

Red Ribbons™

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Red Ribbons ~ The Story Behind Rubans Rouges Dance Company™

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Have you not heard? Have you not seen? Do you not know the story of RED RIBBONS?

My story is not unlike many other women's stories who've been through this travesty. The names are different, the locations vary, but one thing that is common: innocence was lost--innocence was shattered. And that precious child's life will never be the same again.

This story is my story. . .

My story is one of many stories that are out there. I decided to share my story with the world in the form of a dance. It would later lead to my sharing it in many other forms: public speaking, counseling, support groups, encouragement for a friend, a shoulder to lean & cry on and the written form.

My story begins when I was about 3 years old and my grandmother tied a tiny red ribbon to a safety pin. From that pin a charm with a Catholic saint was hung from it. She would pin this to my training pants to serve as protection for my innocence. The saint (I have no idea which it was) was supposed to be a protector. It proved to fail as the hands I once trusted betrayed me. The hands of my grandfather. From that moment on I learned that L-O-V-E was a bad four letter word and that trust was something I didn't like.

My RED RIBBONS were a source of pain and shame. I grew up not knowing how to love or be loved. Fearful of trusting anyone. It took a very long time to come to even speak of the horror, but I did. I somehow found trust in a man--who would become my beloved husband. He was the first person I ever told my dark secret to. I also shared with him how I was raped by my best friend's father and had some other encounters that were very violating. He shared the love of god with me and at first I hated him for it. As I mentioned before: how could a loving god allow this to happen????!! But my heart yielded to god and I did find true love.

Hard at first as I didn't think I deserved such love after being abused (it truly messed up my head and heart) but slowly I began to break free from the bondage of abuse. It wasn't until I met a beautiful woman who had gone through a similar situation who became my spiritual guide/mom, and showed me the way to healing--a deeper healing. I was forever grateful. Then from my pain I was able to grow and heal and then share the sacrificial love of God with others to help them heal from their abusive pasts. Do you see the symbolism in the "red"--God's love/blood...There's nothing more overwhelming than to hold another human being in your arms who's been so hurt and shamed due to abuse.



Photo: Robert Salas

Their broken hearts in my hands...all I can ever do is hold them and love them as I was loved--helped--held. Sometimes it's for hours, it's for as long as it takes because I don't waiver. I always see it as a broken person who needs to be held together as they let it out so they don't fall completely apart. Anyway, that's how I felt when I began to be honest and look at it.

Fast forward to about the late 2000's. Out of the blue I was COMPELLED to choreograph a dance. YES!!! It was RED RIBBONS. Of all things why was I supposed to choreograph a dance about child abuse--sexual child abuse no less? I had gone through my healing, I had gone through dealing with the guilt, shame, etc. why now? It was put on my heart to do and I just knew I had to do it. COMPELLED!!!

As I researched for just the right music I told myself this was a crazy notion and was about to toss it aside. I couldn't find the right music, I couldn't find the right movements and I wasn't welcomed with receptive open

arms--actually I recall crossed and folded arms and an angry opposing face.

Apparently, this was a "taboo" subject for this person as it is for many, I get that, but I disregarded it at the time and said so what, I'm still doing it. But I questioned whether I'd really do it or not.

Just as I was about to ditch the idea my husband said listen to this: "Che Valiers De Sangreal" from Da Vinci Code. I literally almost peed my pants. This was the music. I instantly heard and saw little girls crying and then as the music played, I started crying too. I felt I was moved by either angels or God. This was confirmation for me--I had to do this dance no matter how much it was opposed.

I was COMPELLED. I love that word. But to be completely honest--this dance was never for me. It was a gift for someone else. At first to say thank you, but now I know it's more than that. For I KNOW it was meant to minister and share to the ONE to say from my heart to hers: "I understand."

I need to skip a part of this story because it produces great pain in me and is quite private. I risked much in trying to help set another free. I don't regret it one bit and stand strongly on the hope of love realized. I hope one day to get back to this note and fill in this blank when the matters are finally resolved. But for now it is blank & will remain that way. Sometimes I'm pushed away when I try to help in gentleness. My compassion is a blessing and a curse at times BUT--I would get another chance to dance this dance and develop and improve it and perform it on a real stage with deep love and support. With the loving arms of my mentors: Beth & Robert.

Little did I know that this time around while doing it I'd go on a journey of more healing...after all these years...why now? I didn't realize there was more work to be done. But done it was. I now understand that this history of mine will remain with me until I die. I will always have some work to do to a greater or lesser degree concerning this issue/matter, but the good news is that more healing came and brought blessings I never dreamed. I was able to go on a journey with my fellow dancers and we would all grow, nurture and heal one another.

Beth was the perfect woman to guide us all. She unabashedly pushed me to make this dance all it was meant to be and learn to let the past stay in the past and embrace the present and future. What patience she showed me. It was such a beautiful time for all of us. Robert looked on so proudly. His smile brightened my saddened heart when I would reflect upon the pain & rejection I got prior to having started this dance piece. They both made it a safe place for me to express this and gave me a soft place to lay my heart. They both knew how to set my soul free so I could fly and soar.

I was given the opportunity and honor to perform this piece in many places. But one sore spot that was hard to perform at was a Consortium. Beth held my hand that day but also showed tough love! She sensed that I was ready to bolt and run for the door--but she didn't let me! She securely held my hand as we crossed the floor and firmly told me the best words I've ever heard in my life. I choose to keep these words between us girls, but I loved her for those words! I was surrounded by my family and they weren't going to let anything harm me that day.

Wow, what beauty and what strength they had for me when I was weak. All of them--STRONG WOMEN!!!

Fast forward to the inception of my dance company. What to call it??? I wracked my brain for weeks. Again, my brilliant husband just blurted out how do you say red ribbons in French. It took him 7 seconds to come up with it. LOL!!! I said: Rubans Rouges. I instantly loved it! I knew it was perfect. So there you have it. THE story. Well...most of the story. There's more to this epic tale, however, I haven't reached the end of it yet. I think...no - no... I "feel" that some beautiful climax will end this saga very soon as there's some unfinished business and loose ends that need tying.

