

THE FIRST 4 STEPS OF



THE HEALING JOURNEY

WITH BONUS "MY DECLARATION"

Sue Bowles

Welcome!

Healing. It's a journey, a process, a rediscovering of your true self. Whatever harm came to you, whatever happened to steal away your joy, your sense of identity, your vigor for life, those qualities are still there underneath. Healing is the process of uncovering them and becoming re-introduced to your true self. For some it can feel like meeting an entirely new person. That was my experience. After over four decades of living a defeated life, when I finally started seeing the light of hope, what seemed to be a 'new Sue' began to emerge. Boundaries became a reality for me. Persistence. Fight. Belief in myself.

You have taken a brave step in your quest for authenticity. It is not a journey for the faint of heart. It is a journey for those who feel disqualified yet know deep within them there lies a person who has much to offer the world and needs some encouragement and help along the way. It's for the person tired of being told in word or thought 'you're not good enough.' It's for the person who feels life is passing them by and things seem 'just out of reach.' It's for the person who wants something better for themselves and won't stop until it becomes reality in their lives.

This e-book gives the early steps needed to start or continue your healing journey. At the end is part of a blog post I shared in 2016 as my growth began. I think you'll be able to relate and be encouraged in the process.

May today be the day you start writing your own Declaration!

Step by step,
Sue

The Foundation for Healing

Think of healing as having four pillars. Everything in the journey is supported by these.

Humility

You've reached the place where you want more for yourself and you're willing to do whatever it takes to get it. That starts with humility. And part of that humility is realizing that the deep work of healing is best accomplished with a support system which could include a Life Coach, Counselor, Pastor / Spiritual Director, etc. We are not meant to walk this path alone.

Own your story



You have a story. That is the one thing no one can take from you. It is your story, and you get to decide what you want to do with it. Until the harsh realization of the truth of what happened is faced, true healing cannot be experienced.

Denial must be broken before a new foundation can be laid.

Grieve your story

Your story has a lot of loss in it. Until those losses are fully and accurately identified the remnants of the loss will remain and claw its way back to the surface in some way. Healing is deep, painful work.

Dare to believe that you matter

I believe this is the core foundation of all healing journeys. Until we begin to fan into flame the glowing ember of hope in our lives – hope that things can be different, that we can be different, that what we know right now is not all

there is – real change cannot be sustained. Without hope, we don't try. Without hope, we are not motivated to change anything.

What do we use to anchor these pillars? Pillars without anchors are subject to be weakened by the elements. They can get toppled and everything else goes with it. When pillars are anchored into the ground they are reinforced and able to withstand more opposition. As you are recreating your life you will need your pillars anchored deep. The following questions can help you in that process.



Humility Reflections

- Am I willing to trust someone else with my story? If not, what is preventing me from having that trust and what step do I need to take in the direction of building trust?
- If I am willing to trust someone, where can I go to find that person? What am I looking for in this trusted person, so I know where to start looking?
- What is in my budget and am I willing to ask about a sliding fee scale if necessary?
- Am I willing to do whatever it takes to find the healing I am craving? How far in this process am I willing and prepared to go?



Own Your Story Reflections

- What about my story do I try to hide?
- What compels me to hide from it?
- What will I risk if I share my story?
- Am I worth the risk?

Grieve Your Story Reflections

- What losses are in my story?
- Which of those losses have I dealt with? Which ones still need attention?
- What do I need to do to fully grieve those losses?
- What tools do I have to deal with the intensity of the emotions?

Dare to Believe You Matter Reflections

- What was the first thing I said to myself when I read that statement?
- Where does that thought come from?
- What is keeping me from letting go of that faulty belief?
- What is the next step in my healing journey, and how will I use this new insight as a stepping-stone for it?

After working through those questions, you may be ready to take the next brave step in your healing journey. It's your turn to break free of whatever false beliefs keep you from being all you were meant to be. I offer Life Coaching services designed to be a springboard to get you where you want to go.

Go to suebowles.com to get started.



Mention this ebook for 25% off your first session.



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BONUS



My healing journey began in earnest in 2016 when I began to dare to believe that I matter. This blog became the pounding out of what was beginning to happen as I stepped out of the dungeon and began to risk discovering a new life. I hope it gives you encouragement that this can be yours, too.

This is My Declaration!

Something strange has been going on. I feel it more with each passing day. Things are welling up within me that have never found their way out before now. Not to say they weren't there...just never permitted an exit to see the world.

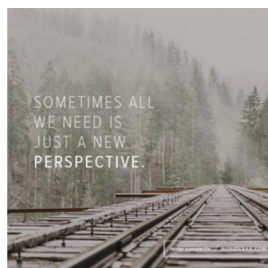
Until now.

Imagine that for over 4 decades (literally) a part of you has been hidden from most everyone. You may have let a few trusted folks in on the scoop but even then, there was a distant protective cover to the story. While dying on the inside you were smiling on the outside. That's about as big of an oxymoron as you can get. And you lived it almost perfectly for your entire life. In fact, some people reading this might already be surprised thinking "I had no clue." See? You were successful!

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Yet inside your head was this room where the 'real you' was kept locked away. "Just out of reach" was the phrase that kept coming out of your mouth when describing what you wanted, what you yearned for, what you needed...and what you didn't know how to get. Insecurity was your prison and fear your chains. And unknowingly you had become friends with your jailers.

Inside you had things to share, suggestions to make, feedback to give, but fear kept your words chained inside your head. Instead, you heard voices say 'you are the problem' and 'you have nothing worth saying - you've been wrong



before and you're wrong this time.' The jailers' voices got loud - deafeningly loud. And you froze. Paralyzed. Numb. On the inside - dead.

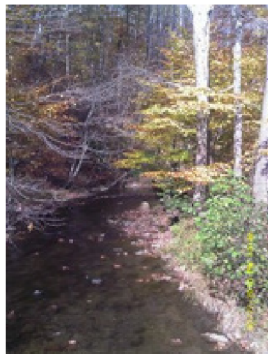
And over time you let yourself get thrown into the dungeon of darkness with little hope of finding the way out, destined to a life of 'on the outside looking in.' Desperate. Lonely. Fearful. Yearning. Trying to hold onto hope but sometimes feeling the strands slip through your fingers.

Until....

God. BUT GOD! When you least expected it a sliver of light shone from above through a crack in the dungeon wall. First you were blinded by the light, shielding your eyes from the glare, unable to focus and see what was breaking through.

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But just the warmth from that single ray started to bring something back to life. Your pulse started to beat a little stronger. The hair on your arms started to tingle as if you were starting to feel again. You stood a little straighter. And while still squinting you at least knew the light meant something was happening. You started to feel hope...or at least a little more than wishful thinking. And then a crazy thing happened.



You started getting visitors. From seemingly out of nowhere some people found their way to you and came to just sit with you. Didn't need to say a word. As it turns out, they were in the same prison, just a different cell. And their cell door opened, and they started venturing out. And they met you.

In pretty quick fashion you started wandering the halls of the prison with them, each having the other's back. You understood each other. You had similar stories – or at least the common denominators were the same. And you had the same quest...freedom. And suddenly what seemed like almost insurmountable odds because it was just you against the world became a mentality of 'pursuing and won't stop.' Funny things happen when others join you on the path. Your own courage grows beyond what you imagined when it was just you.

And sure enough, with a little tenacity, the entire group finds the way out. Past the prison guards. Past the chains and razor wire. Out the gate. And like finding the golden

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egg on the hunt, you find yourself standing in an open field under a bright warm sun, fresh air, beauty to behold on every side, and it suddenly dawns on you: YOU. ARE. FREE!

With that newfound freedom comes a lot of experimentation. Not only is it exhilarating to know your lungs can take a deep breath again but it's also a bit fearful – or at least intriguing. You fight the fear for it only wants to pull you back into the prison cell, and you know to return to that would only be worse than before.

But in a lot of ways, you feel like you are LIVING for the first time in your life and it's like a little child getting to run free in a field. There is energy you didn't know you had. The wonder has returned. The dare to dream



– and dream BIG – is emerging. You are CLEARLY headed in a new direction. And you look over your shoulder at all your old friends who thought they knew you and are not quite sure what to think.

Your family is supportive because that's what families do. Your friends want to be supportive but aren't sure how to respond or what is going on. You have to learn to give them grace, for just as you are surprised at what is happening, so are they. It will require a rebuilding of the foundation of the relationship. It will require getting past the shock – and joy – and getting to know each other all over again. There will be

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messy times because all parties will easily fall back into old assumptions and how you 'used' to be. But through the mess you will find the ones who are committed through it all.



I may say something that rubs you the wrong way. I may seem more brash than in the past. I am still learning when to muzzle my mouth and when to speak my mind, so yes, it can get messy along the way. I am not perfect and it may be something in my communication that needs tweaking. Help me through those times, don't just write me off. At the same time don't automatically assume or imply it's all on me.

You own your stuff and I'll own mine, and together we will find our way through the relationship repair and trust that it is stronger as a result. Deal? Thanks.

And along those lines...

1. I believe God can and WILL use me in the lives of others, that I have something worthwhile to say, and I will say it. My voice will be silenced no more. And while I do not intend to offend, my new voice may catch you off guard. I may say things I once only kept to myself. And I will not be perfect in this area. We will have relationship repair to do – possibly on both ends. But I will speak up and I will speak out. I will pray through things and if, before the Lord, I firmly believe I have peace, I will say it. It may ruffle feathers

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and we can work that through, but don't automatically assume that the issue is all mine just because I've never spoken up before. I will be bold and direct – prayerfully with love. But I will not let myself stay silent anymore.

2. I will make the choices that I believe are right for me at that moment in time. You may not agree. You may not support. You may not understand. Shoot...I may not understand! But if it's what I feel the Lord is moving me to do, my first concern is obedience to Him. That may mean I find myself walking a different path than I have in the past or I may be going along with a different crowd than before. It comes back to that 'flexible' point. If it's what I believe the Lord wants me to do I will do it. Not to offend or upset...but just to be obedient to the One Who matters most.

I think you hear already that I am a different person. I no longer cower, afraid of my own shadow. I am a confident, self-assured woman willing to take risks, accept challenges, and learn a lot along the way. I am in awe of the wonder.



Ready to take your next step to freedom?
Contact me at sue@suebowles.com to get started!