

Purpose of Life

Bettina 'Sparkles' Obernuefemann

*Love the Lord your God with all your heart
and with all your soul and with all your
mind.*

Love your neighbor as yourself.

Matthew 22:35-40

INTRODUCTION

Dear Listener.

I took on a challenging subject, “What is the purpose of life?” Then, inadvertently made the project even tougher, by attempting to pass on my learnings by comparing my personal experiences of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, PTSD, back in 1990 and the trauma of COVID-19 in this year 2020.

With the Grace of God, I found the strength and perseverance to face the PTSD with many healing processes. The same Help is not only necessary but also available to all of us now as we cope with the Pandemic. All we need to do is “ask.”

The original, lengthy PTSD healing activities benefited me by leading me unto a spiritual path. I found answers to biggie questions including, “What is my purpose in life?”

The answer is: learning to love God and myself, and to extend His Love on Earth. Focusing on this activity keeps my soul a constant -work-in-progress and makes my journey here happier.

By the time you read this, the demons of COVID-19 will have attacked our bodies, minds, and spirits just like PTSD does. The

Virus has cast its net of fear of illness and death over the entire globe.

It is causing inner and outer anxiety and panic. All lives on Earth have been turned upside down with closings of schools, businesses, places of worship, sporting events, and endless other activities. The world is under siege with economic turmoil and other sufferings, individually and collectively.

What can we do to make this dark picture brighter?

Well, we can join in prayer and envision that the virus becomes a “wakeup call” for us all to change our attitude of disrespect for life on Mother Earth.

Our blue planet has been abused—with inequalities economically, racially, politically, environmentally, and more. The Earth is at the edge of healing- something IT has been yearning for a long, long time.

- Maybe when the Virus dies out, doors will open to new beginnings?**
- Maybe more people will respect all of life on Earth?**
- Maybe family relationships will improve?**
- Maybe we will see wonderful acts of kindnesses, the end of poverty and homelessness?**

As you are listening to my dream about such a rosy outcome, you may wonder if I always had such trust in life? NO WAY.

Prior to becoming aware of PTSD, my entire life had been chaotic and filled with fear until I was fifty.

I had been stuck in the darkness of unhappiness.

I felt alone, misunderstood, and unloved.

In this state of mind, I remember only once asking a friend, “Why are we even here?”

Inner voices haunted me continually, “No one cares about me. Life just is that way. There’s nothing I can do to change this crazy life.”

But I was able to turn my life of suffering around and make changes for the better.

My life has been more content than I could ever imagine for the last 30 years,

Yes, and YOU can cope better too and keep a brighter outlook on life as well, especially during the pandemic.

What helped me to stop my insane roller coaster ride of life was a recall of childhood abuse. It led to PTSD diagnosis, and recovery and most of all it led me unto a wonderful spiritual path.

I hope you will find the following highlights of my healing journey- interesting and inspiring.

Triggers For Child Abuse Recall

One trigger before the important Recall was the fact that I had started praying again after putting God on the back burner over 20 years. It started with reading a little page daily from a devotional booklet. One result was that it changed my view of the *punishing* God from my childhood to believing in only an *all-loving* God.

The next trigger was working a military charter flight-as a flight attendant—from St. Louis to Frankfurt, to Saudi Arabia and back.

Our crew had a 24-hour layover in Frankfurt.

I was extremely excited to be back on German soil, the land where I was born.

A few of the flight crew and I took a short ride on the Rhein River and visited some of the quaint little 900-year-old towns surrounding city of Frankfurt. And of course, we also enjoyed delicious German meals.

Soon, it was time to prepare for the flight to Saudi Arabia.

In the middle of the night, while packing and putting on my uniform I turned on the international CNN TV channel.

The Desert Gulf War had started and the skies over Baghdad were lit up with sparklers. The sight frightened me, and instantly, fear vibrated through my entire body.

All I wanted to do is go back to my new homeland, the good old United States of America, where I would be safe. Fortunately, during times of war, flight attendants have a choice to proceed to the war zone or return home. Without thinking twice, I chose to fly back to good old Memphis.

Scary Memories

Once I had returned to Tennessee, life surrounding me seemed normal, but my inner life was in turmoil. Within days I had terrible nightmares and frightening daytime visions.

Memories of my little girl came up.

I was taken back in time, to a small country village in Germany where my mother, grandmother, aunt, cousin, and I -found safe shelter, to escape from the bombing in our hometown.

The adult women were able to exchange work on the farms for that safety.

I became aware of sitting in a chair and felt my hands tied to the arms with strips of cloth. I could feel my little body quivering.

My eyes were fixed on a bowl filled with thinned porridge right in front of me on a little table.

Next to the bowl was both a regular and wooden spoon. My mother was screaming that I eat but I refused because I knew what would happen when I was finished.

The next flashback showed me with a handkerchief wrapped around my head over my mouth.

I found myself in darkness, feeling clothes above me and some shoes next to me. I saw a dim light coming through a tiny crack. I was locked up in a closet.

Whenever I watched any war updates on Memphis TV, I was so frightened, and the horrific memories returned.

Thank goodness, I had my fiancé, Michael, to confide in and give him the weird, scary details.

He said, “Sounds like something terrible happened to you when you were little. You need to get help right away.”

I was blessed and found a wise, spiritual psychologist.

Dr. Weiss

I summarized my life for Dr. Weiss.

My story began with two whammies. I was born in Germany 1940, one year after World War II started. In addition, my mother was an unstable, seventeen-year-old and my father went off reluctantly to fight in the war.

Father did return and our small family immigrated to America when I was ten.

Mother told me to forget the past and enjoy my new home.

I did to a certain extent but always felt like an outsider.

Eventually, I became a stewardess (now called flight attendant), a 38-year career I loved dearly.

Ironically, even though I was among thousands of people while “flying”—airline lingo for both pilots and flight attendants—I still felt alone, troubled by inner insecurity and fear.

That inner, empty feeling was covered up by a mask. My smiles were sincere but unknown hurts made me cry on the inside.

Our tendency is to fill the void with temporary relief. I did it, too, with parties, a failed marriage, many romantic relationships, and alcohol.

The wise doctor picked up on my background quickly and went right to the point asking, “So, Bettina, tell me why you are here today.”

I told him about the horrible memories that had surfaced recently. Gently, he continued, “Tell me how you got along with your mother when you were little.”

“I never felt wanted,” I replied.

“Mother always told me what to think, feel and do; and, if I didn’t, she either used the wooden spoon or threatened to leave me forever.”

At the end of the session the counselor summarized:

“It’s quite apparent that you are hyper-vigilant and suffered from low-grade depression all your life. Both are symptoms of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, known as PTSD.

“You medicated yourself with alcohol in order not to feel the hurts of the past and avoided looking at your child abuse.

The feelings of anger and resentment are stuffed deep inside of you and if they are not resolved, you will never find the inner peace all people long for.”

The kind doctor explained I could stay in my PTSD suffering OR finally face the pain of the old wounds, forgive to let them go and find peace inside.

He added, “It can be done but will take time.”

This is the first time I had an answer to my lifelong unhappiness.

Also, it was the first time I heard I had a “choice” and tasted hope.

Honoring My Inner Child

Dr. Weiss used several therapeutic modalities. 1 of them was Inner Child work that applied his innovative *Inner View Videotape Feedback* Therapy.

This is how we first began.

I got comfortable in a big lounge chair.

“Say ‘hello’ to your little girl, your Inner Child, who suffered much abuse when barely three years old and had never been told that she didn’t deserve that bad treatment.”

So, I said, “Hi sweet little Bettina. I am finally here for you.

I really am. I know you have waited way too long for this to happen.

**Now, I want you to know what a brave little girl you were.
You are so important to me.**

From now on I will take care of you, pay attention to you, and listen to you-so can finally relax.

“And, you don’t have to be upset, anxious or afraid anymore, and you can get all the sleep you need.

I know it is hard for you to believe this yet. But, it’s true.

Be happy. I am here for you.”

My little girl answered, surprisingly in German, literally talking in a young toddler’s manner, using my adult voice.

The dialogue felt real and I felt deep emotions.

She answered, “I never thought that that you would understand me. We both need to calm down.

As long as I can remember, I’ve been constantly in fear because you were upset. And, when you were upset, you had no time for me.

When you calm down, I can calm down and we can help each other.”

I told Dr. Weiss that I felt my body relax and sighed.

He explained, “We’ve just touched the tip of the iceberg. There are more inner demons to face and process.”

“Yes, I am willing,” I answered from the bottom of my heart.

After that, the good doctor and I had many more conversations with my Inner Child.

Six months of intensive care had begun, and counseling continued, on and off for ten years.

Finding Spirituality With My Inner Child

Dear Dr. W., as I called him, helped heal many core issues and old wounds. My life improved step by step over the years and there is not enough space in this chapter to describe it all.

Here, I would just like to emphasize that the “Inner Child Work” was most important for me because it was the catalyst to open me spiritually.

In addition to the Inner Child dialogues with my counselor, I wrote down many more conversations in journals and, we also chatted back and forth out loud when home alone.

One meditative night I settled down and relaxed, listening to Brahms' Lullaby while reflecting quietly about my past.

Suddenly my mother's angry face appeared in my mind.

Frightened and puzzled, my little girl screamed from deep within, "What did I do - to upset you so much, Mami?"

My body began to tremble, and little Bettina continued to cry, and plead, "Please don't hit me, Mami. Please stop hitting me. Please, please!"

As usual my Inner Child could not understand why she was so mistreated and thought it was all her fault and that she was not good enough.

At the same time, my adult cried out loud in prayer.

"Dear God, I so want to forgive my mother. I do want to forgive her. Oh God, please can we work this out together?"

That moment I felt an incredible sensation surge through my body. A male voice spoke slowly, clearly, but with a slight German accent. I took in every word as I heard myself speak.

He explained, "I am Mr. Monk. We have come to assist you as you have requested, to get through the current struggles.

You want to work on forgiveness?

It is a task that must be done!

It takes time, much time, indeed.

You are questioning what is happening. We are so proud of you, indeed, my child.

'Up' come the words; 'up' come the memories, at last! This is of help to you. Your hurt is felt through all dimensions."

Mr. Monk continued and explained I had trust issues but not to worry that I was crazy and hearing voices of multiple personalities. Instead, he insisted I was connecting with my deeper Inner Source also known as Inner Child and my Higher Self.

I have continued to talk to “Mr. Monk” often and still do to this day.

You might call the tel-apathic communications, “channeling.” A friend of mine refers to them as “downloads” of the Divine.

My spiritual eyes were opened to the invisible.

I also discovered the spiritual principle that our bodies are only “earthen vessels” for our souls, the direct connection to God - as we journey through this life into eternity.

Here is what I learned from my Inner Child work. First, I was acknowledging my physical little girl who I was in the beginning of this life.

Later, I felt she represents my spirit, my soul, my Inner Child, or the Spark of God. These are just a few of the different names for our “aliveness” inside of each one of us while living on Earth.

That brings me to the story of my adopted middle name, “Sparkles.”

Why ‘Sparkles?’

Here is a slight distraction from the intense fear-energy we are all feeling as the Corona Virus Pandemic moves over the entire Globe.

Did you know that many spiritual seekers, prophets, and saints are name-changers? Those who are looking for their Truth, often change their first, middle, or last name.

For example, spiritual icon Eckhart Tolle took his first name from Meister Eckhart who was a fourteenth century German monk. His main teaching was “Let God be God in you.”

I also was guided to a spiritual name during my PTSD recovery

At a one-day workshop, the facilitator informed about 20 of us, “Today, you will meditate to ask your Higher Self for a personalized spiritual name to keep you on your purpose in life.”

I loved the idea. Afterwards, the group members shared. Many actually “heard” their spiritual name but nothing had come up for me.

However, my prayer was answered a few days later.
My legally blind, long-distant friend, Ron, telephoned.
He lives life in the Presence of the Christ Light all the time and constantly sends out prayers for peace into the world.
He greeted me cheerfully, "Hello, sparkle eyes."
He had never called me that before.
"Hi, Ron, what made you call me that?"
"Because you always sparkle, and I can "see" Light around you right now."
Believing in synchronicity, I told him about my search for a spiritual name. "How does 'Sparkles' sound to you?"
"Sounds really good, 'Sparkles.'"
"That settles it. I am 'Sparkles' from now on. Thank you, for helping me."
But Ron insisted, "Oh, it wasn't me; Jesus gave it to me - to give to you."
I was jubilant about my new spiritual treasure which has kept my life on purpose most of the time during the last 30 years.

"Pick Up Your Cross..."

"Pick up your cross and follow me" is one of my favorite teachings of Christ.

When we carry our crosses or challenges, we are given the opportunity to change our fears to Love, just as Jesus Christ demonstrated in his life and death.

Only with God's Help was I able to carry my PTSD and other crosses. The new Bettina 'Sparkles,' devoted much of the last thirty years to continue her PTSD recovery and spiritual soul growth.

I have forgiven my past and have no regrets.

I am grateful for temporary and eternal life.

As many others, I consider myself a "work-in-progress," still focusing on humility and self-love.

It takes continual request for Help. We cannot—nor do we have to—do anything alone.

In this world of duality, history repeats itself to teach us, evolve and expand in Love. We find proof in the Old Testament, New Testament, The Plague of the Dark Ages, The Spanish Flu of 1918, just to mention a few.

Now, as we experience COVID-19 individually and collectively, what are we to learn?

First, our joining in prayer is powerful because we are connected in Oneness, in body, mind and spirit.

As a former flight attendant, I use the metaphor of flying in an airplane, to show we are all together on this journey called life.

Now COVID-19 is also proving how we are connected for better or worse, relying on one another to survive and thrive.

Together we are letting go and grieving for our old way of life.

Would it not be wonderful if all of us would honor the ones carrying their crosses openly during this pandemic—the hero health workers, those who are dying, and millions of others.

No matter how we pray, let us join, knowing prayer is powerful.

May humanity hear the Call for Love. We are all here to grow. Whether PTSD, COVID-19, or other obstacles, all can be opportunities to do inner healing.

Dear Listener, don't you agree, all this new “awareness” may “awaken” many to practice Christ's teaching to love God and one another?

His teachings were meant for all nations, all of humanity.

Acts of kindness are already increasing while I am completing my article about life's purpose, Easter April 12, 2020.

You may already know your purpose of life or, hopefully, found some gems in my writing.

Maybe we will see a better world? Let us all become brighter *sparkles* and shine out the Love of God as we live on purpose.

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Bettina 'Sparkles' Obernuefemann
Website: bettinasparkles.com
Visit: amazon.com/author/bettinasparkles

Bettina 'Sparkles' Obernuefemann's passion to share began the moment PTSD recovery processes gave back her self-worth and improved her outlook on life.

She wanted others to know, "You have the power to change your life and feel better, too."

Bettina 'Sparkles' has written several articles and three books to date: one memoir, another on PTSD recovery and the third explains how to find one's spiritual path.

She is shown above with her beloved, Michael.

Bettina 'Sparkles' says, "No matter how fearful and unhappy we were in the past or are uncomfortable we are in the present with COVID-19, we must take time out, to go inside ourselves and reflect deeply to find our Inner Child.

This is how we connect with our souls or spirits, home of the Divine and find our individual and collective purpose of life."
