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Remembering Event

Mute

Some people believe that muteness occurs after a traumatizing event, but that is not necessarily true. Purposely being ignored makes a person want to be silent seeing as they feel unheard. For as long as I can remember, I've been told that children are seen and not heard. That has affected me in ways I could not comprehend as a child. Being born into a toxic lifestyle formed me as a person: people pleaser, anxiety and depression ridden, and a loner.

It was still winter of 2009 and I just had my 12th birthday. I just moved back with my mother three months prior since she was clean from her drug addiction and no longer with my father. After living with her for only about a month, she broke her promise to me, my sister, and herself to never take my father back. Over time, she completely stopped taking her meditations for her mental health. In the beginning, the abuse and neglect was not too much to handle, eventually our food supply was dwindling. My father had absolutely no care in the world that we could hear him physically abusing our mother. He was an older man, born in the 1950s, and lives by the saying “children are seen and not heard”, but I was the one to always challenge that by asking questions and making sure my mother was okay because I saw the bruises, black eyes, and busted lips. Though the abuse continued from our father towards my sister and I, it never gotten physical, but he would constantly threaten that he’d beat us or my mother to force her to take the drugs. Sixth grade was a very stressful year filled with torment from my peers and teachers questioning me and being upset that I'm "wasting" my intelligence. I slowly walk through the front door of our apartment, not really wanting to be home. I hear a closed fist hitting skin, a sound you become accustomed to after being raised around abuse. All I hear is my mother yelling in pain, I quickly ran to their bedroom door. Sadly, it was locked so I immediately began pounding on the door, "Stop! Open the door!" I yelled. I proceeded to beat on the door until my hands were a blistering red and my voice as weak a child who just began talking after getting their tonsils removed.

"Back away from the door before I give you something to scream about," my father yelled.

"Nunny just go in your room and read a book, I'm okay," my mother says.

And that was the day it registered that my mother was just trying to protect me from the physical abuse from my father. I calmly walk to my room and notice that my sister is not home again. I grab the radio and start my journey in a new book. Very subtly the abuse got worse as the drug usage became even more frequent, but the blame fell completely on me from both of my parents. Even though I was only a 12-year-old, the weight of the world was on my shoulders - us not having food or them not having access to drugs.

I walked from my bedroom into the living room after hearing another violent argument. As always, I'm trying to be the peace-maker and that caused even more issues.

"You," my mother pointed at me, "everything is your fault. If I never had you, my life wouldn’t be like this. I should've aborted you!"

"Get out, I don’t want to see you! You ruin everything!"

Tears began flowing down my face like the rains of a hurricane as the yelling got louder and closer. Suddenly I felt something painful hitting against my legs, I look down and see that my mother threw an unopen can of soda at me. And at that moment reality slapped me in the face; I knew that silence was going to be a sort of solitude. The thought of ending my own life got so strong it was deafening after hearing that my own mother held me accountable for all the wrong that occurred in her life since I was born.

Eventually my mother tried to mend our broken bond through my therapy sessions, but she noticed that it wouldn't help since I would ignore her existence and just stare blankly into space. We would sit silently in the white office while the therapist spoke about what could have cause me to become intentionally mute. My mother sat right beside me on the fabric covered couch and cried as I disregarded her. Abruptly she turned towards me, "Nunny I'm sorry, I didn't mean anything I said."

I grew tense as I already knew what was going to spill out of her mouth once again for the umpteenth time of my short life.

"I'll get better and leave him," she began sobbing harder.

I caught my therapist’s eye and the words flow deep from the diaphragm, "I don't want to speak anymore." The light-toned lady began to question my reasoning behind it, and all I could tell her was that I was unheard and invisible even if I'm screaming at my maximum level and that was the day my voice stood still.