

A person is seen from the side, standing in a dark garage and looking out through a window. Bright sunlight streams in from the window, creating a strong lens flare and illuminating the person's arm and the side of their face. The garage floor is dark and reflective. The overall mood is contemplative and hopeful.

*The True Story of Radical
Healing By a Radical God*

THE GIRL — in the — GARAGE

3 Steps To Letting Go Of Your Past

Sharon Hughes

PRAISE FOR **THE GIRL IN THE GARAGE**

“Sharon’s story is genuine, transparent, and honest. Her story reflects what others are experiencing, are afraid to tell, or are unable to tell. She gives hope that someone does understand, comfort that you are not alone, and courage that you can move past your fears and brokenness to experience healing.”

- Bob Reish, Certified Business Coach and Consultant

“In our society today, there’s a large disconnect with the way individuals seek emotional support whether that be through therapy, counseling, church, or support groups. There is a stigma with seeking help for the burdens and emotional warfare that wage against us, and the only true remedy is the Lord setting us free. Sharon’s story is a true testament that you can learn from and see first-hand that you don’t have to live in shame. That life can be full and rich if you live outside the garage!”

- Marcie Stoddard, Chief Storyteller, Communication Consultant

The Girl In The Garage

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To my amazing children:

Ciara, Chad and Cody.

You are my why, the reason I keep fighting.

FOREWORD

This book is small but mighty, it will change your life if you let it. It's imperfectly perfect, just like me, and needed to be written anyway. I'm not an expert with letters behind my name; I'm just a woman on a mission to share the truths with you that set my heart and soul free, so yours can be free too.

*May he give you what your heart desires and fulfill your
whole purpose. (Psalms 20:4 CSB)*

As you read and apply the things I share, it's important to remember to think about what's true, not just what you think is true, or is kind of true. If you remember nothing else I say to you, please remember to stay in truth, always. We'll go deeper into that later.

*I finally have words for what sat silently
in my soul longing to be spoken.*

IT'S WITH DEEP GRATITUDE I thank my friends that walked with, influenced and encouraged me not to give up. Cheryl Turner who walked with me through hell and the birthing of many dreams in her gorgeous tearoom. Lidy Baars for answering the phone (always) and wiping countless tears at her kitchen table. Pastor Greg Curtis for seeing beyond my brokenness, and believing in me. Mike Foster for being brave and raw, while speaking words my heart desperately needed to hear. All of you made this leg of the journey bearable.

INTRODUCTION

As I write this book, I pray for you, the one holding it in your hands right now. However this landed in your hands, know that you matter more than you can imagine. You are valuable and God sees you. He hasn't forgotten about you. You may be angry with him and that's ok, he knows what happened, that brought you to this place, and he knows what your heart needs.

Maybe what you've been through makes you doubt there could even be a God that cares about you. I understand that completely and if we were sitting together right now, I'd hug you tight. You don't have to believe in God for this book to change your life. You don't have to believe in God to be worthy, or enough. The truth is, right where you are, you are enough and you matter. I pray you know that the creator divinely created you for a purpose; you are truly loved and completely wanted.

Whatever you've been through, the core of this book is, "What are you believing about yourself and is it true?" You don't have to go through abuse and trauma to find yourself believing lies about who you are, who you're meant to be, and what you're capable of. The steps I outline will walk you through how to breakup with the past, lies, and self worth issues that have kept you a prisoner in your own life.

This book is designed for you to write in it and I encourage you to do so! Writing or brain-dumping helps get all the "ugh" out of your mind so that you can begin processing your own aha moments, find your truths, and let go of the yuck.

Getting to this place of healing and wholeness has been a long journey for me and I've written this book so you don't suffer with brokenness for decades like I did. I don't think I took my first full breathe until I was forty-seven. Yeah that surprises me too, it's a long time to hold your breath. This is the book I needed twenty-five years ago.

Take a deep breath; it's your time now to be you.

Completely you.

Beautiful you.

Unashamed you.

Are you ready? Let's go get your breakthrough!

*May he give you the desire of your heart and make all your
plans succeed. (Psalm 20:4)*

PART 1

A FOUNDATION OF LIES

CHAPTER 1

I Lost Myself From The Beginning

It took decades to discover, kind of like an archeological dig, the unearthing and uncovering of who I am. Who I thought I was, the girl in the garage, I wasn't. I never was. She's a belief system that represents the lies that crept quietly into my life from five years old, and took me hostage when I was sixteen on Halloween night in 1982. The lies were my constant companion, so I hardly noticed them until they wrecked havoc on my life and I came undone.

From the start I want you to know you're not alone in how you think and what you've believed about yourself. I've spoken to so many people that are wounded from their childhood, families, lovers and the world around them. They carry around blame and shame as if they should've known better when there's no possible way they could have. The first takeaway here is don't get caught up in the "I should've known better belief". This book is all about breaking free and no longer beating yourself up for the mistakes you've made and for what has been done to you.

Living Out of Focus

At birth we arrive in this place, so small, so fragile, so extremely human. So vulnerable to the world and all it has to offer. Our lives are meant to be a grand adventure full of rocket ships and castles built out of cardboard boxes. And suddenly, to our surprise we've slipped away from the sweet, simplicity of our childhood and our cardboard dreams are gone. We've exchanged them for something we probably didn't really even want, but bought because that's what was expected of us.

In trying to survive and navigate our identity, we've lost focus of what matters and what is really true about ourselves. We've started wearing glasses with lenses that are out of focus and blurry. We've been taught to believe what we see by society, but when what we see is out of focus and blurry, then what? If you're anything like me, one day you realized this whole messy tamale is not what you signed up for. It may have been years of events that led you here or that one major poop storm (keeping it clean people). Nonetheless, here you are. Now what? It's time to take the blurry, out of focus glasses off and find *your* focus, which is you. Focusing on you, and getting whole is a healthy choice, not a selfish choice when you're overcoming brokenness.

Throughout this time together we'll be focusing on amazing you. Yeah, it's scary but, I'm here with you and I totally understand how hard it is to focus on yourself. I struggled with that for a really long time. Let's talk about how those blurry, out of focus glasses landed on your face to begin with and how you lost yourself.

If you're dealing with parental abuse or neglect, in most cases we believe our parents to be truth bearers and guardians of all things good. The truth is if they abused you, neglected you, or someone else you trusted did, they're probably just as wounded and possibly were abused too. Typically that's how broken patterns of thinking, abuse and neglect get passed on. The broken people don't know what they don't know, and are stuck in a pattern of behaviors and false beliefs they're not even aware of.

I promise I'm not excusing anyone that hurt you with bad choices that are clearly illegal, immoral, abusive, neglectful, or hurtful. Believe me I've had my go around with forgiving the people I trusted, and I haven't excused them. At the end of the day, we are all accountable for our own actions. I've found forgiveness is a process that takes time and I have moments where I'm angry with them all over again.

Mike Foster, founder of People of the Second Chance, who I consider to be the authority on loving ourselves, letting go of shame, and breaking unhealthy patterns said, "Sometimes you have to say f*** you before you can say I forgive you". Thanks Mike! He's absolutely right. We need to allow ourselves to be angry; shoving the hurt down doesn't help.

Normal Is A Setting On The Dryer

The way you were raised became your "normal". As a kid growing up if you had dysfunction in the shape of emotional, physical, or sexual abuse from a young age you probably didn't know that your parents were dysfunctional. You couldn't have known the truth about who you are; that their behavior is about them, not you, because there's no reference point of normal to compare them to.

This is one of the ways the pattern of a broken self worth begins. Unless you became aware of how their thinking and behaviors were wrong, and didn't believe the lies about yourself. The lies could have been in the form of unspoken words, withholding love, manipulation, or the act of abuse itself. Unfortunately, as small children we haven't developed critical thinking skills yet and we tend to believe what the grown ups around us tell us. Saying, "I wasn't good enough" along with emotionally, sexually, and physically abusing me is what I thought was normal, but was actually (obviously) a toxic pattern of behavior. This is what I mean about it creeping in, all of the sudden its there and you almost can't remember a time it wasn't.

Looking back over my fifty-three years on the planet, I realize I've only scratched the surface of who I am. In my first thirty-five years, I'm sure

I would've argued I knew exactly who I was, but I had indeed unknowingly lost myself. The funny thing is you don't know you've lost yourself until a time comes that causes you to question everything you know to be true, and you begin the journey of self-discovery.

I lost myself from the start; my identity crisis began in childhood. You may have lost yourself at a different time, and for a different reason than I did. It could have been a toxic boyfriend, spouse, friends, parents, extended family, or boss. It could have also stemmed from a traumatic event in your life such as a death, divorce, an accident, sexual assault, being in combat, being bullied, homelessness, losing your job, or even witnessing a crime.

When did you first realize you had lost yourself in a sea of lies of who you are, or are you just discovering that now?

Maybe you didn't go through any of the things listed above, but find yourself still struggling and you can't figure out what's wrong? Living with low self worth might show up like this in your life:

Comparing yourself to others.

Gossiping

Overspending

Trying to fit in by doing things that go against your values.

Numbing out with drugs, alcohol, pornography, gambling, eating, or sex.

A lack of healthy emotional boundaries.

Hurting yourself with cutting, or eating disorders.

Lying, stealing, and cheating to cover up your problems.

THE GIRL IN THE GARAGE

Have you struggled with any of these? If so, write out how it started

I want to remind you, THIS IS A SHAME FREE ZONE! This is your personal workbook to let go of all the junk you've been carrying around. It's time for you to be redeemed!

Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by name, you are mine. When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and through the rivers, they shall not overwhelm you; when you walk through fire you shall not be burned, and the flame shall not consume you. (Isaiah 43:1-2 ESV emphases added)

Notice the Lord says you are his and he promises when you go through trials, they will not destroy you.

Add your name in and declare it like a prayer out loud over your life:

Fear not, for I have redeemed _____; I have called _____ by name, _____ is mine. When _____ passes through the waters, I will be with _____; and through the rivers, they shall not overwhelm _____; when _____ walks through fire _____ shall not be burned, and the flame shall not consume _____

What if you're not who you think you are?

What if you let go of the lies you've believed, broke up with your past, and let go of the shame that's held you prisoner in your own life for good? Who would you be? Who could you be? In *The Girl In The Garage*, Sharon Hughes shares her personal story of overcoming years of abuse that came to a head when at 16 years old, she was drugged at a Halloween party and woke up in a garage seven hours later. Her story is one of radical healing by a radical God that called her to a new identity and a new destiny. If you've struggled with brokenness, shame, trauma and self worth issues, this book will walk you through the core steps you need to get a breakthrough while experiencing God's radical healing. No matter what you believe about God, yourself, or your future, you won't be the same after reading this book. After all, believing a lie is just as powerful as believing the truth!

"So many people struggle with pain from their past. Healing is possible, but it has to be intentional. Sharon has done a lot of work on her spirit and emotions by reflecting on her past and looking through a lens of redemption. I think this book will help others realize that healing is possible, growth is possible, and change is possible. Sharon's story will bring hope to those who are hurting."

- Garrett Lowe, NextGen Pastor,
Living Word Community Church



Sharon Hughes is a Certified Life Coach, P.O.S.T. Certified Chaplain, Critical Incident Stress Manager/Debriefing, speaker and the host of Living A Limitless Life Podcast. In her best friend over cover style, she shares God's word woven with neuroscience truths to set your mind free. Sharon is the mother of three, a lover of dogs, the beach, coffee, and resides in Southern California.

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