

Are You Ready To Change Your Story?



Hello! Thank you for being an integral part of Verbal Abuse Journals. Your thoughts and concerns are at the top of my mind every morning when I wake up. I read all of your comments and emails. Some add to my dreams for my future and others remind me of where I've been. But no matter what stage of recovery *you* are enjoying now, I know you will take another greater stride tomorrow. There is no turning back once you *know* there is a better way.

I want to rush out and resolve all our issues stemming from abuse, but I can't. You've learned (or are learning) that the only white knight on the way to rescue you is yourself. Every day I feel the knight getting more powerful, helping to rewrite our stories. We can and will create a healthy and loving life for ourselves!

I hope you enjoy and find this newsletter useful. You'll meet Jodi Aman, a woman I admire, who has some ideas for rewriting the stories we tell ourselves. Please reply to it and let me know your thoughts!

Love, Light, and Laughter,

Kellie Jo Holly

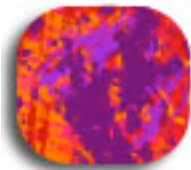
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Interview With Jodi Aman



In the spirit of finding our happy places, I am happy to introduce you to Jodi Aman. She blogs at healthyplace.com, but that is only the last in a long string of accomplishments for this brilliant woman. I'm sure you will enjoy her insights and advice for healing.

Jodi's Path To The Healing Arts



Jodi, you are an exciting and unique individual. Besides being a clinically licensed social worker, your bio describes multiple alternative healing certifications and degrees. It is difficult to find someone who embodies such a holistic approach to mental health. How did you evolve into the woman you are today?

Thanks, Kellie! Life is thrilling when I connect with lights in the world such as you! It has been fabulous getting to know you through our blogs at HealthyPlace.com.

My opportunity to learn holistic approaches to health came as most opportunities come to us-through a crisis. My own health crisis happened 15 years ago. **Western medicine offered me no relief save, "It's stress. Take this pill."**

This far from satisfied me. I had deeper questions, a well of curiosity about the body, mind and spirit to satiate. **What makes us sick? What makes us heal?** I wanted to know. I plugged into study, and tried everything, coming to **deeper understanding of my psyche** than ever before.

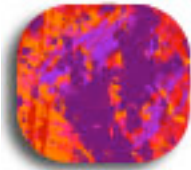
I studied Ayurveda-traditional Indian medicine and Yoga first. Then, mindfulness, aroma therapy, and various spiritualities (especially the divine

feminine). These made explicit **the link between my health and my environment**. I was a sponge (still am) to everything about alternative healing and living holistically.

At the same time my spirituality was evolving. I saw the relativity of the world and how I could effect all that was around me. This had a huge impact on my healing, but also on me as a healer. **I realized that as I healed myself, I could heal others** and vice versa.

Narrative therapy **taught me the power of our beliefs and how to help people rewrite them**. As beliefs changed, I have witnessed over and over powerful, healing energy shifts, that **cure people with spiritual, mental, emotional, and physical problems**. Then, a few years ago, Spirit guided me to begin physical healing by sending light energy through my hands into a person, much like Reiki. I followed this up with a shamanic apprenticeship **to learn how to help people make the shifts they want** in their lives.

Rewriting Our Stories

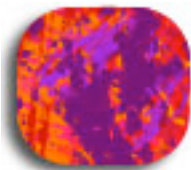


What is narrative therapy? How does it help us to rewrite our story?

[Narrative therapy](#) is a talk therapy that believes that life is multistoried. **Even though there is an abuse story going on, there is also other stories that have been made invisible**. Stories of connection, strength, love, and self-preservation are also present.

Narrative therapy seeks to breath life into these preferred stories, changing they way people see themselves. We do it through asking questions, using metaphor, pointing out contradictions, getting details of events, repeating positive meaning, looking at an event from a distance, tracing the history of skills and knowledge, and **changing the meaning of memories**. It is a subtle but powerful process.

Healing & Staying In Abusive Relationships



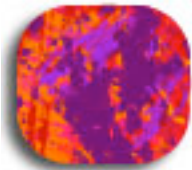
What is your position on healing if an abused person wants to stay in their abusive relationship? What can someone in an abusive relationship do to help themselves?

This is a controversial question as many believe a victim must leave to heal. However, **staying itself is a response**, often judged by others to be “crazy.” This compounds the issue by concluding that the victim is too weak to know what is good for her.

But staying could be seen as a conscious choice with a purpose. (For example, staying until a good, safe plan is made. Or staying to protect someone else.) The abused person who stays can focus on her skills and abilities, building her confidence in herself.

It is important to have identities other than “abuse victim.” Anything that promotes other ways of seeing herself is helpful. For example, “a loving pet owner.” I love to help an abused person who hasn’t left **find a community of support, other people to reflect back the goodness in the person**, so the voice of the abuser is not the only one heard.

Survivors Heal By Remembering Skills

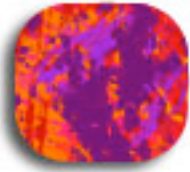


Abuse survivors seek healing on multiple levels. We’ve been knocked down mentally, emotionally, spiritually and all the rest. What approach would you take to best help someone who was abused but left the relationship?

Anything that will help them shift the stories (meanings and beliefs) that living with abuse created about themselves and the world. **Our very identity is formed by how we make sense of events**, (i.e., Self blame is an epidemic among survivors, blocking all paths to healing.) Also, **many traumatic memories are half memories**. Survivors remember [a part of] what happened to them and judge it harshly on many levels.

What is lost to the memory is how the survivor responded. (This is often downgraded by the abuser or overshadowed by self-doubt.) It is crucial to make this response visible, since it always says something about what the person gives value to. For example, the skills that survivors have to keep themselves safe says that they give value to themselves. **Making these visible will make them evermore accessible in the future.**

How Can I Help Someone Who Is In An Abusive Relationship?



What do you believe is the best thing someone who loves an abused person can do? How would you advise them to handle the pain they feel for their loved one?

The best thing you can do is have confidence in them. **Believing in their abilities to reclaim their lives will help them believe in themselves.** This is crucial. Watch this video about how to [love instead of worry](#).

Validate the person, reflect back to them the beauty that they are, their abilities. In the situation of abuse, it is hard to see all this since the abuse has made them feel [worthless and weak](#). Being a counter voice will give them the strength to [shapeshift their situation](#).

Jodi's Special Message For All Of Us



I have a feeling we've only touched on the basics of what you do and offer. Is there anything else you would like to add? What specific message do you have for us – people who are working to overcome abuse?

That is what is so great about shamanism and narrative therapy, **there are so many ways to make meaning and change beliefs!** I can

- talk with a person,
- cry with them,
- problem solve,

- walk in the woods,
- make posters,
- create ritual,
- take them on a shamanic journey to recover parts of themselves lost to the abuse,
- introduce them to spirit guides,
- invite them to new perspectives,
- help them uncover relationships that will support them,
- help them find spiritual meanings,
- and do hands on body work to help move energy.

The sky is the limit. **There are many ways to heal, and I don't limit myself.** But if I feel like another body worker would be beneficial, I do make that referral.

Kellie, I love what you are doing with your website. Building this supportive community is one of the most important things that you can do. This is the first order of business when I am working with someone who has been or is in the midst of being abused.

I believe in them, and remind them that it is not their fault, but it pales in comparison to what a loving community can do when they reflect back the same. In isolation, the voice of the abuser is the only one they hear. It makes it near impossible to leave.

With lots of people telling you you are wonderful, the soul becomes robust and deep healing can happen from this acknowledgement. The abused person now has options that she did not have before.

The best thing they could do is connect, start being around people who can reflect their goodness to them, as often as possible, for there are truck loads of negativity to counteract.