

Our Brokenness Is A Beautiful Gift To Be Shared

[BY TANYA TIGER](#)

Some people may find my writing self-indulgent since most of what I write is about me and my life experiences. It's okay if they think that. We're all entitled to our opinions and if I shut one person down, it limits my ability to express my own thoughts and opinions without fear of judgment.

All I can say is that I write what I know. I think it makes my writing relatable and, ultimately, that's what I really care about. For me, writing is about connection and sharing something...an idea, a hope, a wish, love.

Writing has soothed me during my most painful experiences. It has been my outlet and my sanctuary. When everything else has failed, I know that I can always turn to a blank page and release whatever is weighing on me in the moment.

Writing has saved my life.

At first, I wrote just for me. I didn't feel that anyone else would understand or even care what I had to say. It was a personal expression of everything I couldn't say out loud. It took a very long time to find my voice and to gain the courage to release my writing into the world.

When I finally did take that leap, I was astounded by the outpouring of support. People from around the globe reacted with such love and compassion that it stole my breath away. I found that my writing touched a nerve in some, galvanized and inspired others, and reassured weary readers who felt unseen and unheard.

I discovered that by sharing my own messy human journey of pain and joy and being willing to risk vulnerability, I was able to give others an opportunity to do the same.

I came to understand how a simple reassurance, whether from a friend or a stranger, can be a life raft when a person feels alone in the world. I know this because I've been there. Reading other people's stories of overcoming hardships and heartaches had given me a lifeline I so desperately needed in my youth and in my adult years.

Like many, I was the victim of severe bullying. The worst of it began in second grade and didn't stop until I left high school. Those years left me scarred mentally, emotionally, and even physically. I was afraid and unable to trust people. To show any form of vulnerability had made me a target over and over again.

It was burned into my psyche that I could trust no one except myself, and even that was a difficult feat at times. I was broken...badly. My once vibrant spirit had been cracked into a million pieces and I was left surrounded by splinters of youthful innocence.

I spent decades healing those wounds, building a casket for my tears and regrets with that pile of splinters left at my feet, only to have it smashed once again when my daughter Kristin died. I have borne witness to the death and rebirth of my Self so many times that I adopted the Phoenix as my totem, a symbol that I still wear as a reminder that I have survived the most devastating of losses and I continue to rise.

An unexpected gift of sharing my writing has been the willingness of others to reach out and share their own

stories. This is a blessing that I do not take for granted. I fully understand the gravity of exposing yourself to a stranger. The healing that has occurred, in both the giving and receiving of stories, is immeasurable.

My brokenness, which I once saw as a weakness...a defect that needed to be remedied and stripped away, has become one of my greatest strengths. I've come to learn that my brokenness is what has shaped me into the woman I am today. A little rough around the edges, you bet, but stronger where the cracks have healed over.

My brokenness has also led me to be more compassionate towards others, realizing that we never truly know where someone has been or what they have experienced in their lives until we've been gifted with their stories. I make a concerted effort, every day, to create a safe space for those around me where they hopefully feel able to share their stories, to open up and truly be themselves without fear of judgment.

I'm not always perfect (I am human after all). But any time I start to feel that wall of judgment rise or feel myself sinking back into the shadows of self-doubt, I remember where I have been, what I have been through, and it gives me the courage to step forward with open arms and an open heart.

I could have easily allowed those years of being bullied to harden my heart. I could have chosen to see everyone as an enemy or someone 'out to get me.' That would have been far easier than choosing to open myself up, share my best and worst parts with the world, and lay myself bare.

I am broken, yes. We are broken and I have found beauty in the brokenness.

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Of The Woods, Magick Happens*

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SHANNON CROSSMAN

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