

My name is Monique and I am a survivor. Someone once said to me what's sharable is bearable, and I couldn't agree more. So I am going to share my story.

We have given our voices a lot of power, for example with the me too movement we opened the door for us to share what we went through, I want to shine a light on how it looks when you have to pull yourself out of one of the darkest moments in your life. How to make something of it. How to make something of it. Here's my story of how I turned my trauma into my success.

I don't think of myself as a victim, not anymore. I am alive so how could I be a victim. Although a part of who I am, a part me did die, I survived and am thriving that to me definitely says that I am a survivor.

Trauma will inevitably define you the thing is you get to choose how!

So this won't be so much a story of what happened to me as how I came to the point I'm at today. How I became a survivor!

December first 2019 was the day my life changed, the day I became a survivor. Finding out that someone who lit me up, the person who had given me back my confidence, was also someone who was capable of killing me and almost did was the best happy/crappy I have ever been through! And hopefully ever will. Getting to the happy part, working through the crappy was the hardest thing I have ever had to do. On December 19th 2019 I realized that I couldn't continue the way I had the last 18 days. I needed help!

Living with my trusty google home reminding me of time passing. The alarms going off for simple day to day tasks, telling me that six hours had just passed and I had to pull my shit together and go pick up my kids from school realizing that I hadn't gotten off my bathroom floor since I got home from dropping them off in the morning, living like that wasn't a situation that would last long. So I asked for help, first I called mcfcd and told them what had happened on December 1st and told them that I desperately needed help. I needed to get up off my bathroom floor. I needed to live again. Due to a severe lack of resources in my rural community I didn't get that help until almost the end of February, almost three months later.

the next two and a half months didn't get any better.

In the time that passed after I called for help the coping mechanisms I developed to get through the days, and nights were not any healthier then spending six hours on a bathroom floor. Although I lived through nearly becoming a murder victim, Trying to stay alive was a battle I still had to fight every single day that passed and it sure wasn't an easy task. Is all I could do was find any way to live. To not continue to relive that night over and over again. Luckily I did manage to pull through. My children needed me alive. I had accepted other wise right before I went limp in December but I couldn't have been more wrong and I clung on to the knowledge that my three beautiful boys needed their mom every day for months. Even though I was coping I still desperately needed help non of my coping was going to help me get back to me, Or the new me I have now found. I had just moved into a new house, actually the very same day December first, decorating my house was probably the healthiest thing I was doing other then baking for my boys. and Although winners and the thrift store might have been happy with my need to decorate, my bank account sure wasn't. I had some extra money at the time from my injuries I sustained in car accidents and I burnt through it all before I got into therapy. I allowed more people into my life that definitely didn't have my best interest at heart and was hurt more in the process all because I

couldn't stand to be alone in my thoughts. I couldn't think about that night. I couldn't think about how bad I missed the person who almost killed me. I couldn't continue reliving running down that dirt road. Most of all though I couldn't think about him. When the money started to run out all those people who I allowed into my life began to run out with it and as the people who had claimed to have been there for me ran out too.

You might be starting to feel sorry for me, but don't because this is when it all started to change. When the money and the ability to shop my worries away was gone as well as the people who supported it, but didn't truly support me. I had to face how bad I actually needed that help so I started asking everyone in a position to help me. And right before covid-19 hit The Salmon Arm Safe Society was there with open doors to help me. Thank God!

When I first met with Kathy, my therapist with the safe society, I was so empty on the inside. In the last two and a half months I had successfully shut off any and all emotions. I felt dead on the inside. Looking back at it now almost feels like I'm watching a movie. It doesn't feel like it was me. And it wasn't.

After telling Kathy what had brought me in to therapy she asked me how I was coping I told her with a shit eating grin on my face that I had put two ounces of fireball in my coffee that morning. Her response was well that was honest of you. I was there to heal and to heal you have to not only be honest with yourself but with others, especially your therapist. My honesty through this process is definitely one of the key factors to how I managed to make it here today. I stopped hiding my trauma in the shadows. You have to shine a light on it if you want it to go away.

I managed to get a month of in person therapy before covid hit, thankfully! In my last face to face session I walked in having a full on panic attack. I missed him so much that day, I wanted desperately to stop missing him, and I didn't understand why I couldn't.

In that session Kathy asked me what I liked to do, and I honestly and genuinely started to say "I like to take my kids camping and to the bea..." And she stopped me and said "monique, I didn't ask what you like to do for your kids what do you like to do for you?"

Talk about panic! I have been a mom since I was 15, over half of my life, my whole adult life I had been a mom. There had never been a moment even with the career I had chosen for myself pre car accidents, that was about what I wanted to do for me, not that I regret any of that, although being a young teenage mom is not something I recommend lol. But I had never just thought of me.

My youngest is nine now and I clearly wasn't doing anyone any favors by not figuring out what I liked, by always putting everyone before me. Is all it ended up doing was putting me in the position to be driven down a dirt road, almost not making it home.

A few days after that therapy session it started to become clear that Canada was not going to avoid the covid pandemic and the fear of not being capable of providing, not being self sustaining in anyway, along with my severe ptsd and Kathy's simple question, I got that push to change shit for myself, and my kids. So I asked for more help.

My boys dad and I have been separated for years now and have managed to become friends and he was one of those people I had to be honest with about all that I was going through. He had just been laid off thanks to covid so I asked if he would come and stay at my house with the boys so that I could have the

ability to figure out what I liked to do, to learn new skills for survival in what was seeming to be an apocalyptic world. Thankfully he did.

While everyone was out mass buying toilet paper I was mass buying actual survival items mainly things for my garden. Which by the way ended up being a major fail lol. And I really wanted a planter but thanks to burning through my settlement money, I definitely couldn't afford 150\$ for someone else to make me one. So I went on Pinterest and it looked like I could manage to build one myself. Even though I had never used a power tool in my life I went and bought a used saw for half the price and asked a construction site in town for some scrap wood. And I built myself a planter!! The first one was God awful, 30 screws that make absolutely no sense and it could not hold soil if my life depended on it but it stayed together and stood all on it's own! That was the first moment I felt true happiness in almost four months!

And I wanted more. I wanted that feeling to stay!

I made another planter and this one was beautiful, it stuck together and it would definitely hold soil! But I was broke and who knew soil was really expensive no point having a planter if you can't put dirt into it so I sold it with that money I bought myself my second power tool a trusty 25\$ palm sander I got at walmart. I went back to the construction site asked for more free wood and they loaded my car up! I made another planter and tried a few more Pinterest crafts, maybe there were more things I liked to do that I never knew about myself and I wanted to know! I wasn't afraid of failing. I was afraid now of losing the feeling of being alive again. I wanted nothing more then to live! Actually live.

My next planter was also a success and I sold that one too. And after a couple of celebratory mojitos, morning fireball was no longer my go to, I had a crazy idea to actually try to make a business out of these planters of mine. And did I ever! The She Shed by the Shuswap Shore was born! On April 17, 2020 I launched my Facebook page. And it took off quickly. I guess those celebratory mojitos did a job well done with the name picking lol.

Since April I have really gotten to know myself, this new me the person who was a stranger to me in Kathy's office that day. I realized that once you stop being afraid of death, afraid of failure and start being afraid of not living life. Actually living! Trying new things stops being scary.

I know what I like to do now if I was asked that question today I know I like to cliff jump at Kal lake, I like to acrylic pour paint although I still fail more often then not at that ahahaha I enjoy it and when one actually turns out it goes on my wall if it turns out horrible I just paint over it and save the canvas for another day. I really freaking like sanding it is my meditation, my zen zone the new fireball just not in coffee it's the fire in my life! I don't make planters anymore I really don't like them way too fussy! Bug taking a live edge slab and bring out the beauty that nature holds is magic too me!

I still have days where I'm not ok, and I think that is normal I still have bad days where panic hits for no reason. Although they are fewer and waaayyyy farther between. I also now have the knowledge of what I like to do so it's way easier to snap myself out of it and come back to reality. The reality that life is worth living! Actually living! That I am something to be proud of! That I don't need someone who was capable of murdering me. That I don't need anyone else to make me feel worthy I now know that I am worthy of myself!

If you are on your bathroom floor, if you are addicted to the way someone makes you feel so you ignore when they hurt you, if you don't know that you can live without them. I am here to tell you you can! You are worthy! Life is worth living!!! And there is a whole new you waiting to be alive! Ask for help, whoever will listen tell them your truth! Get up off of your bathroom floor and make something of it! Make something of you! Live!!!! Actually live!

Thank you for letting me share my story it helps me heal and I hope it helped you!

Let's stop hiding and make something of it!!