

About Anita, written by Anita

Dedicated to God, who has given me the strength to write this,
and to my family and friends who have been supportive.



Dear Readers,

When you are a survivor of sexual abuse, you don't scream it from the roof tops or get it tattooed on your forehead. You don't write it down and wear it like a "kick me" sign on your back. As a survivor, I can't shake the hand of someone new that I meet and say, "Hi! My name is Anita and I was molested when I was younger." I can't go on to tell them, "By the way, I have also struggled with depression and anorexia because of being sexually abused." Generally, you try to give those people you meet the impression that your life is perfect for fear of rejection. You want them to like you, or at least accept you and get to know you. So you put on a big smile and pretend that everything is fine. But what they don't know is that behind that smile is a horrible secret.

Victims of sexual abuse all have similar reasons for not sharing this information. It might be fear that someone will blame us, just as we blame ourselves. It may be that we don't want to hurt our caregivers by letting them know they trusted the wrong people with their own child—the most cherished part of a mother's life. Perhaps we just don't want to admit that it really happened because we want to forget and bury it. Or maybe we have blocked it from our memories in an

attempt to live a “normal” life. Still, some don’t tell because of fear that we will not be believed or because it is just too painful to bring ourselves to talk about. So we put on our masks, hide it beneath our physical shell and lock it up inside of us. Some of us are great at sugar-coating our attitude in the hopes that you would never guess. Others of us shut down and withdraw, while some try to self-medicate through drugs, drinking, self-mutilation, and believe it or not, sex.

I have hidden behind my smile for over ten years now. I kept my secret for two years, until it was told for me. I doubt that I would have ever revealed my past. After that, I still pretended it never happened. I blamed myself and didn’t want to deal with the pain of vocalizing what I wish would simply become a bad nightmare. Now, ten years after my abuse took place, I am finally ready to come to terms and tell my story.

The following pages are filled with my memories. Some are warm and fuzzy, while others may be hard for some people to read. To those of you who have been through sexual abuse of any sort, this book might trigger some bad memories for you.

This is a true account of the first eighteen years of my life. I hope that reading my story will bring many to understand what it is like to be sexually abused and to understand that the effects of sexual abuse do not end when the abuse stops. I want those of you who have been through similar experiences to know that you are not alone. You can get through the pain and fear that you have felt at the hands of your abuser. You can move beyond it and make something wonderful of your life if you deal with it. This is my story. It is not an attempt