

# Whole, Single, Free, ME!

An  
Escape  
from  
Domestic  
Abuse



KATHRYN M. WOHNOUTKA, OFS

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Whole, Single, Free, ME! An Escape from Domestic Abuse

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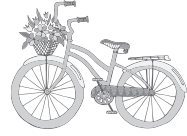
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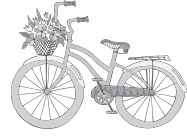
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## INTRODUCTION

*Over the years I have come to know* that my inner self is a teacher and that my divine mission is to lead others to healing and to a closer relationship with God as well as to share my sufferings and the tools I have used to grow in my own intimacy with God. Please accept this gift to you and pass on to others whatever you learn in these pages. Let us pray a beautiful prayer by Susanna Wesley:

**Help me, Lord, to remember that religion is not to be confined to the church . . . nor exercised only in prayer and meditation, but that everywhere I am in Thy presence. So, may my every word and action have a moral content. May all the happenings of my life prove useful and beneficial to me. May all things instruct me and afford me an opportunity**

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of exercising some virtues and daily learning and growing  
toward Thy likeness . . . Amen.<sup>1</sup>

(KLINE 42)

Blessings,  
Kathy

Let us begin with a story about one right decision followed by a wrong decision that led me into twenty years of abuse. Eventually God was faithful to His promise in Romans 8:28 and turned all things to good because I do love him, and I am called according to His purpose.

The right decision was not to have an abortion, saving the life of my baby. The wrong decision was to marry my baby's father, who was already abusing me, rather than giving my baby up for adoption. At the time, I was naïve and searching for love. I was sure that all my boyfriend needed was someone who loved him enough, and then he would stop hitting me.

I wrote this story years later when I was wiser and had a clearer picture of God's plan in my life. The story shows how this one right decision, preserving the life of my child, had a positive effect on the lives of many others and helped to redeem all the years of abuse.

## CHOOSING LIFE

*With each year that passes, I become more convinced that abortion is wrong. My primary reason for feeling so strongly*

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<sup>1</sup> Donald L. Kline *Susanna Wesley: God's Catalyst for Revival* (Lima, OH: C.S.S. Publishing, 1980) 42. Taken from Richard Foster, *Streams of Living Water* (San Francisco: Harper, 1989), 237.

*that abortion is wrong could be summed up in one word—Bill. Bill is my son. I had the choice of an abortion. Each day as I watched him grow closer to manhood, I thanked God that I did not end his life.*

*During my first year in college, I became pregnant. My mom's best friend married because she was pregnant and gave up her dream of becoming a nurse. While my family lived in Fort Morgan, we visited with my mom's friend's family often. I saw mom's friend take out all her anger and unhappiness on her oldest son. She blamed him for things that happened in the family even if he had nothing to do with it. My mother was convinced I should not marry my baby's father as her friend had done. She gave me the option of having an abortion, which was illegal at the time, or going to a home for unwed mothers and giving my baby up for adoption. I immediately said I did not want an abortion. I felt something inside me telling me that abortion was wrong. My mom made plans for me to go into a home for unwed mothers. However, my boyfriend's parents intervened. My boyfriend and I were married a few days later, and I was able to keep Bill.*

*As I have watched my son grow, adding both pleasure and pain to my life, I have become more and more convinced that I made the right decision. I believe that abortion was pushed on me as an easy way out of a difficult situation. I had not been given any information on birth control and was sent to college with only my "good girl" morals to protect me.*

*Unfortunately, my morals were not enough, and I gave in to temptation; nature did the rest. I felt then and feel even more*

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*strongly today that it is important to take responsibility for my actions. Abortion would have been a way of not accepting responsibility for my actions and getting out of a difficult situation without giving any consideration to Bill's right to life. Bill made my life more difficult at times, but I was responsible for his conception and owed him a chance at life.*

*I often think about the other people Bill has had an effect on through his life. At the age of fifteen, while a counselor-in-training at YMCA Camp Cullen, he saved a child from drowning after a terrible water-skiing accident. The child was hit in the head with a ski and was lying facedown in the lake. Bill tore off his life jacket, dove out of the boat, and swam to the child. The counselor drove the boat back to shore for help, leaving Bill and the child alone in the water. The child was not breathing and had turned blue by the time Bill reached him.*

*Luckily, Bill was a strong swimmer. While treading water, he turned the child over and gave him mouth-to-mouth resuscitation for several minutes until help came. What would have happened to that child if Bill had not been there? Would someone else have reacted with the same swiftness and skill as Bill?*

*The following summer while in Ecuador with a group called Amigos,<sup>2</sup> Bill and his friends saved a local fisherman. The man had blown his hand off with a stick of dynamite while fishing. Bill and his friends drove the injured man over dirt roads to the*

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<sup>2</sup> Amigos de las Americas inspires summer volunteers age thirteen to twenty-two through collaborative community development and immersion in cross-cultural experiences in Latin America.



*nearest hospital. Normally a four-hour drive, the boys covered the distance in two hours.*

*During the ride, Bill had to help with the tourniquet. While bouncing along at speeds in excess of 100 miles per hour, Bill, who was riding in the back of the pickup, showed remarkable courage. Every few minutes he had to climb on the roof of the cab and reach inside to hold the injured man's arm up while his partner released the pressure on the tourniquet. The driver did not slow down, and one of the other boys had to hold Bill's feet so that he would not fly off the cab. The boys managed to save the man's life and his arm. What would have happened if Bill had not been born? Would the man have bled to death or lost his arm?*

*Another exceptional rescue happened one day as Bill was driving home and saw a car go off the road into the bayou. He stopped, handed his wallet and watch to a person standing nearby, and asked them to put them in his truck. He then dove into the water. He was able to get the woman out of the car and safely to shore. He suspected she had a back injury and being a paramedic knew how to handle her so as not to cause permanent damage. When he returned to his truck, his wallet was not there. He had just cashed his paycheck so was quite worried. Later, he found out that the person had called his home and was holding on to the wallet so it would not be stolen.*

*As a frightened teenager, I could not foresee what effect Bill's birth would have on other people, but I am glad he has been there when others needed him. There have been many more cases over the years where Bill has intervened to save people's*

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*lives. As an EMT, paramedic, and now an emergency room nurse, he saves lives often.*

*There have been other situations in our family where the woman involved chose life even though others thought abortion was the best option. Bill's sister-in-law Kara and her husband saved their baby Kendall, who was born with spina bifida.<sup>3</sup> The doctor told them she had an inch and a half gap in her spine and water on the brain and that they would be lucky if she lived three days. He said abortion was an option, but they wanted their baby. They came to George and me. We prayed with them and gave them a prayer blanket to put over the baby as Kara slept at night. Many prayers were said for the baby.*

*By the time Kendall was born, the gap in her spine had almost closed. I gave them a baby-sized prayer blanket for her during the surgery to drain the water off her brain. We all waited outside the operating room until it was done. We have all had the joy of watching Kendall grow into a beautiful, intelligent young lady. She has competed in and won many beauty pageants, showing the world that people with disabilities are talented and valuable. She will soon graduate from high school, and I know she will go on to do extraordinary things.*

My life has not always been easy. My choices have refined me and made me stronger and more forgiving. My choices have given me an inner strength that only comes from God.

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<sup>3</sup> Spina bifida is a birth defect in which an area of the spinal column does not form properly, leaving a section of the spinal cord and spinal nerves exposed through an opening in the back.

I am a child of God and run home to my Abba Father, Daddy God, to get the strength and guidance to do what He is calling me to do. Then I put on “the full armor of God” as it says in Ephesians 6:14–17:

**So stand fast with your loins girded in truth, clothed with righteousness as a breastplate, and your feet shod in readiness for the gospel of peace. In all circumstances, hold faith as a shield, to quench all [the] flaming arrows of the evil one. And take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.<sup>4</sup>**

I know that through Him all things are possible—like this book that He is guiding me in writing. It is as a testimony to His glory, mercy, and saving grace in my life. Now let us go back to the beginning.



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4 All Bible verses are from the New American Bible, Revised Edition (NABRE) translation, <http://www.usccb.org/bible>, 2011.

