being perpetrated than actually not believing the child. It is often traumatic when they begin to face the truth. This recognition that the failure by the caregiver to accept the awful things that have happened to their child extended the abuse period is very difficult for them. This is a hard truth for the caregiver to accept but often once reality has set in the caregiver often can be a part of the recovery.

It strikes me, though--even after writing my own "reasons" on here--that this problem boils down not to why, but how. Learning "why" won't change anything. The question is, HOW can we DEMAND **improvements in law and education**? Because believe me, folks, I've worked on elections for many years, and the squeaky wheel gets the grease. If every adult survivor marched in the streets, someone would listen.

I think **most people want to turn a blind eye** to things that are disturbing to their little world. By choosing to ignore the problem they have seen they can keep their little world free of any ugly real world problems.

I think the question is pretty arrogant. I was sexually assaulted long time ago. None will feel comfortable to explain believe me. None who got through that horrible.

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On my travels to small and large communities, I found the learned person knows its wrong and they have a right to avoid and seek help, because of this they're not likely to be harmed.

Whereas no knowledge person has not the support required and most vulnerable, to the voodoo of school and communities silent. Change this practice will change the attitude of the perpetrator and the victim. Most would be aware of this, the question how to educate all communities, and schools, who is willing to fund and programme? Land owners receiving money for peoples land, they had opportunity to make a change, AS get NOTHING , YOU MAY QUESTION THEIR MOTIVE., AN INDEPENDENT DIRECT BOARD, CALL TRIPPLE 111, YOUR REQUEST REGISTERED, ACTION 1/ 48 HRS, CHILDREN SHOULD NOT BE BLAMED IN ANYWAY, HOW THIS IS ACHIEVED ?

My view **stop the practice of silence**

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I agree with your comments about our people standing up for our children. In relation to that community - the actual result came after we were finally able to get some children to disclose the abuse and identify perpetrators - let's hope this is the start of a cessation of this in our communities and provides people with the strength to come forward.

Children need us to be their protectors - not protectors of perpetrators

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They think it is not their duty and responsibilities.

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I have been informed that recently after extended investigations police and the Department for Child Protection swooped on perpetrators at a WA community. Sadly, it was only achieved following many years of protests from women in the community, and despite the community having the highest incidences of STIs for children under 5 for many years. Irrespective of the bullying, scaremongering and whatever else, our people need to stand up and protect our future generations. How many innocent lives have been ruined and will continue to be ruined whilst others effectively **condone the behaviour through inaction**. I only hope this sends a clear warning to perpetrators and authorities alike that something needs to be done more quickly when people on the ground and medical statistics validate the story.

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It's out of their comfort zone. The old stereotypes still apply.....the person is lying, people are afraid to deal with it and don't want to make any waves. It's easier for them to just keep it quiet and not deal with it which is sad because they don't realize the help they could be giving that person. Do they want it to continue? They would all say no but they're still afraid to do anything. I helped somebody once and it was one of the worst experiences of my life. I'd do the same thing again but the aftermath is horrible. It changes everything. **If it's a family issue, your family is never the same again.**

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Each person has added a valuable piece of the societal dynamic, as well as the dysfunctional family dynamic to the mix of reasons why sexual abuse of children has been handled the way that it has.

The shame and stigma that was associated with sexual abuse, as little as thirty or forty years ago, has long diminished, due to the work of advocacy groups, and courageous individuals. Although there is still much work to do-a lot of progress has been made. The comments of this page are proof that we are becoming more aware of this horrendous problem, and more open about discussing it.

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Many families are willing to sacrifice the child victim of a pedophile in order to maintain the illusion of a good family reputation and not need to confront the family member everyone knows to keep their own children away from.

I was taught to believe it was my fault that grandpa raped me from six years old. My mother's denial culminated in cycles of deafening silence and then rage toward me until she died. My siblings still act like everything wrong in our family is my fault. When I asked for help and mom either did nothing or told me she would kill me if I told anyone, I fought back. When that didn't work, I ran away, drank as much as I could and got into trouble. I ended up in the mental health and criminal justice systems. I had to find mentors who allowed me to see myself through their eyes so I could live up to their expectations rather than living down to the way my family taught me to feel as a child.

I firmly believe that anyone who stays silent when they know to keep their own children away from a pedophile should be arrested as an accomplice and placed on the sex registry with the pedophile.

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I love all the comments but I would like to see the in your face messages on merchandise especially the NRL jerseys and community organisation uniforms so our communities continually see the messages. I also think that small 2-5 minute videos could be produced by different communities to play on NITV and indigenous community television so these are played with indigenous content. There is also a need for more focus and funding to be put into the post traumatic issues of behavioural sexual abuse. We need to understand that this issue affects our young girls and

teenagers and women who have psychological implications whilst trying to trust men in general and live a normal happy life. **Our men who don't stand up against this are as much to blame as the perpetrators** as we all have a role in this disgusting behaviour.

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I am very intrigued by your Reason 2, it is simply, Brilliant! As spiritual beings, our journeys have surely taken us to this place previously. Current life experience allows a test of our derivative understanding and persuasion in this matter. The familiar resonance has a range of response from total inconceivability to rabid objection. The potential soul's proclivity is encoded in the dynamics of DNA and may be readily perused by astrological archetypes (planetary symbolism) as one method of approaching understanding and unravelling the mystery of CSA. Hard aspects at birth to the prime sexual indicators (Venus and Mars) especially from Pluto or other challenging (stressful) configurations with Saturn, Neptune and Uranus are very likely to manifest in issues of sexual abuse or "premature" invasion or those experiences occurring without willing (conscious) compliance and participation (readiness). This ancient but future new application of cosmic awareness and synchronicity will be used hopefully for the assistance, recovery and salvation of many in the near future.

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I think one way to increase awareness of sexual abuse is through public announcements in the media. Commercials, radio, Internet all reach many people. I wonder what would happen if prevention had much more energy. Thanks for this outlet.

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This is an AWESOME list to start with in order to try and remedy the situation. With this I mean; once we are able to pinpoint the 'reasoning' behind why people choose to be silent/do nothing about sexual abuse, we can better find an approach to solving these underlying issues and giving them a direction to move toward making change. Simply knowing the 'why' is the first and vital step. Education, knowledge, and the next step to take is also necessary in order to close the circle....so to speak.

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THATS TRUE. PART OF THE DYNAMIC OF THE ABUSED BECOMING ABUSERS.

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They think it is not their duty and responsibilities

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I think the greatest value of art therapy with children who have been abused or neglected is that it provides an opportunity to give voice to their pain. The images they create provide tangible proof of progress that has been made and this can be especially helpful on days when children feel discouraged about their progress. Visual art seems to come readily to many children and adults who have been abused or neglected. Let's look at the truth about abuse and see what can be done to heal the scars that are much harder to see.

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Sometimes they identify with the perpetrator, especially if it a respected religious leader.

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The reason people do nothing about sexual abuse is may be for two reasons: 1. they are part of the abuse, 2. may not have adequate knowledge about how to intervene.

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I agree with you that those adults who allow for the abuse to continue and even lash out at victims should be arrested for being accomplices. I think one of the great reasons people don't do anything about child sexual abuse is because of **lack of knowledge about the short and long term effects the abuse has on the victim's life**. I come from a professional and educated family and not one of us knew what we were dealing with when my young nephew broke his silence about being molested for a three year period by a family member. I am even in the medical field and did not know the impact until I started reading and educating myself in order to understand and help my nephew through his healing process. It was only through consultations with specialists and reading books that we realized that if we didn't get help for the young boy, that his chances of having a normal and happy life was lessened. And it was also through that process that we learned that the molester, a loved member of our family, would most likely continue to victimize others. The other reason people don't do anything about child sexual abuse is because of the disruption in their lives. As a family, we had to look beyond our family name, reputation in the community and even family unity to save the victim. It took courage. I would like to also share an interesting twist to this tragic event that took place in my family. While educating myself to help my nephew heal, I understood at the age of 49, 37 years after I was molested by a friend of the family, why I never got married, why I never wanted children, why I never wanted to stay at people's homes as a guest, why...the list is long. I told my nephew that his tragedy helped save me! I want to thank everyone out there who has shared their sad and painful stories in order to help us heal.

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I was raped at fourteen. I did not know anything about sex at all. A guy who I had such a crush on at that time apparently knew I was stupid on not knowing about sex. I sneaked out of the house to go out for a ride with him. I was given some kind of pill and it knocked me out. All I remember is getting out of the car and staggering. My parents to my knowledge did not do anything. The worst part of this is what people say to me when I was working in the meat industry. Example: did you wear white at your wedding? Me: Yes, but I was raped at 14 because they were inquiring if I was a virgin. They: Well then that means you were not a virgin. Me: Hello? What is the joke here. Second example: I was working as a USDA in the meat industry. I have post trauma over this rape and it seems to be nothing to anyone. On the line I would get stupid remarks that were to me. Like I bet you do not get much because of your age, other stuff I will not go further. I filed for a transfer and report the harassment. You should hear on the unemployment interview the screaming and thrashing I got because of that report. No, I never got that unemployment. No, I can never do that sort of job again. No meds because the doctors seems to think I do not need it. The story goes on but I sympathize and agree on all comments.

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Thank you for sharing your story. Your voice matters and people are listening. Your story can help others understand how awful systems and people can be. I hope you have a team of support. If you don't, please let us help you! There are so many people who want to help you. Again, thank you for sharing. Peace and Blessings,

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They don't believe it really happened. Maybe it was a nightmare. Even if it did they are convinced it must have been their fault.

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Because they are terrified of their perpetrator. The perpetrator often knows where the victim lives and could come back and harm them or someone they care about.

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Denial and for children not knowing what happened to them was abuse. I would be curious to know the statistics on the latter. When I was 12 I overheard an older family member describing to another woman what happened to her, it was not until then that I knew what happened to me was abuse. **This is why we need parents and schools teaching children what is ok and what is not.**

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I have enjoyed reading this forum. I believe someone asked "what people are you referring to", and I took it as everyone, general public, yso's, law enforcement, clergy, etc who want to keep the proverbial head in the sand over this issue. But the question now is How do we form a solution to ensure that everyone comes together in community to try and end child sexual abuse. One lady mentioned radical reform. Oh how true that is and just what we need. I have found it is not just because "people" do not know what to do, they choose denial because they don't want to hear anything about CSA. I know young parents and grandparents that I have begged to take the SOC class and they usually say, I probably do, but need to find time to come. Give me a break! Those folks are the ones who choose denial b/c it is also an inconvenience. I sure as heck would not want them responsible for my children, would you? That is just between you and me. I have also had friends tell me that I cannot force this issue on people. I would sure love to, so I will continue to preach to the choir! **We need to mandate Prevention training to adults and children as one solution.** But one thing is for sure, if we continue to see organized religion, families and other YSO's resisting, we will never get a hold of staying one step ahead of a pedophile. Mandates are part of the answer to radical reform.

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I wonder what the response would be if there was a commercial on television promoting awareness and prevention. Does anyone know if a public announcement commercial has ever been done?

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I am not aware of any on major broadcast stations. It would take deep pocket sponsors. We need them though.

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It maybe the fact of its not their problem and they can't fix it or change what has been done. I don't believe this is true however I have recently seen a mother who thought it was cute that her daughter was Sexually abused. Seeing how the child was four and had no real defense but her mother. Her mother simply thinks that nothing can be done to change the past and that her daughter will get over it. This is a scary but true how many times a parent knows their child is being abused but does nothing to help because of own faults as a parent and person.

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It took me a lot of years in therapy, sobbing my eyes out, rolled up in the fetal position sucking my thumb to make peace with my past. Please ask for help.

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I have been a target of continuous attacks, bullying and intimidation by the family of the sexual abuser because I supported the victim. Although the last year was hellish after the conviction, I do not regret for a second having stood up for the child. One thing I have learned the hard way is that there are no laws protecting supporters of CSA
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Each person has added a valuable piece of the societal dynamic, as well as the dysfunctional family dynamic to the mix of reasons why sexual abuse of children has been handled the way that it has.

The shame and stigma that was associated with sexual abuse, as little as thirty or forty years ago, has long diminished, due to the work of advocacy groups, and courageous individuals. Although there is still much work to do-a lot of progress has been made. The comments of this page are proof that we are becoming more aware of this horrendous problem, and more open about discussing it.

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I know there has been a lot of progress made on this issue. I wonder if people aren't just scared. The thought that "not in my back yard." It's uncomfortable for people to talk about. Even though sex and other behaviors are more known, the thought of sexually abusing someone particularly a child is not understood by everyone. In prison, for example, they separate the sexual abusers of children otherwise the other inmates would kill them. Personally, I cannot comprehend it. Why remains a huge question.

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That's a very valid argument and I suspect you're right. When I first told my neighbour I was writing a book and she asked what it was about, her reaction was classic, and very typical, when I said "incest". Her eyes clouded over; she looked away and it was obvious she was super uncomfortable, not just because she knew me and would never had suspected it (no-one who knows me would) but the whole idea was just so foreign to her. We've laughed about it since, and she's thrilled that I've had such success with the book but no way will she ever read it herself. She's flat out said "I just can't!".

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The main reasons I've found that people don't act is simply this:
They don't know what to do
They don't have the skills
They are afraid of the consequences
They don't believe the child.

That last one is a difficult one, because, in order to get away with his dastardly deed the perpetrator has to invest in socially acceptable behavior. On the other hand the child is taught to lie, to misbehave, often acts out in anger... It's much easier to believe that your child is wilful and troublesome, a typical teenager, than to believe in the reality of what he or she may be saying. (if they come forward at all)
Let's not forget that parents are people too.

++++
It is easy to choose to believe a person who has power over the child who has none. **It takes an extremely courageous child to even mention that something might be wrong.** The abuser typically enjoys a position of power in the community, school, church, etc. The child has nothing by comparison. This is what we need to remember when a child suggests something may be wrong. They have received threats and have suffered extreme humiliation and pain. Any child who overcomes those forms of control should be taken seriously. As protectors of these precious children, we need to understand how difficult their decision has been to ask for help and the great jeopardy it places them in.

++++
I had a nervous breakdown at the age of 12 1/2 because there was NO one who I could trust, I did not think that anyone would believe me. I think I was told that by the abuser. When I was 15 my mother sent me to stay with a cousin in the summer. I did not realize that she did this to get me away from the abuser until recently. My mothers cousin informed me of why Mom sent me there. As stated before Mom was afraid to lose her sugar daddy although it was insane in our house with the drinking fights and all. Only God knows how we all survived. I am a strong women now and it is definite in part because of the things I was made to bear as a child.

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I want to turn one of your thoughts around. You say that you are a strong woman, in part, because of what happened to you in childhood - I would say that you are a strong woman because you are able to talk of what happened to you. In other words, it is YOUR strength that has you surviving. And thank YOU for that. Your mother, I'm sure, tried to do the best she could - and it sounds from what you say that she has problems of her own. Maybe I am wrong here but I'm guessing that your abuser and the man you identify as her 'sugar daddy' are one and the same? And that is tough for you because you are aware of, what were, your mother's needs and you care about her. But in caring about her needs you give less importance to yours?

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So well spoken! The strength of survivors and thrivers doesn't lie in the fact they were abused, it stems from what they themselves have done to overcome their childhood.

It's not what doesn't kill us that is making us stronger. It's what we do with it.

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It is true I became stronger after I was able to speak freely of the abuser, the circumstances and how I felt about it all. I was not saying the abuse made me a strong woman but my recovery from it all. **"We are only as sick as the secrets we keep"** Thanks again,

++++
I'm sorry if my words came out all wrong. What I really meant by what I said is that you are already a strong person to have faced up to the abuse and to have had the strength to speak out. Your strength is what has you as strong as you are and, in speaking freely, you are giving freedom to yourself to be all that you are. And the all that you are is a brave and strong woman. All love to you.

++++
I've had many conversations with a more experienced therapist while still a candidate about the seduction factor of sexual abuse. This guy worked with both targets and pedophiles. It's easy for a child to be fooled into such criminal behavior, due to how he or she is gradually lured to a point of no return. By no return, I mean that a child can't put into reverse the advanced knowledge and experiences of adult sexual behavior. The physical touching and penetration is developmentally unnatural, but **unlike getting beaten or starved there are different feelings associated with it.** This type of abuser knows how to have complete control over a child without resorting to bruises and marks that would draw attention.

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I have made an observation when a child a boy or a girl is abused in the circle of trust and that means family or friends or close relatives, they hate it but can not tell cause it is all about **protecting the family shame which takes top priority** but very often sexual abuse happening in residential homes for children is often not seen as offence cause they are so deprived of love and affection and lack attention that anyone showing them little love or physical touch they immediately convert it into love and believe it even if they are being abused or treated badly. They begin to like it and feel at least there is someone in the world who loves them and so they are not hesitant in going ahead with it and also they cherish it and do not want to call it abuse or report it. Also boys and girls growing up in the same home may be told that they are all brothers and sisters as they all grew up together but actually they are not blood relatives and so they make these connections within the homes to find partners so that they can dream of having a better future with someone they know. Often it is also emotional blackmailing that keeps them from telling the truth or accepting the fact that it is abuse.

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There are a multitude of categories victims can fall into and we need to constantly be aware of that. I remember horrendous pain, crushing suffocation, the stench of coffee and cigarettes, the humiliation and terror...I do not remember anything even remotely connected to love.

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I maintain the point that early and regular induction of self-advocacy curriculum will help targets of sexual abuse to at least keep from "normalizing" such interactions and behavior from the abuser. An adult will always be more physically powerful than a child but the head games can be detected and not internalized (guilt, distorted beliefs).

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I would like to address this question from two points of view. That of a very young child, and that of a mother who becomes aware of the problem long after the fact.

In the case of a very young child (elementary school and younger), perceptions can be shaped to cause them to believe that they were complicit in the acts, especially if a sinisterly clever adult requires them to verbally acquiesce. Whether through fear, or by pretend, the adult can cause the child to think that it is a "secret shared" with the abuser and one that is of the utmost importance not to share. **Just as the Stockholm Effect** causes those who are kidnapped to become sympathetic with their captor, so can younger children be convinced that the exchange is of great importance to an adult by drawing on their sympathy (especially in pitting a child against the other parent). Memories of the act, coupled with memories of "agreement" could cause them (for many years) to believe that they were somehow responsible, or at least in agreement with the act(s).

In the case of a mother who finds out after the fact, she may be in denial that she could have allowed something like that to happen without figuring it out while it was going on. She may blame the child for shattering her illusions that such a thing could not happen in her family (especially if the attacker/parent is gone by the time she finds out). The child who most assuredly needs help dealing with emotions, physical problems, and unanswered questions may be perceived as a pointing finger of "guilt" by the mother as she internalizing the blame but projects it onto the child.

Recommending that the child talk to someone else (priest, minister, counselor) seems to take the onus off of her so she can strip the reality out of her thoughts and go on thinking that she had and has nothing to do with it. **Dark Family Secrets try really hard to stay silent, for the "sake of the family,"** which in turn does a detrimental damage to the children involved. As the children may start to "act out" as a result of such abuse, the mother will see them as an embarrassment and blame them rather than see it as a cry for help.

I have done counseling with children who were the victims of incestuous rape at a very young age and the dynamics involved are not simple for either the children or the "non-involved" parent. Changes in other parts of the relationship between them often become strained as a result of NOT ADDRESSING THE REAL PROBLEM, as alternate explanations for their difficulties surface in myriad ways.

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Everyone wants to believe they are such an evolved human being, above everyone else; so noble that mistakes cannot be made. It's an irrational form of thinking that stems from the delusion of being surrounded by right-minded and civilized people. We also tend to believe in a total disconnect from being primal and certainly not able to act aggressively against perpetrators. **This goes on until you engage in brutally honest therapy and stop kidding yourself.** I'm not talking about going on a destructive path and hurting people who are suspected, but being able to think of the child's welfare and shed a light on the abuser's actions and life in general.

But the hard truth is that not everyone (very few actually) want to enter therapy. So it is up to healthcare professionals to promote self-advocacy. Children are raised to depend on an adult-oriented world. This does not include knowing how to detect head-games and have a vigilant respect towards personal boundaries. The subject of feelings is still treated as a alien novelty. Anger is still something to be stamped out and punished.

An example of self-advocacy would be helping the child to solidly establish relationships with teachers and other adults at school. We assume that kids will grab a teacher and verbally communicate on what is going on a home. No, most kids don't operate with this much trust. In a family where sexual abuse is being, the teacher is treated like an outsider who doesn't need to know. Many children, even if not being abused in this manner have a single dimensional view of adults (they are big rule makers) and this is far as it goes.

This is my experience from working with children as their therapist and being a survivor.

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All of your comments are wise and reflect our culture's abhorrence and aversion to facing the facts of sexual abuse. It happens. It happens in families. It happens to very very young children (under 6 weeks of age) largely by men, but also by women. And it goes on for years. Some undetected by unsuspecting spouses and clever perpetrators who hide their abuse...others do so out in the open and wives are caught in a cycle of violence they cannot see how to stop. Many children are abused without the knowledge of the mother until many years after the abuse occurred...for the reasons you all know.

Children with disabilities, who have cognitive and communication disabilities, many who are non-verbal (many with autism) are also abused. I did not see them mentioned in the above comments. Perpetrators, in my experience, of these children are particularly vicious in their abuse, but are also very confident that the abuse will never be discovered because of the child's disability. When the child acquires the ability to communicate, however, their disclosures are often met with disbelief: No one would ever do that to a child with a disability! That's what they say, And the disbelief is universal: friends, neighbors, police, investigators, judges, prosecutors, forensic interviewers, attorneys, social workers...and even including disability service professionals. The essential healing ingredient for any abuse survivor is that she/he is believed. When they encounter a person (therapist, friend, family member, etc.) who believes them, healing begins. I can't tell you how many of my clients with disabilities state again and again, "You believe me..." It's not many words, for those who are low-verbal or those who use AAC, and it is plenty. I'm sure those who have already commented will agree that being believed by those who learn of the abuse is healing and essential.

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Some people do not want to get involved with any issues about Sexual Abuse. It is too sensitive. People have that mentality, as long as it does not happen to mine I am not worried about it, but then you have those who strictly want to stay out of the picture for fear of bad publicity. Then those who feel like "my vote will never count so why even bother?" It is not just a matter of how you say it, but the response and action in which we all give. Everyone's voice matters and if we want this devastating thing to end we must act quickly. Great question Mr. Smith.

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I love your comment and I agree with it faithfully. It could happen to any type of child, especially the ones who cannot talk or are too disabled to do anything about it. It is sad but it does happen. The only way that it can stop is if we as parents are careful about who we let in our lives and in our houses, and monitor the children as close as we possibly can.

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Yes, it is very common. the BJS came out two weeks ago with stats that people with disabilities become victims of crime at THREE TIMES THE RATE of people without disabilities. You say that if parents are "careful" about who comes into our lives, that is a protection. I agree with you but only to a point. Perpetrators are slick and often present very very well. You would NEVER KNOW that behind closed doors they are quite different. **The only way that I know of to reduce...not eliminate...the danger of abuse is to create a detailed plan** for oneself and one's kids or, if a carer, the person you are caring for and yourself. A plan for the both of you. Each has things to learn. This is like any other unwanted disaster: earthquake, flood, etc. Take every piece of information about sexual (and/or other types of abuse) you can gather, then make your plan. I have collected all of this information and a step by step guidebook on creating a plan. And, I have had wonderful successes with my clients over the years. For those who were able to evade an abuse attempt and those who were abused, but because they understood what was happening, and their power lay in AFTER they got home, were much better psychologically than others who did not have a plan for themselves or their parent.

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I have seen the research of one of the largest commercial insurers in the nation. The rate of sexual abuse in a daycare setting overall is typically very small...that is until you add one male to the staff...then the numbers rise to staggering proportions. Being aware of this study, I chose to put my career on hold until both children were in school full-time. Sometimes we simply need to understand the numbers. It is unfortunate these studies are used for liability insurance and never released to the public.

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Although the stats for csa most often delivered are probably reliable, I am convinced by my own experience and research that these are pathetically conservative estimates. Truth is, unfortunately, sexual abuse is almost a right of passage for most denizens in many places of the world including our civilized, modern and sophisticated America. This offense and penetration of innocent helplessness is just one variation in the manifestation and experience of trauma that we are all assured to have as we choose to incarnate for ripe and meaningful benefits of an earth sojourn. All experiences are intentional, meaningful and necessary; if not, they would not occur, happen or manifest. We must endeavor to raise our consciousness and level of humanity until only increasingly rarefied experiences can occur to us all. Know that we cooperate with divinity for the purpose of achieving progressive steps towards perfection. The date, time and place of birth presents a report card of purpose, passion, mission and experiences to be tackled and eventually mastered. Those of us engaged in dedication to recondition thinking and living about the subject do so because we have, ourselves, been touched irretrievably by this dark or struggle against a reservoir of indelible trauma from past incarnation which we are, in present incarnation, obliged or compelled to set right. In astro-psychological nomenclature, these experiences of wrenching, indelible and irreversible traumas are labelled as Plutonian awakenings. Child sexual abuse, rape, incest, domestic violence, murder, bullying, natural and man made catastrophe to name a few that have genesis in this disruptively dark umbrella. There are so many others including the meanness of racial or any other discrimination which isolates, vilifies, attacks with the thrust of demoralizing spirit. Point is that these are lessons that we must become acquainted with for inexorable growth and expansion. If we have choice, it is how we absorb or assimilate these experiences. Those aware, willing and capable of accomplishing lessons via thought, imagination or emotional vivification may avoid the necessity of concrete, physical realizations. Just as a skillful knowledge of DNA may reveal genetic coding that may predispose to disease or health, astrological coding permit distinct markings that betray potential for emotional/sexual harm or maladjustment. The gestalt of the natal horoscope can reliably identify potential "victims" as well as perpetrators and, not surprisingly, they are very similar; just different ends of the same continuity. Now, I invite any sage in this forum capable of thought outside the box to demand that I demonstrate proof, reality or relevance of which I awkwardly here speak.

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I am very careful of who I let around my kids, especially when we are in our own house environment. I am very picky when it comes to who I let walk through my door and who my daughters friends are. That is basically why I am a single mom, because I am afraid to let people in my children's life. I know that everyone is not like this. It is just the point that anything could happen anywhere. I have been a home where a man was the sexual suspect and it pained me badly and that is why I am the way I am. Not to direct it towards everyone but careful is just how I would like to be. Abuse has been a strong impact on me and because of it I am very determined keep myself and my children safe from it.

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Educating liberally and protecting carefully our offspring are hallmarks of best parenting practices, and are usually rewarded with big returns. What I am aware of emboldens me to suggest that if you or your parents have had experiences of CSA or DV then it is even more likely that your progeny may experience the same unless you take great effort or care to assure an alternative, optimum development as you seem to state the many precautions that

you habitually already have taken. Provide me birth information on your daughters and I'd be pleased to provide a summary of the presence or absence of markers that might indicate heightened potential for the concerns discussed.

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Over the years, I have learned several things about why people, including adults, parents and other persons who know it is occurring in the life of a child. These thoughts and lack of action are all interrelated.

1. There is a belief that it is not their duty to report. Someone else should do it, or will do it. "Well, everyone in the family knows it, so why do I have to do the reporting?"
2. Do not wish to become involved in the matter, for sake of having to potentially get caught up in the trial or upset the family. "No one likes a rat."
3. If they ignore it, they can forget it. "Maybe, nothing is happening, and I just perceived it incorrectly."
4. There is an actual jealousy in some cases where a mother allows the father, her boyfriend, or partner to have sexual intercourse with the child. Even an infant, because the child asked for it. The child, therefore is the one to blame for trying to take Mom's lover. "If he/she did not draw attention to themselves, then it would not have happened. That's what he/she deserves for trying to seduce my man."
5. Some allow the abuse to occur because, they want to keep the molester in their own lives. "If I turn him in, he will go to jail, and I will have no one to pay the bills, or I will be alone. I need him."
6. Lacking the mental comprehension that it is not okay. "She has a boyfriend. Her Uncle loves her so much. They are going to have a baby." (True, yes true comment from the actual mother of the girl who suffered abuse at the hands of her brother, father, and uncle for over 18 years.)
7. Active participant. (self-explanatory)

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Despite all plausible precautions, measures, and evasive actions that a parent or parents make; never allow yourself to feel safe. More so, never presume or assume that your child is safe. There truly is never such a thing. It only takes two - five minutes, or even less. A bathroom break. Snack time. Play time.as one person stated...they are slick. They are one step ahead and in cases of the disabled who cannot speak or even utter a sound...it takes only thirty seconds, which is shorter than your turning away to grab a pen...answer a call, or send a text.

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This is not a safe universe we live in. The trick is to strike a balance between trusting indiscriminately and putting proper safeguards in place. 'Trust the lord and tie your camel' they say in the desert. It's much the same here. Tie your camel means: instill proper boundaries in your children, discuss healthy sexuality with them and give them every reason and opportunity to talk to you about the things that happen in their life. **Preventing child sexual abuse is something that is done on a daily basis, by the type of environment you provide for your children.**

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Although this is generally critical and thought to be sound advice by many, in reality it becomes a very exhausting and dauntless charge, almost humanely impossible, to maintain this level of hypersensitivity bordering on paranoia regarding protecting the sexual/emotional sanctity of our children in their development. This nearly helicopter parent has walked the line. Some children have greater proclivity towards the harm of csa than others and this potential may be readily detected in the map of the birth promise. Just as all should be apprised of the possibility of heart attacks, those born into families with a history of this illness should take greater precautions to avoid this development of this malady. My research along the lines of csa, incest and dv suggest markers which reliably yield incidents of such trauma. It is my intention to ferret out similar markers that will betray the incidence of autism spectrum as well and would be pleased to discuss the matter with you.

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Agreed, some of us are better advised to pray harder and to tie our camels tighter and this admonition should be well directed before becoming too late and a devastating surprise!

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It's always surprised me how little people actually know about child sexual abuse. Just the statistics of it appear to surprise the unaware every time they're listed. But even more so when it comes to the impact, the way abuse is experienced by the victim/survivor. With these statistics, 'having been sexually abused as a child' is as common as having cats. It's time we start to talk about child sexual abuse and sexuality as a matter of course, as often and as freely as you would about the antics of your cat.

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I would love to have the discussion with you. My own daughter at 3 years of age, who at the time was non-verbal autistic, was molested by a therapist while attending ABA therapy at a supposed, secured centre where we were ensured her utmost safety. Despite our best efforts for conviction, it took 2 years for the police to actually investigate the allegation, only to tell us that because our daughter was only 3 at the time in addition to having

autism she was not viable to imply any sexual violations. Despite her telling a forensic interviewer verbatim accounts without our being there in the room and her story & the name never changed.

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You bring up an important topic in this discussion. When the system totally fails to protect a child, how do the parents react? You follow the rules, you do everything right, and you are left with a broken child who you could not protect nor find justice for. Will parents of victims find their own form of justice?

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I think having a plan, offers the best possible risk reduction there is. It reduces the incidence and impact of abuse. It does not require daily helicoptering, but it certainly requires several hours developing the plan at the beginning. **Perpetrators have a plan...we should too!** That is one of the mottos. Another is, "Knowledge is Power." Your/your daughter's story is sadly more the rule than the exception. That is why our project, provides training for law enforcement, investigators, interviewers, prosecutors and judges.

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I'm wondering if you are planning to make a complaint about ADA violations to the U.S. Department of Justice? Since your daughter was able to tell the forensic interviewer what had happened, it appears that failure to prosecute may have been due to negative attitudes toward children with disabilities...clear discrimination. Although some prosecutors decline to file a case, the refusal is usually based on "not enough time or money" for the special case. Discrimination. I urge you to make a complaint not only the the US Dept of Justice but your State's ADA Compliance office and also to file a civil case against the agency where the abuse occurred.

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Please refer to my earlier statements about helping children build self-advocacy. I have a style of counselling and education that is based on practical action and cutting through self-doubt. Many people can create a storm of confusion and blame, but the child can be helped to take personal control through use of language and centering. Adults will continue to confound the situation of sexual abuse (without a sure plan), so to depend pure reasoning will always be like spinning your wheels in quicksand. **Self-advocacy needs to be a normalized and mandatory part of early curriculum in schools.**

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I believe, that in addition to information and a plan, included in the plans I recommend is a keen attention to intuition, the little voice inside, the one that tells you how you feel in a particular location, or event or around certain people. That is our best GPS system for danger or safety.

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Right, but without such matters being an accepted part of earlier education, children are broadsided daily with "your thinking and feeling isn't worth considering" type of mindset in both school and households. This is not because of adult's malicious intent, but the business of life that often does not include a focused intent to mind intuition.

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RIGHT, and this is why I emphasize this in the trainings I do on the topic and it is emphasized in the book, with examples of ignoring and paying attention to intuition. It is embedded openly in the sample plans in the book. **Trying to open minds, here, about "the best" risk reduction strategies.**

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The faculty of intuition like so many others of our gifts is more developed or available to some than others. This instinct is suggested if not measured in the gestalt of the natal horoscope for any child. I can attest to more than a few occasions on the mean streets of, Harlem, New York City in my youth when I intuitively avoided "monster" predators in wait because they projected or betrayed a peculiar fondness of me or keen interest in social connection that just seemed weird or inappropriate for circumstances. Voices went off in my head, red alert, back up, get outta here! I am confident that it is worthwhile effort to encourage this protective perception in our young for their safety and protection.

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I have been alerted to this faculty by people with I/DD who have told me, "I had a feeling I should not go there, be with that person...etc. " We all have it. However, it needs to be nurtured, practiced, and we need, I think, to pay attention to when we respond to it and when we have ignored it. There are many examples of it from survivors of 9/11...who decided not to go to work that day, or medical appointments at the towers, because they had a bad feeling about it. Others who decided last minute not to take the flights that were involved. I tell stories of being aware of the warnings, but not heeding the warnings, then making YET ANOTHER commitment to always pay attention AND take a different action. Seems to be a lifelong effort to tune in and pay attention. In trainings, I have each participant tell of times they have listened/ignored their inner wisdom voice....

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Thank you for making this last comment that you did. We with cognitive ability and understanding are able to understand that odd pattern of behaviors before it is too late, or we understand what it means when our parents say...no one is to touch you there. You tell me immediately! You scream, yell, hit, bite, and do all you can to get away which is what I have told all of my kids since they were six months old. Here is the kicker. My daughter told me through words that she had never spoken before, that this man hurt her down there. When I asked how, should could not at the time completely express. I took that as "maybe" she does not understand what she is saying. So, I begged multiple therapist to help her and I work through this, because my husband was just wanting to kill this man. I wanted to help my daughter and get this man out of his position of working with kids forever, even if that meant sending him to jail and smearing his name. The centre did not back us up, took his side, and he is an OT working with disabled kids now. My daughter broke boundaries and limits of her own condition to tell me albeit in fragments, what was happening. She screamed, she kicked, bit, begged, and it took 3-4 people to get her out of the car when it was time for ABA. It was then I knew he had done it, I knew he had violated my beautiful little girl. We demanded that since they refused to even suspend him for a an investigation, lied to us about telling the police, or filing a report to DHS, that he was not to be anywhere near her. If he was anywhere near her, that we would file a civil suit, and would go to every single news station in the state. They removed him from the section of the school from where she was. That was our only victory. The Developmental Paediatrician stated that since no one in the area, that maybe we could talk to her about it if she began to present signs of a memory of the events. She began exposing herself, touching herself, having her two younger and more severe siblings touch her, she eventually severely hurt her brother and sister. I was begging everyone to help me before my other kids were also hurt. DHS helped us. They investigated, they stated that our daughter was clear, concise, and descriptive of what he did to her and that kids do not know about that sort of foreplay. They pushed the police again to investigate, they pushed to help find us a counsellor. However, no charges, and not one counsellor. So, I changed my degree plan to work with kids who were in NEED! All children. I will never turn a child or family away because it is "too hard." I will find someone to help them. This is why I say, there is no truly secure zone. I am not a helicopter parent. I was a police officer, I am a Criminal Justice major, and I knew children who were molested in my own family. Repeatedly. I never truly trusted anyone and as soon as my daughter began to act out, regress and show severe signs of trauma, I screamed NOW! It was others who failed her, not me...though I certainly took my sweet time recognizing it. Parents crack under this pressure. Children get tossed to the side like garbage, or called liars, or incompetent. In the end the criminal goes about his way, and the people who hired him, kept him, defended him, and let a 3 year old autistic child get raped, by a paedophile are still happy, It is only the family that is still suffering.

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All of your comments just amaze me. It is ashamed but some parents have already found their form of justice when their child has been molested or has experienced sexual abuse. They take things into their own hands. They feel that the suspect will never be brought in and so commit other ways of doing things that are very unlawful. It hurts, but it happens and not only is the parent suffering but the child is suffering another incident besides sexual abuse. THE LOSS OF A PARENT.

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Appreciate your sensitive disclosure, of tribulations your family suffered in pursuit of safety, wellness and justice regarding mistreatment by caregivers and injurious failure by legal authorities. This is a saga that demands vindication but is more widespread than imagined or known. My profound empathy to you, your daughter and the many who are failed and, therefore, harmed by our often revealed inadequate jurisprudence. Please know that all such experiences in the language of astrologers are plutonian passages which touch us so deeply, at the core, from which we are unable to regain previous composure or emotion/psychological or even, sometimes, physical stasis. We must radically change our thinking, approach to living and transform into something else. Sometimes unfortunately the metamorphosis is devolution, degradation but the optimum outcome is uplift, ardent desire for personal as well as community progressive shifting. We are tested by baptism in the trauma fire of horrendous, disruptive experience. The crucible of experiences on earth becomes a platform to forge spiritual muscle of extraordinary character. Most of us who labour in this cause are decorated with invisible chevrons of devotion and achievement in converting what are apparently acts of hurt, harm, degradation and abuse which diminish the human community.

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You mentioned in one of other posts about conducting a layout of her daughters information based upon birth could you please explain further to me either here or in private of what this is precisely. I have a general idea...but I am one of those mystical minds that is simply fascinated by this.

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The foremost reason why CSA is not taken as seriously as it ought to be can be encapsulated in the word 'denial'. Denial from those for whom the very idea is so abhorrent that it is unthinkable; denial from those who had it happen

to them who would prefer to deny its happening; denial from those who did it because they come into the previous category of denial. Denial from families where it is endemic (because they have learned to deny that anything is wrong); denial from wives, sisters, daughters, sons, brothers, husbands who would rather not face the ugly truth that a someone they know is destructive of innocence and purity. Easier by far to turn a blind eye or, as some do, live in a make-believe world where the child is seen as, at least, part culpable. But not in my world!

Denial I think is one of the biggest reasons Child Sexual Abuse is not taken as seriously as it should be. Also, there are so many victims who become survivors and thus those who don't understand the awfulness and impact.

Regarding your comment, that many victims become survivors and "don't understand the awfulness and impact", I cannot agree with that. I'm a victim, survivor and consider myself a thriver, having written and published a book about my own personal story of incest for the very reason that I DO understand the awfulness and want others out there to know what we go through and how it feels, and how at 68, I have never forgotten. There are hundreds of victims like me campaigning against abuse on Facebook, trying to do what they can to raise awareness. But there is always also going to be that feeling of futility ie. will we ever get our message across and is there any hope the abuse of children will stop. I, for one, believe all we can do is increase awareness but we haven't got a chance in hell of eradicating the problem and the initial causes of it. It's too ingrained into cultures worldwide.

You miss read what I said or meant. Victims and Survivors know the impact. Also those who have been impacted by child sexual abuse in other ways. My point is, one of the reasons why child sexual abuse is not taken seriously is many who don't understand it or the impact are those who see many victims turn into survivors etc. and thus, they are the ones who don't understand the impact and awfulness of being a victim of sexual abuse.

Total recovery is nonexistent, because although we may forgive, survive, thrive, achieve in spite of, the wave we stand upon is built from tears. These are my tears, your tears, and the tears of countless unknown children and adult survivors who continue to suffer the unspeakable actions of others. As long as one more child out there is abused, the wave I stand upon only grows taller.

Ah, that's clearer now.

I think we need to speak more realistic about healing from child sexual abuse. If it seems hopeless people will continue to look away. Nobody wants to feel desperate and disempowered. And it's not hopeless. You can heal from child sexual abuse. We need to start telling the tales of recovery, and yes, I do believe, full recovery is possible. If we start telling our hero and heroin stories, people will take heart from the stories. It's time to lift ourselves out of the victim-role and inspire others to do the same.

It is not hopeless, but we become less human if we forget the suffering children have endured. I am highly successful but I will never bury the compassion I feel for others who have suffered. Recovery is everything and we can praise it to the rooftops, but I find it difficult to applaud my success knowing the numbers of children at risk. I think I have always felt my recovery is miniscule in comparison to the enormity of the problem.

The answers: denial, not wanting to talk about it, etc. reflecting a desire to not want to talk about scary and negative things and also feeling helpless to do anything about it. I call it Risk Reduction...not prevention. I treat the issue as any unwanted problem such as earthquakes or hurricanes. You don't want it to happen, but you prepare just in case.

When we keep silent about child abuse we honour the abuser. **Unfortunately there is a culture of silence towards problems of this sort.** With the recent rise in child abuse cases in the world, I have on many occasions asked the same question, "Why the silence?" then I began to study the culture and the human society using my country Nigeria as a case study. We need to re-evaluate the way we raise our children especially the way we raise our men in relation to the woman, in relation to everything that relates to the woman. There is also the way we raise the girl to perceive her body or her femaleness. When we survey the different stages of formation of children and the things, behavioural patterns they learn from the immediate society, then only can we realize that the causes of this perversion are in many cases, **fallout of our own action or our own neglects** as parents, guardians, teachers, political or traditional leaders, etc. There are certain customs and practices in our cultures that encourage, promote and even permit this sort of abuse.

Like all forms of abuse, the abuser associates the abused with vulnerability and helplessness. Unfortunately the abused girl too is taught to associate her femaleness with a weakness that lends itself (as it were) to exploitation.

SILENCE ON THE PART OF THE ABUSED

1. When the child is not treated equally as others that child is likely not to have enough sense of self worth or boldness that will encourage the child to speak up. In the Nigerian society where the boy is ranked over and above the girl, the girl child who is abused may decide that since she is not taken seriously as the boy, no one will listen to her complaint, let alone believe her story. This attitude to abuse is rampant in societies where the girl child is not given audience, she is physically present in the home as a trophy for some man in the future, so year after year she is being prepared for that future. She is an absentee to the "speaking" part of the family. She is an absentee to "speaking out" because the cultural and religious society extols the "silence" of a woman as virtuous. So when such a child is sexually abused, she (in this case) conceals it and buries it in her sub-conscious, from where it will rear its head some time later in future.

2. Another reason for silence on the part of the abused is fear. In many cases (if not all) the abuser threatens the child, it could be in the form of death threats or threats of mating out some for or violence to member of the family of the abused. So the child keeps silent because he or she believes that is the only way to protect herself or himself, and the ones dearest to him or her.

3. There is also the shame, embarrassment and stigmatization usually associated with sexual abuse. This is very disturbing trend in our society because it condemns the victim and vindicates or protects the abuser. While people are busy stigmatizing the abused, they forget, or are in denial of the existence of the abuser. The abuser takes advantage of this culture of stigmatization of the victim. Very little or nothing is done to unmask the criminal. In fact, it seems to me, that many are less concerned about the abuser, they appear to be even sympathetic to the abuser. So, the abused child sees this trend in the society and does not speak.

4. Girls are taught to be ashamed of their body. There is this bizarre, negative mystery associated with the female body. It creates a mystery between the girl child and her own body. She does not know nor does she understand her body as a thing of honour. Misinformed parents fail to, or deliberately refuse to educate their children about sex, so that aspect of the child's life is totally vague, confusing and blank to the child. Some parents claim it is sinful to teach children about their own bodies. At school during biology classes on reproduction, teachers separate the boys from the girls. This gives the impression that the woman's body is...

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you make some excellent points. From a cross cultural perspective I can only say that it's not much different from one society to the next. Thanks.

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I could not agree with you more. I wish a lot more people would speak out about it so we can find solutions too it. It burdens me so much when I find out a person has received child abuse and for many years to. I only pray that things get better. Good comment

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I am glad she was awarded the money to care for herself and her children...but that money multiplied by all currencies in the world cannot and will not give her back what was lost. She is a far bigger person than me for not blaming her mother. I find it extremely difficult to believe she had absolutely no idea. And the most concerning part is the whole "statute of limitations" idea. There are none in murder and rape should be no different. May that be the next law that changes...**if you are guilty then you are still guilty now.**

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The roles of mothers in these cases is always one of the most baffling. I'm currently reading a book where the mothers of 6 incest victims are interviewed. It's quite amazing how they just didn't know, and when they found out, what they did or didn't do. My mom went to her grave not wanting to believe that what I finally told her in the last year of her life was the truth. Several people who have read my book also go as far as hating my mother. And yet, I never hated nor blamed her and to this day I'm not sure she knew. Yet I don't understand how she couldn't. She too was his victim and scared to death of him, just as I was. The mother's role in incest is incredibly complicated and worthy of its own long term investigation.

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I was never a victim of traditional sexual abuse, but rather exposed to acts between my parents that no child should see. I know that it did a severe amount of damage to my mental state. My mother willingly did these things. We as a whole we beaten terribly and lived in fear. However, when I have asked her how she could not only stand by and watch us be beaten...or how she could do what she did in front of us; she says she was beaten too and denies what she and my father did and made us watch...or comments with, "I was trying to keep the peace." I am sorry. Maybe I am wrong, but that is not good enough for me. And at what cost does she define peace?

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I honestly believe that some, not all know. There simply is not that much collective ignorance in the world. However, just as my own mother said...they want to maintain peace. **They fear** where they would be if they had no husband, boyfriend or support system.

As much as we don't want to accept it, "**keeping the peace**" is a huge part of why moms do nothing. That is coming out in the book I'm reading. And yes, so many of these woman stay in this situation, despite what is happening with their children, for, as they see it, the sake of the children ie. the abuser brings home a pay cheque. Without him, how does she feed her kids. So they put up and shut up. Also, as you mention in your other post, many moms are themselves victims of incest or sexual abuse of some kind. If they haven't had therapy or come to believe otherwise, they just accept that this is a woman's lot in life. She went through it and didn't die, so you'll survive too. It sucks but it's a reality that is very common for thousands of victims. It's also why this scourge is so hard to eradicate, if it ever can be.

We must get beyond the illusion of single identity and limited consciousness of the here and now to savor or achieve satisfying answers to the perplexing questions of csa/incest. We all are spiritual beings that pursue lives and mimic personalities to gather experiences for the purpose of advancement/evolution. Sexual abuse and other manifestations of trauma are lessons that we attract for competence in achieving more progressive expressions of human living. My research confirms that mothers who must manage the predicament of abuse of their young by husbands, boyfriends and trusted others almost always have dealt with the same or similar abuse themselves or are familiar with scenario because of affiliation with significant others. The test or challenge must be presented, recognized and successfully managed. Only with this achievement is there a chance of liberation so that other emotional challenges may be encountered. If you have been molested, it is likely that one or both parents have had grappled the same challenge and, more than likely, your progeny will be presented similar opportunities to show mastery of this conundrum of sexual abuse/incest. Ignoring or failing to intervene or correct instances of csa is proof positive that task is not solved and will repeat itself or surface on subsequent occasion or appropriate life juncture. The timing or appropriateness of experiences are reliably indicated by astrological measures.

I very much agree with both of you. I know that fear is one of the strongest bonds. There is a failure to realize the ability to overcome. I had the misfortune of being a child born in the early 1970s. This was a time, especially in the small town in which I was raised; that everyone knew, but no one reacted. I admire those of you who have written books about your lives. I hope one day to do the same. It has been a goal of mine for the last 25 years. I refuse to allow blind eyes or fear to be an excuse. It is often said it takes a village to raise a child. However, the time has come to realize it takes that same village to save a child. The duty is ours.

I was shocked to read "...being a child born in the early '70's"...when everyone knew but no one reacted." In the '70's child abuse was spoken about all over the place with conferences galore and newspaper articles, My neighbor's child was a raped at school and everyone knew - and responded. Although at the time, rape treatment centers were just just opening, it was no longer a secret that these things happen. I'm sure in certain communities, including rural ones such as yours, the shift from actual ignorance to knowledge may have been slower. It is BELIEVING that it happens that I think is the main idea of this conversation. And while there is a belief that it does happen, that belief just does not seem to apply to actual people sitting right in front of us. That applies to not only family and community members, but also members of the response community: police, investigators, prosecutors, judges. Children's statements seem to be "suspect" while the statements of the adult suspects are believed without a doubt. They can lie their heads off, as "pillars" of the community, well-known, well-liked members of families, etc. That is what I don't understand.

As stated before, I know my mother did nothing about the abuse because of her fear of not making it without a man. I was told I should write a book about my life but thought the task to difficult. I have kept journals since my recovery which was very helpful. Speaking of recovery, do you know the percentages of people recovering from addictions that are also victims of CSA is astounding? I thought that I was so unique, not so. I was born in the 40's, matters not the time, NOONE wants to talk about or do anything about it.

Maybe I will still write that book yet!?

When you say, "no one wants to talk about it or do anything about it." Now there are hundreds of agencies around the country addressing child sexual abuse, conferences with thousands of people in attendance. We are so much better off than in the past. AND we are not where we should be. Parents do not receive information about abuse from their doctors when they are pregnant, to inform them of this pervasive problem. Parenting classes do not

address the issue. Schools do not address the issue. Churches do not address the issue. Parents are not receiving the information they need to be aware of changes they may notice in their child, signs (if any) by their partners who may be sexually abusing the child. When the abuse results in STDs that are found in infants and children, this is clear evidence that cannot be ignored or misunderstood (hopefully). I think much should and could be done to improve this problem.

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She said that she was a child of the 70's in a small town. When I was a child being abused no one spoke of it. It was a deep dark secret. The awareness is much better now, however not in all places. I truly believe that when they teach sex education, they should include some sort of prevention. Sex education should be taught earlier, like 3rd grade, children are more mature now.

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As a certified sex educator, I do not include crime victimization in my classes, except among a list of other topics they may want to learn about. Sex, sexuality, dating, romance, etc. are to me, all in one category: sexuality. Child sexual abuse, rape, etc. all fall into :crime victimization. With too much of one in the other, the sex ed classes, especially for people with disabilities, basically teach NO NO NO!

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Since the statistic has been compiled that 1 in 4 girls & 1 in 7 boys in the U.S. will have been sexually abused by age 18, how about some credible statistics being requested for how many abusers were first abused themselves (sexually or otherwise)? How about also demanding FAR better training for judges, GALs, etc. plus exposure re existing statistic that ~ 58,000 cases per yr in U.S. have judges (some judges & GALs corrupt, too- google "Judicial Hellholes") ordering kids into abusive custody or abusive unsupervised visitation- we MUST FIND WAY to get major media to expose this! Act as catalyst to get constructive, compassionate ideas for solutions!

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I grew up in a town of roughly 300 people. Most of which were elderly individuals who were born in the early 1920s, and some even earlier. There were no other children to play with aside from my sister. My grandparents believed in corporal punishment, on both maternal and paternal sides. Teachers knew my parents personally, and knew my father to be abusive, and for the most part absentee. His name was in the paper when his lover was killed by her husband, with another man. Her husband came to our home with a shotgun, threatening to kill my father. I was the one sent out to greet him. Everyone talked about the scandal, our names, my sister's and mine, as well as her kids names. So, we were harassed in school, as were they. There was the mindset that, if it wasn't your house, keep your eyes, ears, and nose out of it. My father threw our home furnishings into the yard almost weekly, so we would get off the bus seeing our beds, and clothes in the yard. He would be waiting for us outside in the yard with a belt. The kids, teens, and bus driver would see him, no one said a word. I went to basketball practice and games, changed clothes to expose bruises, but no one mentioned it. It was ignored by all that knew. So, while you are in California, where life was far more fruitful and advanced. We still had outdoor bathrooms, wells, and shared phone lines. It was by all accounts the land that time forgot. A different standard of living, responding, educational level, employment, there were no police, no CPS, and no school counsellors. We merely accepted our life as it was, as did everyone else. The reality is, that you must look outside the modern, high technology, and face paced world and realize that there are still placed in our own nation, that are decades behind...that is one of the biggest issues in making this issue common knowledge.

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Your point is well taken, that there are AREAS still today in our country similar if not identical to what you describe in the '70s. We often speak of culture in geographic areas, while there is also a culture of one's own family. Sounds like yours was both. Thanks for the reminder. One could live in a house with the same culture as yours, TODAY in California or New York, and be just as isolated and far from help as you were.

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I think people are afraid. When it happens in their back yard they go into denial. Consciously or unconsciously people wonder what they would do if it were to happen to them. Like an oh my God! There goes the empathy and ability to be supportive. No matter what, people can't seem to get out of their own issues long enough to help another person.

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You are SO RIGHT....that's in part why I wrote my book on how to reduce the risk and impact of abuse. It serves the child/vulnerable adults, but also empowers, informs and strengthens the parent who learns of the abuse, so they know what to say and what to do....and WHAT NOT TO DO AND SAY as well.

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I agree. I can quickly sum it up: REPERCUSSIONS . All of them. Death, Homelessness, ongoing fears, threats and on and on and on.....

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Hopefully, it is enough to help parents do the right thing in the beginning stages of a case. In addition to bad reactions by other family members, shunning the parents who act correctly to protect their child, etc.

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I agreed with you regarding . Are you knocking me for a reason. Why am I listed "Deleted" I already have a "LIKE" can you fix it? Thank you.

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SOMEWHERE A MISCOMMUNICATION. I don't knock you or anyone! I don't know how to fix "deleted. " it is not my skill.

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As a court appointed child advocate, it seems one of the most important reasons people don't do much about child sexual abuse begins with FEAR! FEAR if the subject surfaces, the abuse will continue. FEAR that people won't believe because the admission is from a child. FEAR that the subject will bring up painful memories. **Sexual abusers come with all types of threats.**

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I agree that fear is a great reason people don't do much about child sexual abuse. I have worked with many families in this situation. Fear holds so many back from addressing, believing and or following through. Also another fear, that if brought to attention, those who are entrusted to help get the child out of the situation don't or are unable to for some reason and thus the child is subjected to continuous abuse and or harsher abuses.

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One of the main reasons that I have encountered has been it's not my problem or it's not my child so I don't need to get involved, They have their own family and they are more than capable of making the right decision of what's best for them. So to simplify this people just don't want to get involved unless it affects them directly and that goes with anything not just abuse but any situation in life -we are too busy to get involved, Plus that also means that we have to give up our time and if that is not what selfishness Is I don't know What is -and I believe after 25 years I should have a pretty good idea Or I am in the wrong line of work.

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I think people are just scared. They do not want to go through the publicity of others finding out. They would rather let that person suffer then let the abuse be known. Which is wrong. They do not know or care how bad a person is impacted. They only think about their well-being. Sad to say but it is true.

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You're right. Fear has everything to do with it.

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Shame

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I agree that most sex abuse goes on unchecked because people cannot believe that it is happening. We as parents cannot accept that someone we know (and love) maybe offending against a child OR that a child they know can be a victim of an offender (it speaks to our belief as parents that we can protect our children if we love them enough.) When I train parents to develop strategies to protect their children the first thing they mentally have to do is accept that it is possible. When red flags or the feeling of something being "not right" occurs allow yourself to go to the place that says sex abuse could be one of the possibilities.

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The first item is to know and believe that abuse happens.

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We are exceptionally mighty but also very vulnerable as humans. We are committed to our missions of completing life's journey and wish not to consider or encounter bad weather. This is hopeful but also abysmally naive. Trauma just as joy are key, heightened aspects of living and learning. These are scheduled and predictable. Individually, the harpoon of hurt or the ecstasy of bliss will manifest in different times and arenas of our life space. Consider the analogy of sexual abuse and death for they are both plutonian experiences with some variation. None expect their offspring to die young nor do they wish to contemplate or prepare for sexual abuse of the same. Some are foolish enough to think that death ought never to occur. The trauma and necessity of both of these functions are positive, certain and may be reliably anticipated if we but broaden our spiritual horizons of perception. Growth requires contortion, reconfiguration and in the cauldron of gestation there is opportunity for transformation into new awareness and a higher form of existence as is inevitable. Red flags are signs reflected in celestial movement and

order.

I could read your words over and over again. They are sincere, poetic, and painfully true. They ring in my ears and head like the speeches of great men. If they were on audio I would play them so that all could listen.

There is wisdom in your comment but I am struggling to understand the correlation between 'death', which is a natural part of the life process, and 'sexual abuse' which, to me, is aberrant behaviour. Can you say more about what you mean by the 'necessity' of this form of trauma?

I dare not speak for him. However, my perception is, essentially these acts occur as part of the cycle of mankind. It goes beyond what we see or know in our world. Destiny, or fate is inevitable. No one wants to die, and we certainly do not want this fate for our children no more than we want them to be victims of sexual abuse. However, the reality is that it does happen and despite our battle to prevent it, it is going to occur. Education about what is out there stalking children & adults will spread, but it will not stop the act. Victimology states the precise concept. Victims are born, not made, but the question is "why?" Why one & not the other?

I second your request for an explanation. A big part of why I write counselling literature is the need for behavior and consequences to have a practical face. The world of mental health is looked upon as ghoulish enough without sexual abuse topics being left open to interpretation.

My sincere gratitude, for the compliment and a clear expression that we have some resonant thought and feeling on this grave matter: the protection of our children and, consequently, the health and wellness of society in our future. You are apparently spiritually mature enough to view death as "a natural part of the life process." For it certainly is this and more than this, a release or promotional opportunity for new life and even greater achievement. For spirit is eternal and incapable of death but only inevitable evolution or advancement at different energetic rates towards perfection and then beyond. Please comprehend then that various severe traumas such as sexual abuse are mini deaths experienced in the context of a single identity (life time) for the purpose of digesting unavoidable but essential lessons in self control, use of power and respect of the sanctity of others (to be stated broadly). That which you call aberrant behavior is traditionally called by religiosity, evil: wilful intention and behavior which is contrary to good, proper, moral or spiritually progressive if you will. Traumas are the unconscious break through or eruptions of experiences that must needs be resolved unfortunately through turmoil, agony, torture as well as, often, concomitant physical harm. We attract the experiences that we deserve which are capable of providing a horrendous conundrum of experiences which allow us the opportunity learn, redirect or transform our thinking and behavior. If we are "victims" of csa is it very likely that our parents had the same or similar experience as well as other significant family members. Incest would be an obvious example. We can only be born to those who share this energy marking or lesson just as any talent or "cursed" behavior is manifested in family lines for good or bad. Hopefully, survivors have internalized the wrong of the experience or behavior and commit never to participate in this harm, humiliation or violation of another. Transcenders do even more as their outrage over the offense demands that they take solitary and, sometimes, public vows to prohibit others from experiencing this harm by joining organizations with similar strong sentiment, conviction and ideals to abolish the offense, csa. Those of us in this forum with strong desire, intolerance if not compulsion against this pervasive harm have had personal brushes with the darkness or the same runs within DNA to steadfastly reject or convert to higher expressions of behavior that advance rather than hinder our own as well as mankind's progress. In other words, we consciously or unconsciously choose by our actions, hopefully, a progressive niche on the spectrum of behavior: perpetrator--victim--rescuer (savior). We don't just do good or evil. These are built in patterns of behavior that are with us even before conception which we rightfully own and deserve with license to test or change in each succeeding life experience. Prescriptions of behavior are apparent in the spiritual report card of life which the magi of the ancient past and erudite astrologers of present day call the natal horoscope. In practical language, it is possible for me to gauge reliably the potential for child sexual abuse merely by having the date, time, and location of a child's birth. My ambitious goal is to collect sufficient, accurate and reliable data to permit relatively precise prediction of instances of abuse. Also, how these lessons may be digested, internalized, learned satisfactorily with a minimum of trauma or, alternately, an abbreviation of the extent or period of suffering before relief or recovery (healing). For any in earnest about the subject but find my pronouncements arcane madness, I say, let's put it to the test! Provide me 10 bonafide cases of csa and 10 without this harm (given birth date, time, place), I am pretty confident that my skills will reliably identify those who have experienced this trauma.

You also mentioned the point that I was trying to make about victims being born and not exactly made in regards to CSA. Family is our number one influence and interaction. If our family is dysfunctional, even our extended family...it affects us. There were multiple acts of incest in my extended family, which made its way into my own family when a cousin who had himself been molested and molested his sister along with his father and uncle who had done that to him as well as her...molested my sister, and two cousins at the same place over a period of a few hours and kept them captive by holding them at knife point. They were 8, 9 & 10...he was 16. Two girls and a boy and he made them watch the acts. They never told anyone. Later the two girls were raped and abused as adults. Family can be the child's biggest threat, because they are the rapists and the secret keepers. Our family makes us, only to break us and will deny forever their role in our disintegration.

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Thank you for explaining how you see this issue. If I understand you rightly you hold that the trauma of sexual abuse (and other crimes against a person?) is a matter of predestiny and, as thus, is part of the soul's work while inhabiting an earthly body? The trauma being a vehicle for moving towards perfection... or not. I look at the issue from a different perspective... I see those who abuse children as having been taught, in their lifetime, to relate sexually to children. For most adults a pre-adolescent child is not sexually attractive because they lack the physical attributes of sexual readiness, but those who were themselves sexually used as children grow up confused about natural sexuality. And some grow up compelled to 'act out' what was done to them - sometimes with no awareness of their own story. So, for me, the issue is a psychological one - and the way forward has its roots in psychological change. But, I guess, we both agree that a progression toward a more enlightened way of being is imperative.

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A nice perspective to take, however I believe your typology of the perpetrators is incomplete. First of, there's different types of perpetrators of abuse, some who indeed act out the abuse that was heaped upon them. However, there's other precursors that are just as relevant, such as personality disorders, alcohol and drug abuse, coming from a dysfunctional family and mental disability just to name a few.

Then there's the social context as well. Cultural aspects which put men in a dominant role towards the women and children is a factor to be considered. I've heard quite often that because a man's wife was ill, he felt entitled to have sex with his daughter for instance. That sense of entitlement is a cultural bias that we need to look at as well.

The other part of the issue is that the object for the abuse is not always sexual gratification. Quite often power over someone else is the goal with sexual domination being the means by which this is accomplished.

What is needed for change, in my opinion, is that we open our eyes to the reality of child sexual abuse, look at it constructively from all angles, learn to talk about it in a way that goes beyond the screaming and howling about how awful it all is. We need to talk about WHY it is such a heinous crime. About the feelings of powerlessness that are instilled in the child. About the shame and guilt that are used to keep a child bound to the aggressor. We need to wake up. We need to look at abuse more realistically and with less rhetoric. The reality is that in most cases it's not the stranger enticing children out of their homes. For most it's not the sexual slave traders. **For most sexually abused children, home is where the abuser is.**

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Very well said. The idea that it's a stranger more so than a family member, or well known person is inaccurate. Also, you are correct about the reasons why it happens. I, personally find it extremely hard to understand why or how someone could see a child as a means of sexual desire, and even more so when it involves an infant. Some I believe are merely over-sexed, curious, bored, and others just mean or cruel. Yes, it is a sickness. However, there is a great difference between mental illness and dominance or perversion. Serial killers are mentally ill by definition, but not insane. Both groups know right & wrong. Their urge is stronger than all else.

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Most, if not all abusers know it's wrong, or at the very least illegal to have sex with a child. One group of abusers, the ones who are children themselves at the time of the abuse happening, deserve some leniency perhaps, especially since, quite often, these youngsters have themselves been abused. It's possible that some abusers successfully convince themselves that it's not harmful to the child. It's for that group that we need to educate people about the short and long term effects of child sexual abuse.

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There is a man here in Colorado who wrote a book about how to make adult sex with children enjoyable for both. He has already written a book on why paedophilia shouldn't be a crime, and on grooming. It worries me to my core, in this society that eventually a law will pass to allow these acts. Everyone wants their freedom and thus the bandwagon. With the multitudes of traffickers, porn production, and its high demand, in addition to pedo's the numbers are immense. We have come too accepting of all things. I fear it's a matter of time before equality demands start and voting follows. Never say never. Time is forever.

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I am thankful to see so many starting this conversation and adding to it. Child sexual abuse is so very complicated and has such a devastating long-term effect on people. After 20 years of working in the field, I find myself tired. So many cases, faces and families. Very little justice in our criminal system and denial or even victim blaming in our communities. I get it! Grooming impacts all of us. Just take Woody Allen's recent film "Blue Jasmine". Alec Baldwin plays a deviant con artist and leaves his wife for a teenager. Art imitating life or Life imitating art? Jasmine sitting on a park bench talking to herself made a powerful representation of how grooming, manipulation, lies and secrets can impact non-offending partners. We need to educate adults about "Con-Artist" persona, behaviors and capabilities. The tactics are common in a sexual abuse offender. Protector types of adults don't think like people who want to abuse vulnerable people, maybe it is time to fight back with understanding what makes them "tick", so that we can better protect children and vulnerable adults.

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I agree that all of these reasons mentioned play a role in why people do nothing about sexual abuse, but I think another factor is that they really don't understand how devastating sexual abuse is. After giving my testimony last fall, I had a gentleman come up to me in tears and apologized saying he just didn't know. It was enlightening because this man has known me for many years and has heard my testimony before. The difference was that this time as I shared my testimony I built a wall. With each part of my story I would lay down a box with a word on it depicting the emotions or the particular hurt I was experiencing at that time--words like anger, hate, molested, shame, etc. Somehow as he came face to face with those words he got a glimpse of how devastating it is, and it impacted him to the point where he has helped support me in my work. And education is a big part of the work I do.

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Kudos to you, and the countless others who work to make sexual abuse past history. Let's all work together to educate people and protect our children at all costs!

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As a former investigator for CPS many times people would say they didn't know what was going on. The children were afraid to say anything because of threats by the perpetrator. When the spouse was aware and didn't say or do anything it was part of the **dysfunction of the family** as well as the abuse the person was enduring as well. I never spoke to one person that didn't say CSA was disgusting, but they were scared and didn't know who to turn to. I feel there is a wall put up around this subject and many people want to downplay the effects it has on the family as a whole. Sitting through a forensic interview is something that I will never forget as long as I live. **The public needs to understand that it is safe to report CSA and the first priority is to keep the children safe from predators.**

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Thank you! What we need is for CSA to put together a collection of real answers to the questions with the names changed so that people can understand what these kids have to endure. With no open dialogue, the people not involved have no concept.

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I am going to be really honest as I was in my book. My own son TRIED to tell me. I was 18 when I had him, his father died in an auto accident and I was molested as a child and tortured by mentally ill parents to whom never taught me much of anything expect to be alone in my room and to come out to clean the house or do something outlandish like drown kittens and other sick pranks mother forced upon us. Our lives were filled with confusion but I was so excited to hear my baby was going to be a boy...no one would ever touch him so when the doctor wanted to circumcise him, I said no but after three years my sister was trying to help me potty train him and noticed he had an infection so that night, he had an emergency circumcision and I felt awful for never touching, cleaning or even looking there... Because his father died, I wanted to go back to school and become someone (as I later did) but I also felt guilty for going to school and working so I hired the assistant maintenance man who everyone loved especially my son. He was like a father figure and I appreciated him very much. I didn't know what I would do without him... but things changed for my son, he became angry and cried when 'He' came over. I DIDN'T GET IT... when my son finally after months of not being able to figure out his anger and rages, I looked him in his eyes and begged him to tell me what was wrong. 'He' makes me ***. I was SHOCKED, ANGRY and could not believe my son could make up such an awful story! I took away his action figures.... 'He' goes to our church, he's such a nice guy!!! Were some of the things I would say. A month or so passed and my son was screaming in the bathroom. He had blisters on his penis so I figured the circumcision had gotten infected (even though it had been years) I took him to the E.R.....he had herpes at the age of 6. It took me 20 years to write my book in hopes that NO other person has to go through the pain that I put my son through....

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In your honesty you explain so much about how and why sexual abuse can occur without our proper awareness. When someone who everyone around us sees as a 'good' person is the abuser it is so hard to see it differently and especially so when we have not been raised to value our own awareness. I guess that would apply to

you from your description of your childhood. And yes, just as you did, we look for easier explanations so as not to be brought face to face with the awful reality that adults do molest children. You got there... you faced it... and you are fighting against it. All best wishes to you and to your son.

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I am speaking as someone who has endured the violation and abuse due to sexual abuse and for me it started when I was very young about 7 years through age 13 at the hands of a step-dad who was an alcoholic and very abusive. Then at 14 years I was gang raped by 4 18 year old boys who were "friends" I was threatened by each occurrence that they would either do it again, or in the case of my father he threatened me by telling me he would do it to my sister who was 4 years younger. To be honest I have seen many court cases where someone had been raped and that person is made to be the villain and they would ask questions like what were you wearing, did you have on make-up, etc. Bottom line is that you are either not believed or you are attacked again. There are many of us who have had to suffer in silence for many years, for me 36yrs. If we as a society would stand up for these young ladies, perhaps stiffer laws involving rape and other sexual assaults would help. In my case I was ashamed and I felt as though maybe it was my fault. If there is anyone that has been abused sexually that may read this please know it is not your fault, you have done nothing wrong it is the sick individual who assaulted you but sexual assault or rape is not so much a sex crime as it is violent. Get help tell a trusted friend, counsellor, a teacher, anyone. **The longer you stay silent the more harm it will cause you as you get older in life.** We must start standing up to the injustice of rape or sexual assault of any kind it is not okay.

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Has one considered it is a private matter. The Courts are not equipped to hear matters of morality. The Courts today are bogged down with nothing but trash to distract from the real matters by institutionalizing a court with incompetency. Self-medicating the issues to avoid truth. They have attempted to get those to study and show themselves approved. To be able to come into an understanding. Few go there. Morality was tried by the church. Not the courts.

++++
Being a private matter doesn't work for victims, secondary victims or ME. This attitude of "not airing dirty laundry" is why sex offenders gain access and usually have over 100 victims by the time they are caught if they get caught. They (sex offender) love keeping it private!!! No pun intended

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Yes, I do believe that people think! That this is a private matter and therefore choose not to report it. However, It's still a felony and not reporting it is, or in my opinion should be punishable by law as well.

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I must admit to having failed in this matter with my own daughters. As a survivor, I have had serious struggles with body image and difficulty discussing sexual matters, something I wish I had dealt with earlier in my recovery process. Fortunately my daughters are doing a much better job with their children. The cycle has been broken. I will be looking forward to reading your future postings on this matter.

++++
It seems as though no justice has been allowed for your being a victim. I use the term private matter with a different interpretation. As in law. This is a public site. So as I share it may become misconstrued. As in private, law came from the biblical standard back in the day. It has become diluted today. When some want Justice you have to ask yourselves how it is being interpreted to a bunch of Representatives in a court. By No Means Should It Not Be Hidden so to speak. As a child has suffered irreparable harm. I'm simply sharing that it is difficult for court to litigate these moral issues. Again I will state "family issues" were handled in the church courts. You can research this yourselves. When I worked with Mothers of Lost Children. As I have buried a daughter, lost a daughter due to litigation tactics, children 21 years apart, court 13+years, arrested 3x's; jailed twice, walk the trail of tears for the tribes of today. When one ask of Justice. There is proper language and jurisdictions. It does not ever take away the Act or pain. There is no compensation for being victimized. There is a piece of one's life taken you cannot get back. Regardless the outcome of trials or compensation, I apologize if I have offended you or seemingly discounted any act you or yours have experienced. I have went through every National, State, Tribal, Church, affiliate and believe me there are some awake, but most blind and asleep. I am not speaking from a religious take but from wisdom. There is a flood gate of resources to assist if you can move into the healing part. It is hard to move because of those in denial and that want revenge. I have had the experience to be blessed to know there is only one true King Who BORE ALL For me. I am so thankful.

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I appreciate that discussions like these are happening. In regards to my personal journey, my childhood abuse was addressed in the justice system. My grandfather was convicted of numerous felonies and spent 4 years in prison. This was not typical back in the early 80's. Unfortunately by the time he was sentenced the courts estimated that he

had over 100 victims throughout Oregon and Washington. Both of my grandparents attended church and had community involvement. My father supported his daughters and fought to put his father in prison. Justice was served in my case but more importantly, I didn't have to act like it didn't happen at family or community gatherings. I am not offended but am thankful to have open dialogue. We don't have to agree but if we continue to talk about sexual abuse... maybe we can learn better ways to protect vulnerable people.

++++
I was 2 when I was sexually molested. Being that I was so young and also an adoptee, my parents' thought I wouldn't remember, and also the fear of maybe being taken away...but most my childhood was taken already, and the repressed memories ate at my being. No one talked about it. **Silence kills and it nearly killed me.**

++++
Spirit, I applaud your courage! Young children have no knowledge of sexual activity and absolutely no "in-bred" proclivity to induce the abuse of their bodies. Such statements are the ravings of the abusers who enjoy pointing the finger back at the child. I guarantee you did nothing wrong. You were a victim and one who has climbed the mountain to stand above the silence, look down, and declare to the world that you not only survived, but that you thrive and are willing to not only fight back, but protect the children who have suffered along with you. **Silence is our greatest enemy**...not just our own, but the refusal of the majority who have never suffered these abuses to discuss it.

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I'll post on the subject again, because it needs repetition. What is not being taught in our schools is the concept of challenging what we are conditioned to believe, which is that any sort of violation needs to be taken care of, only by a trusted adult. A child's body is his/her own to advocate for. Early training in emotions and self-advocacy (e.g. goals, awareness of boundaries) will contribute to less dependence on adults in the home to make up their mind while the child continues to wait. Or we can continue to gripe and spin our wheels expecting people to change their minds on the subject of sexual abuse. If this worked, we would not be having this conversation.

++++
Well said. Couldn't agree more ie.. "we can continue to gripe and spin our wheels expecting people to change their minds on the subject of sexual abuse. If this worked, we would not be having this conversation". As you say, "Early training in emotions and self-advocacy (e.g. goals, awareness of boundaries) will make the difference when it comes to how children react when they are being abused and in recognizing to whom they can and must turn for help. Unfortunately, that is too often not their own parents.

++++
I myself have been abused first when I was in my high chair and then 4 years old up until 11 yrs old, with my father, brother and my extended family and I had a whirlwind experience. I not only felt shame and guilt, but due to me not being able to express myself with the rest of my family because all of them were abusing me also. So I kept silent for years until it affected my relationships with men and some women. It also kept me from liking myself. Now that I received help, through counselling from a substance abuse treatment facility, because I needed drugs to help me through these ordeals, I also got help from a therapist and incest survivors group. Overall, these helped me so much that I dedicated my life to helping others. I am a substance abuse counsellor and motivational speaker and have helped so many people begin to release their pent up feelings. I am in the process of writing my autobiography. Even one of my abusers tried to talk me out of writing my book, by trying to say "why do you want to expose me to the family and my children", Look I have to do what I have to do for the sake of other people now and I in no way care how he feels or other child abusers feel. Even though I forgave my father on his deathbed and also forgave my older brother who is still living, I still don't feel comfortable around him so I don't go around him. This is a permanent feeling that I have and deal with it with God every time it bothers me. So training people and children is an important matter. This is not going to end, but we can do our best to catch a few people who will listen to what we encountered to slow it down and help others to express themselves. This is all I want to do for the rest of my life. I have a passion and a calling.

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Having been there myself, agree totally.

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You are an amazingly strong person. I admire your strength, courage, and ability to forgive. I never experienced sexual abuse, however my sister, cousins and my daughter have. Please know my heart aches nonetheless. I am especially proud of you for standing your ground and writing your testimonial. I was mentally, emotionally, and physically abused by my parents and sister. I became the scapegoat. Everything was my fault. I still cower in their presence. I don't accept love. Having lived with so much anger and pain and exposure to ugliness; I feel inept. This is why I am becoming a family counselor. No one should feel that they are less. No one.

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And that is absolutely what we here should strive to teach each other... that not one of us is 'lesser' no matter what we might have been told to believe about ourselves. We are NOT what happened to us - we are our own pure clean selves. And that other stuff, the stuff that got glued onto us along the way because of other people's problems, is not us. It belongs to them.

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I use my story to be a voice, not a victim. We should empower our children very young and we need to LISTEN to them the verbal and non-verbal cues. Pay attention to what's going in and around their little world and yours too!
Let's teach our kids appropriate language i.e. body parts, boundaries, self-respect, awareness, and self-love. Every child should be equipped to feel safe to share, and we need to be open and available always to receive whatever it is they have to give us.

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As a victim of sexual abuse, I knew what happened the minute my child at the age of 5 ran through the front door and hid in the closet. I thought I could protect my own children from the horrors of what happened to me. We need more tools to use with the little ones. My efforts at helping them understand the dangers were of no use when the abuser was so much older and bigger. He molested 26 children in our neighborhood. We all need to learn and empower ourselves to share the tools that will prevent this from happening again.

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I spent the time to write out what parents can do to PLAN for something we don't want to happen. But it is not enough to READ the book, you have to do the WORK. The effort is so worth it. Stories of kids who have evaded abuse attempts and others who were abused felt empowered because of their **planning together with their parents.**

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You keep commenting about implementation of awareness and self-advocacy tools into early education as mandatory! Let's actually conference together on a document that would help make it happen!"

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I would love to see the materials. I believe the hesitation is in not being able to view something before endorsing it.

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Identification and prevention. **His work teaches adults about deviancy in the third persona** and moves people to see beyond what we all present in our first and second persona.

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What I'm referring to is the creation of a document between us, that would help to get self-advocacy and other such tools to be a mandated part of public school curriculum.

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I agree that's a great idea. How do we put together something individually or as a group that can be used in the schools? It is extremely hard to break into an existing curriculum.

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I thought I understood that, it referred to the creation of something else to help get these tools mandated as part of the school curriculum. I am supportive of bringing these types of tools to **both parents, children, and our school systems.**

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After reading everyone's comments, I am profoundly saddened. How many forums and advocacy groups do we have to establish before a child can be protected? Reading from your life experiences is extremely painful and here I have to disagree with one, we are the informed few regarding sexual abuse, but there are millions out there that are totally ignorant to the fact that abuse happens "under your nose". Operating a Clinic we see how deep the ignorance lies - our battle is to reach the masses. There is no one set, standardised teaching of protective behaviours, every one has their point of view but in reality how many adults does this reach. Do we have to introduce draconian laws to couples who want to become parents to ensure that their children are safe? It seems to me the fundamental teachings of love, respect, discipline and values have disappeared and in it's place we are left with unaffectionate, impatient, self serving parents where children are possessions not loving , worthy, extensions to the family. Is it any wonder when abuse does occur children do not come forward and disclose. It is my belief that in the degenerate valueless climate we live in we cannot stop abuse from happening, however, given the proper resources and knowledge parents can stop abuse from progressing where in the past it was far too late to help a child. In my experience working with abused children, **the sooner a parent believes the child and actively acts to stop the abuse the quicker the child's recovery from the trauma.** Should we all not try and work towards one campaign and one teaching?

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This is what I discuss in my book. It is for every parent. Much of the time, pregnancies are not planned, so your plan #1 would work some but not all of the time. If the tenets in my book *or probably most anyone's book) that abuse happens and parents should be aware of that and make a plan to address this with their kids, that is a start . But, who should...better...who WILL do this? overworked paediatricians? GYN's? day care programs? clergy? schools? Parents themselves?

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As a Christian, my platform involves speaking within the church community to educate church leaders about the numbers of abused adults who are sitting in their pews, and coupled with that is the need to let them know that there is abuse happening "right under their noses". And with awareness comes then the call to action as I encourage them to get the training they need, and bring in the resources that are available to address these issues. Any advice or resources any of you might recommend toward that end would be most appreciated. The church, a place of love and healing, is too often a place where abuse thrives.

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The church would be a great place to teach from my book.

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Exc. response & I, too, continue to be profoundly saddened by lack of progress getting public to understand that abuse happens "under their nose," & often. I wrote yet again 2 days ago that part of problem is lack of coordination of efforts by those of us who understand . I wrote we don't need more groups, conferences, marches, books, ETC., but rather must join together to form UNITED front to say "Enough." I agree lack of it includes increasingly valueless society (I think partly due to too many raised in daycare starting too young, ETC, even though I understand our inequitable pay often forces this, but not always, but is complex issue), but ALSO need to make parents (as well as teachers, lawyers, judges, etc.) believe kids' abuse allegations & pay closer attention to indicators, & seek help ASAP. My theme has LONG been need to inform general public re BIG PIC- everything interrelated, hence compounding & key problem is excess & outright abuse of legal SYSTEM . I suspect AGAIN by forces in authority BUT ALSO again by actual child abuse groups, one of which wrote me re being fearful of my wording- I wrote back WE HAVE TO GENERATE WIDE PUBLIC INTEREST, & THEN we can hone in on creating more understanding, ETC. AND pass along to MANY, asking they make it a chain reaction. **WE ARE IN DANGER OF DOING TOO LITTLE TOO LATE!!!!!!!**

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42,000,000 survivors, denial, no aftercare, our system is broken and the list goes on.

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The lack of education I believe is a factor. Also not knowing who to talk to or where to go for help.

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I agree that lack of education is the reason, we taught our children for decades all about stranger danger so until I was an adult, I didn't know that being sexually abused by both parents was unacceptable and that I could have gotten help. As I had sons, I was so relieved that I wouldn't have to worry about them that when my son told me about the man at our apartments sneaking in to our home at night and making him suck his p**** I was so angry AT MY SON, "He wouldn't do that, he's not like that, he helps mommy and goes to our church!" I also took away his toys. A few months or so later, my son could not urinate and had blisters on his p**** so I rushed him to E.R. to find out he had herpies..... he was 6. The guilt KILLS me! I NEVER want anyone to go through the pain I have so I too wrote my book. It's scary but for young parents, it's necessary to read to understand that it can happen and to look for those things that I clearly missed. I wonder if my son never had to go to E.R. what his life would have been like having a mother deny him.... today he is 25 and just completed the Iron Man and has his Masters degree doing well.... So, I clearly get 'it' lack of education....

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Wow... quite a story. Just glad that your son was able to move on and make a good life for himself. So many kids don't. I was at a book fair on the weekend with my book and a young man nearly broke down in front of me as I talked about my book. I recognized the signs of an abused child. He'd now be in his mid-30's, has tried suicide twice and is undergoing therapy. In his case, family recognized that uncle was dangerous and were careful to keep the girls away from him. But they never thought uncle would molest the boys too. This young man is a mess today and I am one of a handful to whom he divulged his abuse, right there at the Book Fair. When I hugged him, he just fell apart. So sad.

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Thanks so much for sharing such an amazing story. Congrats to you and your son for the positive lesson you are teaching today. Not all families have the blessings to report a **happy ending to a rocky and traumatic beginning.**

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THANK YOU!!!! I have been SHOCKED.

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Often in a conservative society sexual abuse happens within the family the circle of trust as I have mentioned before. In my career as a social worker and counsellor I have met many girls in Indian homes immaterial from which religious or cultural background they come from, they have first been sexually abused by their brothers. Often there are older brothers at home who are teenagers and young adults and are going through the physical and sexual developments and do not know how to handle or deal with these feeling so they use their sister for their trial and error method. Always girls are victim and all is kept very secret. These things are often not discussed in the family and the fathers just do not want to talk about these things to their sons. Often sisters are not sure of what is happening to them and their brother and they just give in. They are confused, scared and worried but do not want to tell the family. The brothers may grow out of it as they grow older but very often the sisters are the first target of sexual abuse in homes. Things and situations are getting better with the awareness levels going viral these days and the girls are also willing to be more brave but we have a long way to go. Often boys are not talked to and they are also not confronted cause the parents are not comfortable talking about it and **all the family members live with a myth that all is well in the family.**

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I know as someone who spent years in the Police investigating these offences that we are liable to be blamed in some circumstances for not getting a conviction at court. In some cases you are right. I will always be open and honest in my opinions and feelings and always willing to listen, learn and try to explain. The trouble with child abuse and people in general is that they like to put things in clearly defined boxes and to appoint blame. With Child abuse you have to treat every case, every child, every family, every abuser differently. There are no boxes, no generalisations, only what you know from that case. Abusers will lie, parents will lie and you also have to be very careful when interviewing a child or even an adult who has been abused. If a child has been abused parents want to know what has happened but often don't know how to ask a child. They are angry at themselves for letting it happen and that anger comes out closing the child up. **It is difficult to talk to a child without ever leading them.** Every question you ask has to be open so they say what actually happened rather than being lead by your own opinion and this is a real skill. Going back to the original question... You cannot make a list per say. There are many reasons abuse is not reported and you cannot put them in boxes. Everyone is different and often a mixture of many different reasons. You can generalise but it would be wrong. By putting reasons in boxes you are finding excuses and there is no excuse for any form of child abuse. As a detective my job was never to prosecute child abusers. First and foremost it was to protect the child and help them all I could. Their feeling should always come first. A prosecution of an abuser will never make what happened go away. Sometimes it helps, sometimes it makes things worse. There are still things that can be done without going to court against the abuser. Taking an abuser out of society is so important but allowing a victim to cope and live within society is far more important.

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You are right. It should be about protecting the child and, if at all possible, without doing further damage to that child's psyche. Sometimes that is almost impossible - most especially when the abuser is a close family member with whom the child has an emotional bond. What, then, is the best way forward? Taking into account the complexity of CSA and how difficult it can be to decide upon the best outcome for the child.

Is there a best way of striving toward a 'best outcome'?

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That is simple to answer. It is what the abused person wants. I say abused person because most cases I dealt with were actually adults who were abused when they were a child. Even so I would sit down with them and on occasions I would actually advise them to not go to court. It was not that it made my job simpler, it didn't. I would still spend as much time in the investigation to make sure the abuser was not in the position to abuse anyone else but for various reasons sometimes I thought that was best. I would explain why and if they still wanted to go to court I would do my damndest to prepare the best case because that is what they wanted. You have to understand that people who have been abused will never get over it. They will cope by various means but they will never get over it. No one will ever take what they have been through away but. The biggest help is someone who believes and listens. You don't have to understand, you can't but you can be there for them.

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Best way of striving towards a "best outcome" it seems to me, is to recognize the relative potential for CSA trauma in each child or individual and administer to this deficiency of behaviour which they are obliged to understand ultimately for progression. Much in the same manner as we provide youngsters minerals, vitamins for proper nutrition and physical development. **Wisdom informs us to provide this training as soon as possible** before the occurrence of physical/sexual trauma's occurrence. Our only spiritual choice is to understand the required lesson earnestly through vicarious methods preferably (thought, imagination, series of acting out through play play, intensive training via fables, tales or parent's or family's cherished, high ideals for individual sovereignty and mutual

respect). When the harm is done via concrete developmental experience, then, it must be discovered as soon as possible to administer therapy to minimize the chance of the crippling sense of emotional congestion: guilt, demoralization, betrayal, rage, denial or wanton self-harm. Because my father deceased after several heart attacks and my mother has hypertension and arthritis, I am a likely candidate for these maladies especially if I don't take prudent action in living to avoid these disabilities. If one has suffered CSA, then, it is likely that his/her offspring will attract a similar experience in lesson unless an antidote behavior/learning is given to relinquish this need. The genetic design (DNA or spiritual core components) is already set to be tested for learning and awareness. In similar fashion, an astute evaluation of sexual components of the natal horoscope and its aspect configuration yield reliable evidence of sexual "victimization." I dare say all who champion the cause of ending CSA have been touched by this darkness in their life time personally, via significant others experience or are compelled by karmic commitments (unconscious passion) to do so. The truth or credibility of these assertions may be easily demonstrated.

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I wanted to state that you are absolutely correct, in that even if a child does report it they are often ignored. No one believes them, they are acting out, and holding a grudge to make the individual look bad. When my daughter was molested by a care provider at the Autism Center, they automatically told me when I confronted them, that she was manipulative, and because "he" was a weak staff, she was making up lies about him. I asked blatantly, why she had never made such accusations about anyone else prior and then they came back with, well he is the first male she has worked with. I argued until I was blue in the face, filed complaints, went to the police, and in the end the center, and the molester won out. He works in Florida now as an Occupational Therapist with disabled children and there is nothing that I can do about it. She has her good days and her bad days, but I know it will be with her forever. I just hope I am around when it hits her like a ton of bricks, because I want to be able to provide her the support I tried to when it happened.

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Love her, tell her on a daily basis how proud you are of all her accomplishments. If there is one thing I know for sure, it is that children who have been abused always think everyone else is better than they are. It is perhaps the most cruel of all the results of childhood abuse. We need to hear that we're loved and are doing our best...and that "our best" is absolutely acceptable.

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Knowledge is power. Hope is not a strategy.

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I do my absolute best. She has not done any of the sexually charged acts against her siblings in the last 3-4 months and she hasn't exposed herself or done other things she once did that were sexual in nature either. **However, she is not the same child she once was. She has so much anger, violence, and lies constantly.** I do not know whether to talk to her about the incidents or just put it to rest for now. I am on the fence about talking about it because I don't want to stir up those emotions again...but I also feel that I should not be ignoring it. Do you have any advice as a survivor?

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I am not a psychologist, but I do know from experience with another young girl that **bringing it up can cause additional trauma.** What works best is constant reinforcement of the things she did right. Even if that is only one thing a day, confirm her goodness. None of us who have been abused have the ability to find unguarded joy in life. But we can find success in so many things. She is angry and that is a normal reaction, but she can be redirected to find the joys that she so richly deserves. If she has a passion, develop it. If she doesn't, find it. There will be something that she can put all her energy and passion into: a baby pet, art, books...**Find books that inspire children.** Turn off the television and play calming music. She's hurting and she wants to lash out. Love has an amazing healing quality and so does forgiveness. Let her know that you understand...You don't need to repeat any details, just the simple fact that you understand and still love her more than anything. I didn't start to heal until we let our nephew and his kids move in with us for 6 months. He had a 7 year-old daughter and as I watched her, I finally realized that no 7 year-old kid could ever do anything that could be considered as an enticement for sexual activity from an adult. She is acting out because she truly believes she must have done something to cause it...or that she could have done something to stop it. Beware of some of the counsellors, they can take the trauma even deeper than it needs to be. Let her know that it can and does happen to anyone, not just her. Surround her with love, laughter, and beauty. (Even if your heart is crying behind the laughter)

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Having spent some time reading through all the comments on here can I say the following. There are some deeply caring professional people who in my opinion offer some really, really good advice. Some of the ideas they put forward are so helpful and constructive and they can really make a difference. They understand some of the

problems. I have also read things from people supposedly in the know which scares me to death!

There are indeed some scary thoughts around but, what most scares me is the lack of understanding that even professionals can have when working with the aftermath of abuse. And perhaps, that is because each one of us brings to the subject something of our own learning in relation to sexuality. Somehow we need to find a clarity of thinking on the issue - an absolute conviction that the issue is one of an adult taking advantage of a vulnerable other. And a further conviction that, whatever sexualised behaviour the child displays, **they have been programmed and must not be seen as complicit.**

I suppose to a certain extent I was in a unique position in that I dealt with both sides. The abuser and the abused. Because of that I was able to understand why the abuse had happened in that particular case and help from a different perspective. The vast majority of sexual abuse cases are not discovered at the time and only come to light later, often when the abused is an adult. That made it easier to talk to them. I never offered solutions. If someone has already been abused there is none and besides I am not qualified. I never suggested to them that they did this or that. What I did was listen and no matter what they had been through I never, ever judged. Often that can be some of the best medicine possible, Now this is also going to throw some confusion in when I talk about the abuser. In a way I treated them the same as the abused. I listened, never judged and never ever said I understood. I always treated them as human no matter what they had done and on occasions stopped them being really badly hurt. Why?... my job as I say was never to judge no matter what you felt. My job was to get them to tell me what they had done and gather evidence to put them behind bars for a long, long time. Abusers know what they do is wrong as someone else has said. A few will make excuses but most won't. They know what they are doing is wrong and they really need to tell someone. If I was interviewing an abuser in the presence of his solicitor and he started saying what he had done the solicitor would tell him to not say anything. For the abuser to then say to his solicitor to shut up, he wanted to admit it which happened a lot, was my job. I was then protecting other children. The biggest thing ever,ever,ever when dealing with abuser or abused is to be open, honest and never lie .Sometimes the truth is brutally honest but the thing you are trying to do is build trust. If a child of understanding, no matter what age, said to me, please don't tell my mum or dad then I wouldn't. Seems very harsh but as I have always said "The child comes first" and in the end I can only help with **that bond of trust.** That is what has to be built by every professional and every parent/ child.

One does not need a degree to understand the human condition or heart. I asked you as someone who had endured and overcome. I expect a more sincere and relevant exchange from someone who has worn the same shoes than from one who can only hypothesize an answer. It is much like when someone tries to give me their idea of living in an abusive home with an addicted parent. Ideas about it and enduring it are completely different and honestly at times insulting.

Greetings, appreciate your practical insight and wealth of experience as well as honor your proven experience in helping to arrest this problem of childhood sexual trauma in London though it still remains global in its devastation. Your admonition or call for honesty in contact with the abused as well as abuser is admired and resonates with my thinking and feeling on the same. However, it is my view that all abusers were once children and, more than likely, their innocence too was ripped or penetrated prematurely and, probably, therefore viciously. **Our primary obligation is help or heal the young,** innocent and helpless in these violations of moral behaviour. A grander wisdom, I think, demands that we arrest, prevent or minimize the harm that abusers inflict but, hopefully, not to merely be satisfied with punishing this behaviour. Retribution by the state is another layer of rape and abject degradation heaped on the unfortunately twisted and delivered summarily by a supposedly higher level of authority and understanding: the courts, police and state agencies of prosecution. Time, wisdom, love without reason and constructive action can cure all that ails humankind, methinks.

What world are you living in?

A bigger ONE, my friend.

I certainly did not intend to offend anyone. I absolutely understand the anguish. There was no one there for me. I had a mentally ill mother and my grandparents lived too far away to protect me. When I went off to college, I was put in contact with the student counsellor because I wanted a scholarship to stay over the summer and continue classes. I was terrified to go back to a place where I was at risk. Her answer was that surely I must be promiscuous and I wanted to stay on campus to mess around with the male students. This woman didn't even know me. I was 18

and had not shared my anguish with anyone before, and she only added to the shame that I was feeling. Then when my son was assaulted, I secured the best child psychologists money could buy. We talked and talked at first about what had happened. Then there comes a day when the child truly doesn't want to hear about it any longer. They are very probably still angry it happened and further counselling can be extremely beneficial if they are acting out (mine didn't, he totally withdrew). What I absolutely know is that no matter what their behaviour, you still need to try to find the patience to accept and love them. There are just as many contradictory philosophies out there on what to do as there are children. If they display inappropriate behaviour after being molested, you have to deal with it in the best way you can and with the advice of hopefully some very good counsellors. You will make some mistakes, but you will also have some successes and that's what you build on. Each child is totally different. Each child will carry a fair amount of guilt. When I finally secured help at 18 to contact an officer of the court and then faced my attacker, I tried to take the high road and I told him I forgave him for what he did. His response: "Forgive me, you're the one who wanted it." I was a defenceless little kid when it happened. In those few minutes after he said it, I felt such an explosion of anger that had I had a weapon, I'm certain I could have done him mortal injury. But, that was the beginning of my healing process. So, if she wants to scream and rant, perhaps that's how she is getting through the anger. If that's the case, lead her, don't fight her. If she is exhibiting inappropriate sexual behaviour, you need to work with a professional to help her understand her behaviour and the consequences. This is not an easy road for anyone and the road is different for everyone. As the parent of a child who has been abused, our confirmation and love still has the most extraordinary healing powers of anything else we can provide a child. I am not being flippant when I say that. **We need to be that person the child can depend on for clarity, love, direction, and honesty.**

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We have to unite - please join us and help promote to stand in solidarity for **the innocence of our children** and the so profoundly wounded!

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Fear of being shunned and rejected. Afraid of the third degree and lack of belief it occurred.

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"I survived, I'm ok... because it's always ok to tell".

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I sincerely thank everyone who contributed to this compilation, in their efforts to confront and assist with this delicate issue. AI.