



**BREAKING  
THE  
SILENCE**

*Finding Your Voice*

**BY  
SHARRI BURGGRAAF**

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## Finding My Voice

As a survivor of ritual abuse and mind control I found that early on in my recovery it was necessary to find my voice. I had been silenced and threatened in so many ways that I was conditioned to not remember my abuse. Telling was also not allowed. Finding my voice was absolutely essential (like the need for air). To find my voice was to find me. Identifying my own voice and differentiating between the conditioned voice in my head and listening to the inner people who wanted to be acknowledged, seen, and heard was healing. Hearing the parts of me who saved me, what they needed, what they knew (no matter how outrageous it sounded) facilitated integration and wholeness. I believe that getting to know my insiders is the way to freedom. Getting to know your insiders can be the way to freedom for you too. Finding our voice by connecting with our inner parts and the memories they carry breaks the don't remember programming. Connecting with my voices is what it has taken to become a team that works together like a beautiful group of synchronized swimmers heading for the same goal. Ways I did this: I'd lay on my bed holding my teddy bear for dear life allowing flashbacks to come out, journaling, poetry, art using colors, markers, paint on canvas for those who were preverbal or for more graphic memories. Making videos chatting with the parts who wanted to share to get to know each other, making videos of what happened to me using text, music and my voice and express my emotions. Writing and doing videos wasn't enough.

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## Using my voice Speaking Out and Breaking the Silence

A huge part of my recovery was breaking the cycle of abuse by sharing my story with other people who believed and supported me. This broke the silence and the power and control my abusers had over me. Breaking the silence for a survivor is an essential part of recovery from any type of abuse. By owning our story, we are facing the truth and the truth sets us free from the secrecy of abuse which is done in isolation (behind closed doors). Most abusers use threats to silence their victims. By saying I was abused to my husband, my therapist and then the public, I released the shame and took back my power. By naming my abusers I began putting the blame onto my perpetrators where it belonged. I began sharing my story and my poetry through videos on my Youtube channel, Tik tok and other social media. I shared my poetry at Ritual Abuse and Mind Control events and other open mic nights. It's scary to tell others because there is the risk of being judged, blamed or not getting the support that we need, and worse....not being believed or being silenced. Negative responses can be devastating and retraumatizing or reinforce conditioned beliefs, to remain silent. Survivors often suffer in silence. Some never tell anyone. Speaking out broke through the "don't tell" programming that was put into my mind to keep me silent and to keep my abusers from being exposed. Sex trafficking alone is a multi-billion dollar industry. Abusers do what it takes to keep from being shut down.

Using my voice to  
speak out was a  
way to  
break the silence

## Finding My Voice in Community With Other Survivors

Abuse is done in secrecy in the context of a relationship. Recovery needed to be done in relationship to break the isolation. Research has proven that finding our voice in community with other survivors hastens recovery versus individual therapy alone. Finding our voice is the first step in breaking the silence. Then using our voice to tell someone what happened to us. By sharing in a community of other survivors we are taking the next step in our recovery. Being vulnerable, being heard, witnessing each other's stories creates solidarity, a sense of belonging, that we're valued and worth something. Doing so encourages and empowers the whole group. For me it also broke the conditioned belief that I can't trust anyone else and the only way to stay safe was in quiet seclusion. I can honestly say that my healing accelerated tremendously and I've had more progress taken to a whole new level by attending writers workshops, poetry events and support groups with other survivors where I shared my voice in community and they shared theirs. Another benefit was to have safe supportive people who became friends, as relationships are hard to navigate after abuse especially with the whole trust issue. It was gave us a way have safe supportive people to practice saying no with or learning to set boundaries. I am grateful for the many survivors in my life who have been there for me and I could be there for them. I love to encourage others and hear their incredibly brave stories.



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# "Don't Listen To The Voices"

SOME mental health professionals may say

"Don't listen to the voices".

While this may be true for some diagnoses, I say IF you have DID (Dissociative Identity Disorder) to not listen to those in the field who say don't listen to the voices. To not hear your inner people's voices is to stunt recovery from abuse and trauma. Don't act on impulses or programming that says to harm or hurt yourself or others, but listening to our inner voices who are essential parts of us are the key to what happened to us.

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Sharri Burggraaf is a warrior, wife, mother, Nana, a survivor of extreme abuse RA/MC (Ritual Abuse and Mind Control) which is a documented reality for far too many. She is an example for other survivors that a person can go through anything and come out on the other side of just surviving, to start thriving and living life more abundantly with DID. First diagnosed in the early 1990's, with what she says is not a disorder but the body's amazing response to trauma, she began recovery helping other survivors along the way, She started a non profit organization titled S.H.O.U.T. for Help (Survivors Helping Others Unite Together) and put together a National 3 day Conference in 1994 in Des Moines, IA. After a break in her recovery, she then came back more dedicated than ever to do what it takes to heal. As passionate as she is about her own recovery, she has a desire and love to speak out for those who can't yet speak for themselves encouraging them to find their own voice, sharing the hope that she has been given in hopes that they find their me, the person God created them to be. She leads, braves and paves the way for others to follow their own path individually. She now shines more brightly because she has had much deliverance from the darkness she was born into and advocates for others to do the same while continuing her own healing. She lives in Iowa with her husband Frank.