

An excerpt from "Without My Consent"
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A forthcoming book Written by Noelle Rose Andressen

A brutally honest sharing that delves deeper into the psychology of the splintered psyche and how it can be mended. All in her own words, Miss Andressen discusses her experiences being sexually abused. Miss Andressen's fascination with psychology at a young age put her on a path to study psychology and journalism upon entering collage at 16.

We are all imperfect beings, but there's perfection in imperfection. We may enter this world as near perfect beings, untouched yet by human hands, violations, harms and hurts. None of us get out unscathed from the etchings of life. We all must travel through this world with some type of appendage attached to our souls, but there is hope. Miss Andressen once again shows you how she triumphed over tragedy and turned her ashes into beauty.

"...4 minutes and one second would change a heart forever. Why do I make a big deal about it being precisely 4 minutes and one second? Not because I'm anal or pompous, but because I believe that is exactly how long it took to change a heart. If this dance was only 4 minutes long, who knows if it would've been as effective. That one second could have been what changed this person's heart. That one second could have been what ultimately made this person see me for the first time and let them know that I understood and cared.

You see, being a survivor of sexual molestation or rape allows you to see similar signs that you as the victim displayed. I saw these "signs" and behavior patterns in this other person and I wanted deeply to share with this individual that I understood. However, to approach them face-to-face would seem too much as a confrontation and scare them away; this I didn't want to do. I chose dance as my voice to express what happened to me. We all have gifts, dance was one of mine, as was my heart and my voice. To watch something in the dark, in a theater, where no one can see your eyes or your reaction--it is safe. It is safe as an audience member to "feel the experience"™. You can shed all the tears you want, no one will know. That is why I made this 4 minute 1 second dance that you all have come to know as "RED RIBBONS". It grew over the years and is now a complete 55 minute "Dance Drama" that my company "Rubans Rouges Dance" brings to life every so often.

We use "RED RIBBONS" not only as entertainment but as a community outreach; an opportunity to help mend hearts or at least get rape and molestation victims to take the first step: Talking about it and then getting help to heal.

The twisting of the red ribbons that you see in the film was symbolic and a means of pacification. For many years I would fidget with my fingers and nervously pull at my long hair. It was how I dealt with what happened to me but I was always unsure what exactly had happened to me. Had these

flashbacks been a real re-telling of my past or were they just moments in time encapsulated from nightmares...I needed to know the truth of what happened to me; but how would I seek for the truth. The truth has a funny way of making itself known when we least expect it.

One night, my mother called me, she was very drunk and in serious emotional turmoil. She painstakingly shared with me her tale of being molested. I was in my early 20s. She began her story with tears and then strengthened as she continued. She was raped by her father every night from the earliest time she could remember-she was very young until she was around 17 and (the same year she was pregnant with me). My father "rescued" her, they got married and had me near Christmas time.

Mom explained why she never left me alone with Grandfather; but I remember his hands pulling up my yellow dress. I remember Nana saying she'd be right back. I remember Grandfather pulling down my training pants; I remember the blue walls and white crown moulding and the medallion on the ceiling. I remember waking up crying with heavy tears and a black belt wrapped around my neck. He was whipping my back with the slack. It reminded me of a tail or a snake with two holes down its spine and two big teeth. I remember my Nana's voice asking what happened? He said, "She was a bad girl."

That was it! Mom never left me alone with him, but Nana did. I don't know and won't know if it was intentional, if it was planned, if I was a "sacrificial offering" to him. I still wrestle with why she would leave me with him--she must have known what happened to my mom, how could one not unless she justified it or she was afraid of him. She was institutionalized for a time, it could be because she did know what was occurring and she couldn't handle it. It could also be that she was about to come forward with the truth and he silenced her. He was an abusive man - mentally fractured.

Mom continued and shared how her father used a belt around her neck, one with two prongs. Her heart released the details of how he would position her and all the violating intricacies that I can't even speak of now.

Then I knew this was no dream, this was no movie. This was real. This is what happened to me, just like it happened to my mother. I wanted to share with her my experiences but she was so drunk and so deeply in pain. She reached out to me, I needed to be there for her and put my instance aside for a time, she didn't need to have her sorrow compounded by my story. I don't think she would've been able to handle the news, it would've broken her heart so I kept it from her. It wasn't until she was near death from stage four cancer that I could gain the courage to share with her. I copied my 4:01 dance on a dvd for her and sent it, but she would never see it. She was too sick to watch. I guess now looking back, it was what the powers that be wanted. I believe in an afterlife and I believed that somehow now she does know what happened to me and she is whole.

So that is how I knew that what was done to me was no dream. It was a real life nightmare that I was able to push down through many years and tell myself that it was a movie I had seen, or a nightmare I had had. Once my mother shared with me the truth of what had happened to her, it all seemed to click into place. I was stunned and relieved simultaneously. The air I took in seemed different. The colors of my world changed; some became more vibrant and some dimmed, but isn't that what truth does. It can also make us furious with anger before we embrace it with thankfulness.

From that moment on each breath would be changed for me, it would be the breath of understanding and completeness that I forbade and welcomed. Nonetheless, I saw things for what they were and explanations of my truth began to comfort:

That's why my mom was emotionally unavailable to me.

This is why I was afraid of men.

This is why I cried when a man touched me.

This is why I had certain preferences with things from sexuality to relationships.

This is why this happened - This is why that happened -

This is why, this is why. This is WHY.

Almost instantly I could then forgive my mother for all that she failed providing for me. I couldn't be angry at her any longer because she shared her truth with me; her daughter. What else would I uncover?