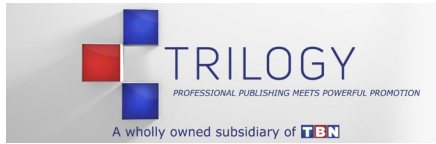


REPURPOSE YOUR PAIN

*MOVING FROM PAIN TO PURPOSE
AND FROM INSTABILITY TO FIRM FAITH*

CECILY LACHAPELLE



Repurpose Your Pain

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this book to my loving and amazingly supportive husband, John. You have walked with me through many of the painful experiences I write about in this book and faithfully stood with me through it all. I could not have written this book without your constant love, support, and godly character. You are “my person,” and there is no one with whom I would rather repurpose my pain more than you!

MY HEARTFELT APPRECIATION

I have been blessed to have an amazing Tribe who have in one way or another helped to make this book a reality. Even before I began to write, I had people cheering me on and encouraging me that I had something valuable to say. I wish I had space to name every person and contribution, but there are far too many important people to list. Nevertheless, this endeavor wouldn't have been possible without these specific people: Jen, Shari, Christine, Sheri, Pastors Ron and Denise, Christina, Rena, Shannan, my parents and children, my wonderful church ‘family’ (friends + family), the amazing pastors, evangelists and leaders who gave their endorsements for this book, and the fabulous team at Trilogy Publishing!

ENDORSEMENTS

If you have experienced trauma and pain that you can't seem to shake, this book was written for you! With courageous honesty, Cecily does not shy away from sharing her own devastating journey through the valley of betrayal and brokenness. Her compassionate tone feels more like a conversation with an old friend—a friend who will both comfort and challenge you. This book is not about placing the blame on others for our pain; instead, it provides practical strategies to experience freedom from the past. It is my firm belief that as you work through the thought-provoking questions Cecily has included, the Holy Spirit will work through them with you, repurposing your pain into something useful and even beautiful.

—Alejandro Arias, president, evangelist, AAIM Ministries,
www.alejandroarias.org

Everyone needs restoration! Being able to teach a message that heals and restores makes this book and the writer significant. Cecily Lachapelle is an excellent teacher with a message that has eternal value. She herself has overcome many obstacles in her personal life and bears a powerful testimony of forgiveness. Readers will be refreshed and inspired to apply godly values in their personal lives, with ample biblical principles and examples as guidance. The Lord has always used ordinary women to do extraordinary things. I would highly recommend this book; this is a fresh sound that is needed on the earth today! It will lay a solid foundation for building a solid future.

—André Bronkhorst, international prophet, Prophetic Life Ministries,
www.propheticlife.co.za

REPURPOSE YOUR PAIN

Life can surely dole out its portion of pain, and as ministry leaders, we have been privy to supporting people in their heart-wrenching moments. In “Repurpose Your Pain,” Cecily shares with utter vulnerability her life-shaping moments, peeling back every mask and self-defense mechanism that was intended to keep her hostage to her devastation. But God, in His transforming love, empowered her to take what was intended to be a weapon of destruction and turn it into a tool of transformation. Each moment deceptively crafted by the enemy was designed to become a tombstone, hammering in place each lie, and now they have been repurposed as milestones of redemptive hope that turn mourning into dancing and ashes into a thing of beauty. You, too, can recycle the seemingly useless garbage of pain and desolation by journeying with Cecily as she demonstrates how the truth of God’s love and His Word can renovate your life as you move from pain to purpose and from instability to firm faith.

—Ron Satrape, apostolic leader, author, and consultant & Denise Satrape, senior pastor & international prophetic teacher, Christian Life Church, Eliot, Maine

Cecily is a courageous woman. She went through very tough times in her life to emerge as a beautiful, faith-filled woman of grace and mercy. Every person on the face of this earth has a destiny and a great plan to fulfill. There is one enemy who tries to divert this wonderful plan: The lies of the devil will deter you from your joy, peace, contentment, and fulfillment. If you want to change your life, you can do it anytime, anywhere. The Word of God says in Matthew 11:28 (NIV), “Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest.” God is in the process of changing and rescuing people all over the planet. Do you need change? For more than twelve years, I have been working with women caught in human trafficking. These women have been raped for many years under extreme circumstances. They can receive help

ENDORSEMENTS

as well. I have seen changes and beauty beyond comprehension. Any woman can have this wonderful future as a woman of grace and love and filled with the peace of God! Please read this book with an open heart. You will feel its warmth and hope for a brighter future! God bless you.

—Gaby Wentland, executive director of MISSION FREEDOM,
www.mission-freedom.de

We all face trials in life, and in some instances, these painful experiences can lead to debilitating mental and emotional trauma. In this book, you will find step-by-step instructions and inspiration for overcoming these traumas and repurposing your pain by employing the Word of God in specific and purposeful ways. Be ready to identify destructive behaviors and uncover hidden pain that’s been buried deep as you navigate the pain to freedom that Cecily has so beautifully laid out in this text. You’ll be led through powerful testimony and activations that will help you break the cycle of a downward spiral and find freedom for your heart and mind. Cecily has so bravely and boldly opened up the depths of her own abusive past and is repurposing her pain into your victory. I highly recommend this book to anyone dealing with unresolved trauma. This is your moment to experience peace and finally walk in true freedom.

—Christopher Scarinzi, apostolic leader,
United with Christ International Network of Churches

I am blessed to have known Cecily Lachapelle for many years as a dear friend, and now I am blessed to know her as a gifted writer. Cecily is an absolute master at articulating both the difficulty of being stuck in one’s pain to repurposing the pain into a wonderful testimony. There are few books that will grab and hold your attention as does Cecily Lachapelle’s “Repurpose Your Pain.” What makes this book so powerful is the sheer honesty and personal experiences of her struggles

REPURPOSE YOUR PAIN

with the pain and how God took her through it all. She shows us that through the application of God's Word and the power of the Holy Spirit, our pain can be turned to gain. Without any hesitation or reservation, I highly recommend "Repurpose Your Pain" to you.

—Evangelist Danny Johnston, DBJ Ministries

"Repurpose Your Pain" presents practical keys to unlocking your prison of pain. Cecily's story is powerful and gripping, creating a transparent picture that is authentic and engaging. If you've ever struggled with the crippling effects of life pain, this book is a must-read that will guide you on a beautiful journey of healing and freedom.

—Drs. Matt & Amy Carpenter, strategic advisors,
www.lhimtv.com

In all the many years I have known Cecily Lachapelle, she has been such an inspiration, a true example of a godly woman that has an in-depth understanding of God's Word. Her unique ability to convey and teach His Word has led many of us to be hungry and earnestly desire to learn more. The material in this book is so full of Cecily's experience and expertise. This alone will help so many of us that have been wounded or have things to overcome. Her life has been a living testimony of not only victories in her own life but in helping many overcome difficult times. I strongly recommend this book to anyone seeking to be whole, healed, and complete in Christ.

Prophet Ed Traut, Prophetic Life Ministry
<https://www.propheticlife.com/>

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction.....	13
Preface.....	19
Repurpose Your Broken Identity.....	23
Repurpose Your Dead Dreams.....	41
Repurpose Your Low Self-Esteem.....	59
Repurpose Your Shame.....	81
Repurpose Your Self-Hatred.....	95
Repurpose Your Rejection.....	127
Repurpose Your Bitterness.....	149
Repurpose Your Regret.....	177
Repurpose Your Fear.....	195
Repurpose Your Weariness.....	213
Before You Go.....	239
Appendix A.....	241
Soundtrack to Accompany Each Chapter.....	243
Activations.....	245

INTRODUCTION

No one welcomes pain. Pain signals that something is wrong, whether it's an ache in our tooth that is getting progressively worse or the feeling of regret or shame that washes over us when a memory is triggered.

But believe it or not, the inability to feel pain is worse than the ability to experience pain. There are people who are born with a nervous system deficiency that prohibits their nerves from sending pain signals to the brain. As a result, they don't know when something harmful is happening to them. They could have their hand on a hot burner and not know it until they have second or third-degree burns. Pain is the warning system designed to keep us from greater injury or repeated harm.

But what do we do when the pain we feel is internal and incessant? What do we do when we have become prisoners of pain? Throughout many seasons of my life, I was that prisoner. I became captive to the pain that came into my life either through my own choices or those of someone else.

For many years, I tried to stuff the pain of my past so far down in my conscious mind that I couldn't pull up the specific memories—or so I thought. I tried to numb my pain with substances and food. I tried to silence my pain by filling my life with “noise,” always having the radio or TV on, or keeping myself so busy that the pain wouldn't have any airtime in my thoughts. The problem with these techniques, besides the fact that they don't work, was that I wasted precious years running from pain that I could have been repurposing into testimonies of God's faithfulness and tools to help set others free. I wasted long nights fighting the voices of shame and bitterness that told me I was a failure and a joke and that I had broken my life beyond repair. I wasted opportunities to make lasting memories by not being truly present in the moment. I wasted the possibility of deep friendships by always being guarded and isolated.

But thank God, I began a relationship with Jesus that slowly chipped away at the walls I had erected to protect myself. Gradually, I learned how to grab onto God's goodness and carry it into my painful places.

I learned how to hear the voice of God through the Bible and in my quiet time with Him, so the pain could be repurposed into something I would eventually be grateful for. Please don't misunderstand me. I am not saying that I had to become grateful for the events that happened or the choices that were made. Many of the decisions that caused pain in my life were the result of sin—either my own or that of someone else. But the Lord has promised in His Word that He turns what the enemy means for evil in my life into something good if I love Him and am called according to His purpose. That promise tells me that I can repurpose the pain that resulted from the enemy's plan into something that aligns with God's design for my life.

In this book, I have been brutally honest and vulnerable in the hopes that you will be able to identify with the places of pain I have walked through and gain hope that you will be able to repurpose your pain as well. The details of my circumstances may be different from yours, but I know you will be able to identify yourself in many of the stories I share and how I repurposed my pain into my redemption story. In fact, writing this book is one more step for me in repurposing the pain I have lived through. If you draw closer to Jesus and find freedom from the pain as a result of what I went through and learned, then glory to God! I love nothing more than helping other captives get free using the keys that the Lord put in my hands.

In each chapter, you will take three important steps. First, you will **acknowledge the pain** you have experienced. Many of us are *repressing* what we should be *repurposing*, which causes us to be stuck in a moment rather than empowered to move forward. Secondly, you will **bring truth to the pain**. I bring specific scriptures and biblical examples to the table so you

can understand God's perspective and promises for the pain you have faced. And lastly, you will **repurpose your pain** by discovering tools to move from instability to firm faith.

I'm sure you've heard the phrase, "No pain, no gain." The adage became popular because of the truth that it expresses in only four words: No one welcomes pain—yet we truly don't get anything of value without some sort of pain and stretching.

So, with that said, there will be some discomfort involved in getting free from pain. Let me explain: I have included Activations at the end of the book designed to help you process the pain we are discussing in that chapter, and to learn how to repurpose that specific area of pain into the good thing that God wants to give you in exchange. These exercises may bring up memories that you want to keep tucked away below the surface. I know it's hard. Trust me, *I know*.

But let me ask you this: How well have the techniques of stuffing, numbing, and avoidance been working? Have you found lasting peace? Do you want lasting peace? Do you want to finally be free from the bondage of pain? Do you want to walk in the good purpose that God designed for you? If so, then please stay faithful in your reading and in doing the activations I recommend. They worked for me, and I believe they will work for you as well.

(Some of you may find the need to reach out to a minister at your church or a licensed counselor when you begin to face certain memories. Please don't hesitate to reach out for the help you need.)

I encourage you to make a commitment to yourself that you will take the time you need to process the pain and learn how to repurpose it into God's best for you. By investing some time, prayer, and thought into yourself, you will begin to move from pain to purpose and from instability to firm faith.

I want to conclude this introduction with an image for you to meditate on before you jump into the chapters ahead. Check out the very first words of the Bible as they appear in The Message translation:

First this: God created the Heavens and Earth—all you see, all you don't see. Earth was a soup of nothingness, a bottomless emptiness, an inky blackness. God's Spirit brooded like a bird above the watery abyss. God spoke: "Light!" And light appeared. God saw that light was good and separated light from dark. God named the light Day, he named the dark Night. It was evening, it was morning—Day One.

Genesis 1:1–5 (MSG)

We sometimes forget what the earth was like *before* God spoke creation into being. It was a mess. Soupy dark chaos covered the earth...until the Lord spoke order and life into the chaos, light and beauty into the darkness. Dear Reader, God didn't throw the earth away and move on to another planet because it was a chaotic mess covered in darkness. He *repurposed* the earth and made it beautiful, lush, and vibrant, teeming with life, animals, and pure light. And in the same way that He spoke life into the earth and repurposed it into something beautiful, He can do the same in your life. You may be trapped in feelings of bottomless emptiness and overwhelmed by the mess, but God knows just what to do. He will walk alongside you and work with you, giving you the supernatural power you need to bring light and life to every place darkness reigns.

I don't know how this book came to be in your hands. Maybe you are reading it as part of a small group; maybe someone recommended it to you or gave it to you as a gift, or maybe you picked it up at the airport for something to read on the flight because you thought the title was interesting. Whether you are reading the brick-and-mortar style book that you can highlight and

get coffee stains on or the digital version on your phone or tablet, I believe that you will not be the same person by the time you finish this book.

I encourage you to give the gift of freedom and victory to yourself and those who love you. I am proud of you. I have prayed for you.

PREFACE

You were not designed to stay stuck. The definitions for “stuck” show us exactly why the feeling of being stuck is unnatural and painful:

unable to move, or set in a particular position, place, or way of thinking// “This door seems to be stuck - can you help me push it open?” Unable to change or get away from a situation // “She was stuck at the airport until the snow cleared.” Not able to continue... because something is too difficult// “I got stuck on the quiz because I missed class yesterday.” To have to deal with someone or something unpleasant because you have no choice or because no one else wants to: “We were stuck with him for the entire trip!”¹

Our human nature wants to move forward, gain ground, achieve, develop, learn, and grow. But when the pain we experience in our lives halts our emotional or spiritual progress, we can feel baffled by how we got here and how to get out. When pain comes into our lives, it burdens us with a weight that, if left alone, becomes intolerable. And when the pain hijacks our thoughts about God, ourselves, and the world, we adopt mindsets that cling to us and contain our ability to be the person God designed us to be. We become a prisoner of our past, and the door to freedom is “stuck.”

In this book, we are going to journey together and discover that God has provided a way of escape through Jesus Christ from *all* that would seek to keep us stuck and block the destiny He laid out for us. We are going to discuss ten areas of pain that most of us experience. I share my personal stories of how and when I dealt with the pain and how I moved from pain to purpose and from instability to firm faith. We will also look at people in the Bible and see how they repurposed that pain. Finally, we investigate Scripture to see what God has to say on every subject and conclude each chapter with personal activations.

Due to the subject matter of this book, some memories may surface that are hard to deal with. If you need to put the book down for a day or a week, do it. But I encourage you to give yourself the gift of pressing through to the end and doing the activations.

The activations are written to cause you to process the material on a deeper level, so take your time and don't rush through them. You will be asked to journal your thoughts in whatever journaling format works best for you.

At the bottom of this page you will find a link to my website, where you will find videos I created as bonus material. As I was writing, I had "rabbit trails" of thought that felt like bonus material, so I created a link and a QR code that will lead you to a page on my website where you can access the bonus content material. If you don't have the ability to follow the link or if you simply don't want to watch the bonus material, you will still get the full import of the material for each chapter without it. I just added it as a way for you to get to know me and hear my heart in a personal way.

The first time you click on the link, you will be prompted to enter your email address. Your email address will not be shared, and I don't sell information to other lists. It is simply for my information, so I know more about who is reading the book and what part of the world you are from!

At the end of the book, you will find a short "Before You Go..." note from me that will set you up for continued progress. Nothing is worse than gaining ground and losing it through poor maintenance!

After the note, you will find an Appendix with prayers and links to Personal Declarations and a Soundtrack I created for your listening pleasure as you work on each chapter.

As I meditated on each chapter, I found songs that spoke to how we feel on that journey. And speaking of journey...

Thanks for going on this one with me!

—Cecily

<https://higherpursuitministries.com/book>



REPURPOSE YOUR BROKEN IDENTITY

Until I realized that Jesus came so I could 'have life, and have it to the full' (John 10:10 NIV), I didn't realize what was available to me through my relationship with Him. But as I grew to understand what it means to be IN CHRIST by intentionally filling my heart with truth, I began to see myself the way He sees me and started living out the promises He's given us in His Word. If you'll do your part, God will do His. He is always faithful!

Joyce Meyer²

Do you feel like you are living in the holographic horror of comparison? Are you constantly measuring yourself against other people who seem to have the career success you want, fit into the dress size you can only dream of looking good in, be blessed with the well-behaved children you hoped you'd raise, be experiencing the relationship bliss that has escaped you, or worse yet, be the smart, put-together, loving person you want to be but can't seem to pull off?

I lived for years in the purgatory of “who I long to be” compared to “who I honestly, deep-down, *think* I am.” The chasm between the two was enough to make me want to curl up in the fetal position, draw the shades and quit. The issue was a matter of identity. Like a thief, each social media post that boasted of someone's latest fancy vacation, their loving children, their attentive spouse, or their latest promotion stole the peace and confidence I thought I had. My identity and self-worth would drown under the weight of the lies I believed about myself, lies that other people's success or my own losses seemed to validate. Even after becoming a Christian and reading books about my identity in Christ, I still struggled with a vacillating view of myself until I discovered some very important keys that unlocked the process of repurposing my broken identity.

In his book, *Imagine Heaven: Near Death Experiences, God's Promises, and the Exhilarating Future That Awaits You*, which resulted from hundreds of interviews of people who had near-death experiences, John Burke writes this commentary about the identity we live with as compared to the identity that God created for:

Who defines who you are? This is a such a critical question, but so few of us have really stopped to answer it. Who has the right to define who you are? What you're worth? What your purpose is? Whether you succeed or fail? How you define your identity if

WHAT YOU BELIEVE ABOUT YOURSELF IS WHAT SHAPES ALL YOUR DECISIONS AND ACTIONS. MOST OF US END UP BELIEVING THINGS ABOUT OUR IDENTITY THAT ARE NOT GROUNDED IN GOD'S REALITY—WHO GOD CREATED US TO BE, WHAT GOD CREATED US TO DO.

ultra-important. What you believe about yourself is what shapes all your decisions and actions. Most of us end up believing things about our identity that are not grounded in God's reality—who God created us to be, what God created us to do. We believe lies about our identity that the evils of this world inflict on us. We constantly worry about the opinions or approval of others. We experience intense anxiety when we're not succeeding or are not recognized for our

accomplishments....We find ourselves lowering our standards to new levels, then justifying it in order to prove our worth or get someone to love us. We feel the need to control our spouse or kids because our identity has somehow gotten wrapped up in what others think or do.³

Does any of this sound like you? I know, for many years, those words

defined me to a "t"! What I found was that there are three keys to repurposing my broken identity into the one God created for me before I was born. And the great news is that you can access these keys and unlock the process of allowing the Lord to repurpose your broken identity into an unshakable identity as a son or daughter of God, fully loved and fully accepted right now—with all your flaws and hang-ups.

Whatever the trauma, loss, or brokenness was that hijacked our identity, Jesus has a path that leads to peace—with Him and with ourselves. But before we can get to the good news of how to find our eternally satisfying identity in Christ, we must look at the mess. Here's how mine started.

My broken identity started as a young child.

My parents were recovering alcoholics who met in AA. Mercifully, I never once saw either of them take a drink. However, even though they maintained a sober lifestyle, they retained broken identities that affected how they related to one another and to me.

I grew up as an only child, which was both a blessing and a curse. From outward appearances, I lived a privileged life, but inside our home, I was lonely and craving a love I didn't know existed.

I'm sure my parents both had dreams in their hearts of a wonderful marriage and a happy life together, but that was not to be. They both had brought issues into the relationship that even AA couldn't heal, so not long after I was born, the relationship deteriorated into nitpicking, yelling, and isolation. The atmosphere of our home was fraught with an undercurrent of seething anger and bitterness that frequently erupted in torrents of disrespectful communication followed by isolation. My mother, father, and I were three people living under one roof but not bonded as a family should be. I lived with a constant sense that something was wrong without the ability to determine what it was. I only had my childish interpretation of the situation

as my perspective, and as I saw the outward happiness of my friends and their connectedness to their parents, I assumed that in my home, I must be the problem. After all, weren't adults smart and in control? The adults in my life were making all the decisions that impacted me, so I assumed that they were doing so because they knew everything.

In my sophomore year of high school, I found myself at a boarding school. Now to be clear, this was not a decision made because my parents wanted to reform me. Everyone in my private school community went on to boarding school for high school. It was just what we did. So, there I was, alone again, now without even the familiar, albeit toxic environment of my own home.

Six weeks into the school year, I was stupendously miserable. It was parents' weekend, and I was going to ask my parents if I could come home and go to the local high school. This boarding school thing was not working for me. Oddly, my mother told me that my father wasn't coming to parents' weekend but that she could make it. I didn't really give it much thought... until I saw her. In the six weeks that I had been gone, my mother had lost a shocking amount of weight. As we awkwardly sat on the seats of a small outdoor amphitheater, her face was gaunt. She cut to the chase.

"Your father and I are getting a divorce."

I laughed.

I used to have this terrible habit that when something traumatic happened, my brain seemed to hiccup and send the emotional charge to the wrong part of my brain, and I would burst out laughing. Of course, those were always the *wrong* times to laugh, which made it impossible *not* to laugh...like when your mother tells you that your parents just blew up your family.

As the days and weeks passed, I really thought that I was okay with this news. After all, I wouldn't have to argue with my mother every day when I was home from boarding school, and I could have complete run of the

house with my dad. He and I would have a great time together without Mom always nagging and yelling at us about something. I thought I was okay—but I wasn't.

The pain was actually so great that I buried it...but pain that severe doesn't stay undercover. It comes creeping out of the dark place where you stuffed it. For me, it came out in binging and purging, beginning to smoke cigarettes, destroying my stellar grade point average, dropping out of all sports and social activities, becoming obsessed with boys (which is a feat when you go to an all-girls boarding school!), and having suicidal thoughts.

The girl who arrived at Miss Porter's School was a high-honors student, untainted by substances, and a virgin. The girl who went home at the end of that school year was none of those things. She didn't know who she was anymore...somehow the evaporation of the family caused the evaporation of her fragile identity as well.

I know, based on current divorce statistics, that many of you reading this probably have a similar story. But for others, your identity was shattered through sexual molestation or emotional abuse. Or maybe you were the victim of bullying or bigotry. Maybe you invested all your heart into a relationship to the point that you lost who you are.

I am so sorry that these horrible and hurtful things happened to you. That was never God's design. We live in a broken world where broken people perpetuate their sinful nature in hurtful and harmful ways. And even when they don't realize how their actions blew up your self-esteem and your identity, that doesn't make the effect any less devastating.

But the good news is that the heavenly Father sent a rescuer for our shattered identity. Our heavenly Father busts down the doors that are locked from the inside, runs roughshod over the bullies that have taken our hearts captive, and in a rescue of unprecedented proportions, races in to sweep us up

in His arms because we are His. Not because we are worthy but just because we are *His*, and He will not live without us.

Now it's one thing to see this truth on paper and quite another to believe it down in the core of our being where our irreparably damaged identity still wants to dictate our emotional state and thought patterns. Until we truly allow the truth to rule in our hearts and kick any competing thoughts or emotions to the curb, we will revert to our old nature.

We are going to have to purposefully seek out the truth about our *new* identity—the one that Jesus Christ purchased for us and gave us access to through His death and resurrection. One that makes us not servants but children of the Most High God. In order to seek this truth purposefully and make permanent changes to our soul's hard drive, we need to apply *three keys* that will give us access to the identity as children of God that He created for us and enable us to walk in the stability and strength of that identity no matter what comes.

1. Bring the loss and grief to the Lord with honesty and brokenness.
2. Search your Bible to discover who Jesus is and who you are because of who He is.
3. Memorize specific scriptures to renew our minds and to use as our weapons against the enemy.

OUR BIBLICAL EXAMPLE: JOSEPH

Now, before we talk about how to personally apply the three keys to our broken identity, let's take a look at a young man in the Bible named Joseph, who endured some of the worst kinds of assaults against his identity a human can endure yet remained stable and strong in his belief about who God created him to be. I have read his story a hundred times, and I never grow

tired of it because it reads more like a script for a telenovela than a Bible story. This guy is a rock star when it comes to knowing who God created him to be and not crumbling when circumstances seem to be mocking that assertion.

We find his story in the book of Genesis, chapters 37–50. Joseph was a little like me during his childhood and pre-teen years in that he seemed to have a pretty privileged upbringing. He was the youngest son of a wealthy man and was certainly favored by his dad. However, unlike me, Joseph had many siblings—older brothers who were none too impressed with how he had Daddy wrapped around his little finger. Nobody likes to be the unfavored one, and they didn't handle their anger and jealousy well at all. Even though the Bible doesn't tell us this outright, I believe they let truly hateful and evil thoughts come into their minds about Joseph on a regular basis. Why do I think that? Because one day, Joseph's father sends him out to check on his older brothers. Talk about sending a lamb to the slaughter. Joseph comes to the location where his brothers are working, far away from the camp and the rest of the family, and he is wearing this special cloak that his father had given him as a gift to demonstrate his favor upon Joseph. Wearing that coat in front of these men, who were already seething with an undercurrent of anger and jealousy, must have been like waving a red cape in front of an angry bull. They went crazy and grabbed Joseph, throwing him into a pit. Most of the brothers wanted to kill him, but one of them was able to talk them out of such a horrible decision. The fact that these men came so close to killing their own brother is what tips me off to the fact that they all had been allowing a tirade of hateful thoughts to run unchecked for a very long time. Their broken identities could not handle the weight of their father's favoritism, and they snapped.

Press Pause: Has someone else's broken identity caused loss or pain in your life? Take a moment to sit with the memories and view the damage from 35,000 feet. Maybe you are feeling some strong emotions, but maybe you are not. In either case, it's important for us to give credence to our personal history instead of hoping that it—or the effects of it—will simply go away. Before moving on in your reading, take a few moments to journal about how other people's broken identities impacted yours. And has your broken identity impacted anyone else, like a spouse, children, or other people close to you?

That evening, while Joseph stood begging for his life at the bottom of a pit, a band of slave traders approached on their way to Egypt. The brothers had been pondering what to do with him, so they decided to give Joseph to the slave traders and then tell their father that Joseph had been killed by a wild animal. Joseph screamed and begged for his older brothers to change their minds, but they turned their backs on him. As Joseph's cries drifted away with the caravan, the brothers killed an animal, put its blood on Joseph's cloak, and brought it to their shocked father. Even his wailing and grief weren't enough to make the older sons repent and confess their crime to their father and to God.

Upon arriving in Egypt, Joseph is sold into the household of a wealthy and powerful man named Potiphar. In that household, Joseph acts with integrity and diligence and gains the notice of Potiphar, who ends up putting his entire estate under Joseph's care.

However, Potiphar has a wife who is an unhappy woman. And she is an unfaithful wife. She repeatedly makes passes at Joseph, who denies her each time. Finally, she grabs him, but he wrestles free, leaving his cloak in her hands. Realizing what she is holding in her hands, she uses the cloak as false evidence to frame Joseph to her husband, accusing him of making the pass at her.

Potiphar puts Joseph in prison where, as a foreign slave, he is the lowest of the low in ranking. The shred of stability he had enjoyed in Potiphar's house has been ripped away by the plots of a broken woman.

However, again, Joseph uses his God-given skills for management to gain the favor and trust of the jailer, who puts Joseph in charge of the prisoners. One day, two of Pharaoh's servants are sent to prison. One is the cup-bearer, and the other is the baker. Joseph overhears them speaking of dreams they had the night before, and he offers to interpret the dreams for the men. One receives the interpretation that Pharaoh will restore him to his position in three days, and the other receives the interpretation that in three days, Pharaoh will hang him. Both interpretations come to pass. Before the cup bearer leaves to return to Pharaoh's service, Joseph asks him to mention his name to Pharaoh, but the cup bearer forgets all about him.

Two years pass. Two *years*. Nevertheless, Joseph maintains his integrity along with his faith that God was working on his behalf, even though everything was going from bad to worse.

Then one day...Pharaoh himself has a disturbing series of dreams that none of his advisors can interpret when suddenly, the cup bearer remembers Joseph! Pharaoh calls for Joseph, and through the revelation and wisdom given to him by God, Joseph not only interprets Pharaoh's dreams but also gives him a strategy to save his entire nation from starvation and economic ruin. Without a single hesitation about Joseph's ethnicity or current status as a prisoner, Pharaoh promotes Joseph to the highest position in the land,

second only to himself. He puts a signet ring on Joseph's hand and gives him a cloak of fine linen reserved only for those in the highest positions of Egyptian society.

Now that I have given you the overview of the story, I want to show you something that may help us learn how to repurpose the pain of a broken identity. If you recall, Joseph's father gave him a cloak as a young boy. That cloak represented the fact that he was loved and special and that his future would be tied to his father's favor. But then, without warning, it was gone. The cloak was gone, and the family was gone. His relationship with his father and everyone he loved was gone. His Hebrew culture was gone.

Years later, when Potiphar's wife accuses Joseph, she does it by holding up another cloak. This time, the cloak represented an identity that was a lie. Joseph was not a molester or an adulterer, but this cloak became false evidence that put him in an Egyptian prison for years with no hope of release.

And lastly, we come to the cloak of honor—the one that Pharaoh places on Joseph after more than a decade of slavery and imprisonment, after developing a character that would seek God and learn how to hear His voice, and after serving with integrity and excellence as both a slave and a prisoner.

Press Pause: Can you think of "cloaks" that people have put on you in order to "identify" you or that you have put on yourself in order to grasp some sort of identity? Maybe you put on the cloak of worldly clothing and behavior in order to attract the opposite sex so that you could feel loved or special. Maybe you put on the cloak of "savior" for your family or those around you, never speaking up for things you need or want. Maybe you put on the "cloak" of

unbelief and rebellion because you thought that God let you down, and now you want to hurt Him back. Maybe you put on the "cloak" of perfectionism, never letting anyone see that underneath it all, you are lonely and insecure. Maybe others put a "cloak" on you. Maybe your parents put the "cloak" of expectation on you, and rather than find out who God made you to be, you have been chasing the dreams that others have for you. Maybe someone put a "cloak" of criticism on you, causing you to believe that you are a failure. Maybe someone put a "cloak" of abuse on you setting your identity as one who is shameful. Take some time to write in your journal or in a Notes app on your device about the cloaks you are wearing that others have put on you.

The first cloak didn't make Joseph a Hebrew who loved God any more than the second cloak made him an adulterer or the last one made him a hero. Clothing is external to us. True identity must come from within. And like Joseph, we can find our identity by connecting with the one who made us and who is the only One who has the right to speak to our identity. Like Joseph, we can take the broken pieces of our lives and repurpose them into our identity as a child of God. If Joseph had

AND LIKE JOSEPH, WE CAN FIND OUR IDENTITY BY CONNECTING WITH THE ONE WHO MADE US AND WHO IS THE ONLY ONE WHO HAS THE RIGHT TO SPEAK TO OUR IDENTITY. LIKE JOSEPH, WE CAN TAKE THE BROKEN PIECES OF OUR LIVES AND REPURPOSE THEM INTO OUR IDENTITY AS A CHILD OF GOD.

staked his identity on his relationship with his father and his family, then the moment they were ripped away from him, he would have crumbled. But he remained steadfast in his faith and character, demonstrating his identity as a follower of God in the way he served with humble integrity and walked in forgiveness. Whether at Potiphar’s, the prison, or the palace, Joseph was the *same man*. He served God, he was assured that he belonged to the God who made him, he believed that God was working all things out for his good, and he lived as one who was known, chosen, and favored *by God*.

NOW YOU

No matter what you have been through, you can find your identity in the fact that Jesus Christ, the pure, perfect, and holy Son of God, “God with us” Emmanuel, loves you with a fierce and passionate love that has pursued you to this place. He knew you before the foundations of the world. Not even your parents can say that. He knows why He created you, and that purpose has never changed. Your “cloaks” may have changed from one season and one relationship to the next, but they have not changed His opinion about you or the identity that He created for you as His child. The cloaks that others put on you or that you put on yourself have not changed the unique purpose that God for you because of who He created you to be.

Years after my parents’ divorce, I was faced with another, even greater loss of identity. After a thirteen-year marriage and four children, my husband left our family and told me that he didn’t want to be married to me anymore. I prayed, fasted, got counseling, and cried my way through many sleepless nights. I grieved the loss of the dream that I had nourished in my heart from my childhood of finally experiencing a healthy family and the ride-or-die marriage I had not witnessed in my own family. I grieved for my young children who were living the nightmare I had barely survived as a teenager. I

couldn’t believe that one Christmas, I was a happy homemaker wrapping gifts for our four children and planning to go to my in-laws on Christmas Day, and the next Christmas, I was sitting alone in front of a donated Christmas tree, sobbing, and mourning the loss of my former life, my former self.

The identity descriptors that I wore proudly for years— “married,” “cherished,” and “loved” —slipped like an heirloom wedding ring out of my fingers and down the drain of my divorce. New names, like an unwanted package, arrived at the door my husband walked out of: “abandoned,” “rejected,” “bereaved,” and “not enough.” They sought to become my new identity in the same way my parents’ divorce had “re-identified” me.

But unlike the shattering of my identity that I experienced during my parents’ divorce, this time, I knew Jesus. And I didn’t just know *about* Him; I *knew* Him as the lover of my soul. Jesus moved into the hollow darkness where my former identity used to live in a false sense of security. He came in to reinforce my unchanging identity based on the rock-solid and eternally fixed truth of His love and purpose for me. During the months after my husband left our family, I felt like a castle under siege. Yet, while I lost some turrets through the battles, my core structure stood the war. With the help of the Holy Spirit, I applied the three keys to this season of pain and gradually repurposed the pain of my divorce into a stronger foundation on the truth of who I am as a daughter of God.

Let’s review the *three keys* briefly and see how I applied them to the season of my divorce:

JESUS MOVED INTO THE HOLLOW DARKNESS WHERE MY FORMER IDENTITY USED TO LIVE IN A FALSE SENSE OF SECURITY. HE CAME IN TO REINFORCE MY UNCHANGING IDENTITY BASED ON THE ROCK-SOLID AND ETERNALLY FIXED TRUTH OF HIS LOVE AND PURPOSE FOR ME.

REPURPOSE YOUR PAIN

1. Bring the loss and grief to the Lord with honesty and brokenness.
2. Search your Bible to discover who Jesus is and who you are because of who He is.
3. Memorize specific scriptures to renew our minds and to use as our weapons against the enemy.

While Jesus didn't dry my tears right away or shield me completely from the pain of the loss, He held me through every long night, every moment of panic and fear for the future, every sad memory, and adjustment to my new normal. He was my constant. Every morning when I grabbed my coffee, my Bible, and my journal, He was there. I would pour out my sadness, questions, and fears in my journal, and He would speak words of encouragement and vision to me and give me the words to pray. I was amazed at how the Lord would speak to me through the Bible. I highlighted scriptures, wrote them out longhand in my journal, and memorized them to give me strength through the day when I couldn't access my journal.

During that season, I also listened to many, many messages by Christian podcasters and speakers while I cleaned houses and drove my children to school. Jesus always seemed to speak exactly what I needed to hear through the messages that came my way. I love how Jesus will speak through the "*logos*," the written Word, as well as through His "*rhema*," or speaking voice.

While that season of loss left me clinging to threads of my life, Jesus repurposed my pain. He gave me a testimony of His presence and provision that I will boast of as long as I have breath. He repurposed the pain of the loss of my identity as a wife and mom in a biologically intact family and turned it into a deeper identity as His beloved, one to whom He says,

Don't be afraid, for you will not be put to shame! Don't be intimidated, for you will not be humiliated! You will forget about the shame you experienced in your youth; you will no longer

REPURPOSE YOUR BROKEN IDENTITY

remember the disgrace of your abandonment. For your husband is the one who made you--the Lord who commands armies is his name. He is your protector, the Holy One of Israel. He is called "God of the entire earth."

Isaiah 54:4-5 (NET)

Jesus will do the same for you. He will repurpose the pain of a broken identity and give you a new name, a new identity—one that can never be stolen. He will reveal to you your blood-bought identity as His child, His beloved. He will become more precious to you as you lean into His truth and promises, and you will gradually see that all other "cloaks" are false and superficial.

I delight greatly in the Lord; my soul rejoices in my God. For he has clothed me with garments of salvation and arrayed me in a robe of his righteousness, as a bridegroom adorns his head like a priest, and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels.

Isaiah 61:10 (NIV)

And now you ...have also heard ...the Good News that God saves you. And when you believed in Christ, he identified you as his own ...he has purchased us to be his own people. He did this so we would praise and glorify him.

Ephesians 1:13-14 (NLT)

When we believe in Christ, we become His. We are His possession. *We belong to God.* We were redeemed—or rescued at great cost—with the most valuable asset in the universe—the life of the perfect and holy Savior, Jesus Christ. So, when Jesus repurposes your broken identity, He gives you a garment of salvation and a robe of righteousness. You become a co-heir with Christ of every heavenly blessing, the greatest of which is fellowship with

the Father. Jesus gave His life to prove the Father's love for you and open the way for you to be restored to the identity that God had for you before the foundations of the earth.

His love will combat anything that keeps you from experiencing all of His goodness. God doesn't cause hardship or tempt us to sin, but He uses the pain to uncover our cracked and false identity. When He allows our false identity to break, it can feel like we are breaking. But it's not us that is breaking; it's the false sense of self that we have been leaning on. Now in this place of vulnerability and illumination, we can leave the false behind and pick up the new identity as a son or daughter of the Most High God.

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Our new nature means that we are children of God, which is awesome in itself. But each of us has specific characteristics of our identity in Him that are unique to us. For instance, I know that as a born-again believer, I can stand on the truth of God's Word that applies to every believer and me. But I also have specific parts of my unique identity that the Lord has revealed to me through prophetic words others have spoken to me or that He has spoken, and I recorded in my journal.

God is no respecter of persons. What He does for me, He wants to do for you. You will hear Him speak specific words of identity and affirmation to you if you position yourself to hear.

Now you may be wondering how you find out both the born-again identity and the specific characteristics of your identity in Christ. We find these details by asking the Lord and recording what He says. He can speak to us prophetically as He did with David when Samuel anointed him as king over Israel when he was just a teenager (1 Samuel 16:12-13), in dreams, as

He did with Joseph, or in psalms and meditations as He did with David on many occasions when David was discouraged or experiencing failure. He can appear to us dramatically as He did with Gideon when He appeared to him at the threshing floor and declared Gideon's identity as a mighty man of valor (Judges 6:11-24), or He can speak to us through the Word, the Bible, which Paul quoted in all of his writings and confirmed to be the major source of his doctrine and identity in Christ.

Have traumas, losses, or brokenness made you wonder if you are in a class of people that the heavenly Father's plan of restoration won't work for? Do you find yourself comparing yourself to others, calculating the difference between what you see in them versus what you know about yourself as the verdict that you are defective? Have you been confused about what is God's part in fixing your broken identity and what your part is? If so, then you are not alone. I felt that way many times.

The good news is that there is a recourse for "identity theft." No matter how you found yourself here or how long you have struggled with these thoughts, you are reading these words because God ordained the timing. This is your season to find your identity in Christ. It won't happen overnight, in the same way that losing fifty pounds or getting out of years of debt doesn't happen overnight. But every step in the right direction is bringing you closer to peace, stability, and the firm faith you have been craving.

When you pour out your pain to the Lord and allow Jesus to speak to you through His written Word, the Bible, and through His spoken word through people, God, in His goodness, will show you who *He* made you to be so that you can realign your identity with that truth. And it's through grabbing onto that truth and purposefully making it your own that you will be able to walk with confidence—stable and firm in who you are in Christ.

LET'S PRAY

Dear heavenly Father and my Savior, Jesus Christ, thank You so much for offering me a brand new life and identity! Thank You for revealing to me through the Holy Spirit that I am a new creature in Christ, a child of the living God. Please forgive me for discounting and nullifying the amazing miracle that happened to me at the new birth through my negative thoughts, words, and attitudes about myself. Please continue to reveal to me all that my new identity in Christ means so that I can walk in the fullness of it, growing into maturity and firm faith. I declare that I am new. The old man is gone! I am redeemed by the priceless blood of Jesus and have been made as righteous as He is through the miracle of imputed righteousness. Holy Spirit, please continue to guide me into all truth so that I can walk out my specific assignment here on the earth. In Jesus' name, I pray, amen.

REPURPOSE YOUR DEAD DREAMS

Learning to stay open to the movement of God is going to be tricky for those of us who tend to want to hold on to our plans. But there's a process to uncovering the plans of God. You have some things in mind for your future, but so does God. 'Many are the plans of a man's heart, but the Lord's decree will prevail.' (Proverbs 19:21) As we learn how to stay open to His movement in our lives, we are going to see some things happen we could never have dreamed of.

Nicki Koziarz⁴

I closed the door behind me and walked through the garage into the driveway. The sunlight seared my vision, starkly contrasting the dark oppression I was living with inside the house and the happiness that the rest of the world seemed to be enjoying beyond my doorstep. My marriage was so emotionally draining and depressing that for months I felt like I was living with my own private weather pattern of “always overcast.” So, on this beautiful sunny day, I desperately wanted to be able to drink in the warmth and hope that sunshine used to bring to my soul, but a wall of intense struggle kept the joy at bay.

I made my way to the rear of the car and popped the trunk. The day prior, I left my make-up bag in the trunk of my husband's car, and now I needed to pack it in my suitcase before we left for the weekend to be at his sister's wedding. As my hands half-heartedly rummaged through the items in the crowded trunk, I felt my bag and pulled it out. But to my surprise, I had not retrieved my make-up bag, but rather a journal—a leather-bound journal with hand-made paper tied with a raw-hide strap. Overwhelming curiosity drove me to open it. And as I sat on the bumper of the car and read the hand-written entries, my world fell apart like an egg smashing on the pavement.