

## **Ottawa Psychotherapist Pens Memoir on Childhood Sexual Abuse**

Milk and cookies shared between a grandfather and granddaughter became the first of many secrets Psychotherapist Stacey Kirkpatrick would keep from her mom. That first secret led to many others as her grandfather gradually pushed the boundaries of inappropriate behavior—and subjected Stacey to childhood sexual abuse. Eventually, after beating the odds, Stacey rose above the effects of the early childhood abuse and now dedicates her services to her clients, helping them to believe that healing is possible even after experiencing unthinkable trauma.

In *Milk & Cookies – An Intimate Story About Rising Above the Trauma of Sexual Abuse*, Stacey shares her story of healing and resurrection from childhood sexual abuse and trauma. Hailing from Ottawa, Canada, Stacey is the Chair of the Board for Voice Found, a charitable organization working to prevent childhood sexual abuse and human trafficking. She is also the co-author in the International #1 Best Seller, *Women Who Impact*.

As a child, living in the low-income projects, Stacey grew up seeing her mom struggling as a single mother while being physically and emotionally abused by her boyfriends. But the abuse knew no boundaries as these men set their eyes on Stacey to satisfy their sexual needs, as well.

Being groomed by her grandfather and her mother's boyfriends, Stacey perceived sexual exploitation as normal, and her life seemed destined to revolve around low expectations of herself and others. Stacey struggled to find her identity through her teen years, often turning to the young men around her for validation.

She left home at eighteen to have her first child with her older boyfriend, whose family felt like an escape from the dysfunction she had known. Little did she know that she was headed

for several more years of trauma and sadness, including the end of a relationship and loss of full custody of her children, followed by the death of a very special friend.

However, as years passed her hard-won wisdom anchored in her soul. Stacey overcame the depression, anxiety, and low self-worth that had haunted her for much of her life and built a life for herself that she hadn't dared to dream—one built on a foundation of confidence, courage, and commitment to her wellbeing.

“While there were many days when life seemed just too difficult and migraines plagued my every move, something inside of me knew I could rise above my challenges,” says Stacey.

“And I have. I truly believe that healing is possible and life is what we make it.”

Stacey not only studied to be a psychotherapist, but she's also turned to the world of high-performance coaching under the tutelage of Jack Canfield, co-founder of the *Chicken Soup for the Soul* series and author of *The Success Principles: How to Get from Where You Are to Where You Want to Be*. Stacey became a Certified Coach Practitioner and has coached executives trying to manage challenging portfolios and large numbers of employees, while maintaining a healthy life balance and small business owners just starting out, trying to navigate through their fears of failure.

She has volunteered as a peer supporter for women leaving abusive relationships and provided peer support training for new volunteers. She has provided supervision for a Supervised Access Program at Family Services Ottawa and worked with the Discovery University program offered through The Ottawa Mission, providing non-credit university-level courses to participants at no cost. She also trained to facilitate women's support groups at Western Ottawa Community Resource Centre and has certified in conflict resolution, danger assessment, Indigenous Cultural Safety, and suicide intervention.

Stacey's journey is one of inspiration for anyone who has suffered the trauma of physical and sexual abuse. She shows that when we learn to love and respect ourselves, others will as well.

*Milk & Cookies – An Intimate Story About Rising Above the Trauma of Sexual Abuse* is available on Amazon November 2, 2022 and a portion of proceeds will be donated to Voice Found, an Ottawa organization that helps survivors of childhood sexual abuse, sexual exploitation and human trafficking.

To learn more about Stacey and her books, visit: <https://staceykirkpatrick.com/>

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