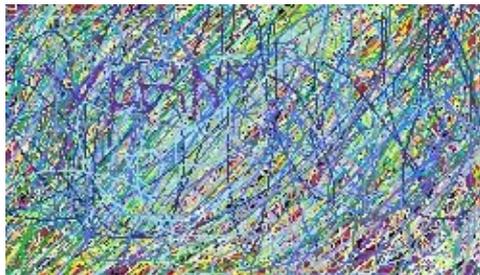


Soul Blotches

Soul Blotches

By : midlife writer

My memory of my father and several of the times I took ownership of his soul blotches



Published on
Booksie

[booksie.com/midlife writer](http://booksie.com/midlife%20writer)

Copyright © midlife writer, 2015
Publish your writing on Booksie.com.

Soul Blotches

Soul Blotches, a brief memoir of my life with my father

I want to say first that I acknowledge I need therapy. Unfortunately for everyone I cannot afford it so I have turned to writing in these last desperate days in order to make sense of my lifeânot that that is ever possible. The thing is, I had a therapist at one point last year. My irrational reactions to life and the wrong anti seizure medication prompted my beleaguered neurologist to send me to someone whose job it was to listen to problems; after all, the only problems he wanted to hear related to my epilepsy and heâd heard the same sad tale of woe for twenty years, who could blame him? That therapist, who I only saw twice gave me a quick diagnosis of PTSDâPost traumatic Stress Disorder. I find this amusing since I was never really in any tangibly horrific situations, it was just that I had no way of dealing with the minor crisis or emotional turmoil of daily lifeâeverything was a crisis. I swear I would have continued but the insurance I finally had, albeit briefly, didnât cover his practice and the cost of my sessions was a whopping one hundred and fifty dollars, a luxury only the upper middle class bored individual with money to burn could realistically afford. I donât blame him for charging that, most people in the affluent area I live could easily afford this. He was even willing to give me half hour sessions for seventy five dollars, predicated on my taking a battery of tests to uncover the actual mental disorder I was carrying around. I said thank you and have decided that PTSD I can work withâ!

So what exactly in my life then could have caused the PTSD. Well, hereâs a few things. Now of course, many of my recollections will not be the recollections of those players within my memories who are still with us on this mortal plane, but of course, you see, that is the inherent flaw in âtalk therapyâ - the only person recalling is the individual seeking help, the other players rarely if ever get a say. Therapists are only working on half the story! Imagine any other doctor of medicine when given a patient who exhibits, letâs say, the inability to walk without bumping into things. The doctor may diagnose the individual with some disorder such as Parkinsonâs or MS when the fact is they are blind, a fact the doctor did not have readily available. But I digress, and I know there are many great doctors with grateful patients. Sometimes, talking it out really is the only way to uncover the root of a problem, and much better than just medicating the symptoms!

Letâs begin however my journey with Infidelity. My siblings and I have always acknowledged, either to ourselves or to each other depending upon which sibling you ask, that my father cheated on my mother. But of all of them, I believe I was the only one to witness his infidelity first hand. It was probably 1967 and we were then living in Fairfax, Virginia. The house we lived in was a one story, with finished basement. It had four bedrooms on one end of the house and a small kitchen, dining room and living room on the other end. The house was just a large rectangle. The master bedroom took up one corner of the triangle and was a bedroom with a small three quarter bathroom attached. I remember that room really well, it was the room next to the room I shared with my sister, before she outgrew me and our elder brother left for college, leaving the bedroom closest to the living room empty.

I must have heard a sound, an unusual sound, I think it was a womanâs voice that was unusual and roused me to take my small four year old hand and knock on the bedroom door. I must have been quite insistent, probably knowing that my mother had been out of the house and thinking she had returned, because my father flung the door open and stared down at me. I remember his, well, naked body standing in the doorway. The funny thing is that his exposure didnât shock me â I had three brothers after all and was bathed often with the youngest brother of the family. But I remember the woman. She was lying on the bed, also naked

Soul Blotches

with her feet on the floor, her face flushed and her eyes staring at me. My mind has often tried to put my mother's face on that woman. But try as I might, her face remains a face not my mother's. The woman jumped up and disappeared into the bathroom. I'm not sure what I said, probably, "Where's mommy?" But the rest of the memory is gone — only that instance when I saw my father with another woman.

Later on, when I was about fifteen or sixteen and we were living in New Jersey, my siblings having gone their separate ways for the most part, I walked in on my mother chastising my father. They were in the dining room, he seated at the dining room table with a hang dog expression on his face, my mother standing over him with her hands paced firmly on her hips, "You realize I have lived like your housekeeper for more than ten years? I cook for you, I clean up after you, I raise our children, but you never touch me anymore!" My father looked up and caught my eyes a deep sorrow and a desperate plea seemed to flow out of those deep dark brown eyes. I turned around and walked out. In that moment more than any other I became complicit in my father's infidelity, I became the bearer of his soul's blotches. I was at that moment no better than he. At four I had not realized what I was seeing, at sixteen the memory and the words my mother spoke collided and became the awful truth. I had caught my father in bed with another woman, in our house, and as a consequence he hadn't made love to our mother since.

I wonder if they ever spoke of that incident. It would I suppose make sense of the last words my mother ever spoke to me. She was dying, and we had all acknowledged she was dying. It was December 2010 her last month on this earth. She had been talking through memories of moments in her life in a dream state. Suddenly she saw me, her eyes became focused and her pupils dilated, "What are you doing here, you shouldn't be here, go home!" Or maybe just maybe she thought I was her son, Peter.

Peter was one of my older brothers and another one of my father's soul blotches.

Peter had been born third in a family of five children. He was the middle of three sons. He was always in the middle. He was a cute baby, though Mary and Joe's children were all cute babies, we are now quite an attractive bunch in our own way. Peter though was born without a fully developed right hand. His thumb and pinky were there, just useless and half developed. The middle three fingers were nothing more than knuckles, as if he had bitten his own fingers off in desperation at some point in the womb. There are pictures of Peter as a baby. The hand was hidden from the photographer. There were pictures of Peter and the rest of us, his hand was hidden from the photographer. His flaw became a physical sign of the deep flaw within the family. A family headed by a bipolar alcoholic and the co-dependent enabler he was married to.

Of course, Peter made choices that destroyed everyone's faith in him and even any pity they may have had for a child raised to be embarrassed about a physical defect he had no control over. But the image of the fetus Peter biting his own hand may be illustrative of the human Peter always biting the hand that fed him. There was however, one person, who he never disappointed. One person who held him in such high esteem that the loss of him and the love he showed her could never be filled. Of course, that was me. I was only eleven when he died and he was the only one of my siblings who didn't seem to mind my being around, ever.

Peter had unfortunately, turned to drugs when every other avenue to acceptance had been blocked. In the drug culture of the very early seventies, a skinny, long haired, slightly damaged boy could become a bit of a rock star. His jeans torn, his body slightly emaciated looking and his crooked smile and beautiful eyes gave him a life he probably could only have dreamt of as a young child being told to make sure his hand was in his pocket or behind his back. Also, being raised by an alcoholic, he had learned the coping mechanism of lying — even when the truth was easier. He lied to everyone, I'm sure he lied to me, but his lies to me never hurt as bad as the lies he told to our siblings or my parents.

Soul Blotches

Lies caught up with him in August of 1973. He landed in jail for the sixth time. He desperately wrote my father, pleading with him not to tell our mother. His hope was that our dad would forgive him and give him another chance when he got out of jail.

My father took my mother and I from New Jersey to a family friend's house in Maryland. Peter came there, or my father brought him there. The Trollingers were a wonderful couple, my dad and Ed were Fraternity brothers from their days at Georgetown. Ed was big and gregarious, Ruth, his second wife was a statuesque redhead. She was a nurse, I never knew what Ed did, but they both sang. Ed was a member of a Barbershop Quartet and Ruth was in the Sweet Adelines. I think that was my first exposure to married couples who shared a passion for something other than each other. It gave their lives a cohesiveness that my parents never really had. Their marriage was based on keeping my father standing and successful.

I was lying on the couch in their living room. The living room led to a converted porch that Ed used as his guy's room, replete with a full bar and the television set. It was night and I was supposed to be sleeping. I can still feel the scratchy fabric of the couch against my face and the warmth of the heavy wool throw that lay on top of me. I was supposed to be asleep, but I couldn't sleep, there was so much yelling going on. The only words I caught, the ones that caught in my own throat as I repeated them to myself came from my father, "I'm done with your lies, I never want you to darken our door again." With that he stormed out of the porch through the living room and up the stairs to the guest bedroom. Peter came out a moment later and stood above my supposed sleeping self. I caught his eyes and he saw the tears begin to stream down my cheek. He squatted down and brushed away the tears, "It'll be alright Suzy." Then he kissed me on the cheek and brushed some hair out of my eyes, "Now go to sleep." Little did I know that this would become the worst lie he ever told me.

Christmas that year I received a call from a friend. She still lived in Fairfax, Virginia a place I had called home until the previous year. The discussion was all about what we had gotten for Christmas, the food we had eaten, school, missing each other. Then she said something that made me drop the phone when I heard the click on the other end, "I heard my dad say that a Peter McNabb was killed in a car accident today." I turned to the stairs that led from the basement to the main floor of our house, as the stairs turned to reveal the top level, I saw my parents standing there looking down at me with expressions of fear on their faces. "It's not true!" I screamed up at them. They just shook their head in the affirmative. "I'm not sure which of my brothers spoke first, but, 'What's not true?'"

It seems my parents had hidden from all of us the fact that they had received the call informing them that my brother had died late last night, but because they wanted us to have a good Christmas, they chose to hide it from us, well mostly from me. It seems they didn't trust my older brothers to keep it a secret.

My father lived another fourteen years with the fact that the last words he spoke to his son were that he never wanted to see him again. For a man who already had a tenuous grasp on normalcy that was too much. My husband has always been convinced that it was that more than anything else which led to the cancer which took him in 1988.

He gave the burden to me though in 1984. In 1984 he took me with my mother and him to a party for the company he worked for in Northridge. He had left the Navy and ended up working for military contract companies, first in New York - thus the move to New Jersey, and then in Northridge, California, I moved to California after college and ended up living with them in Thousand Oaks.

My father had by that time come to unsteady terms with the fact he was an alcoholic. Alcohol was now making him throw up and he was getting drunker faster - probably the first clue (missed) that pancreatic cancer had begun to take its deadly toll. Anyway, at this party he came up with me, bleary eyed from drink, tears beginning to stream down his face. "He died thinking I hated him." It took me a moment to figure

Soul Blotches

out who he was talking about. Then it dawned on me, he talking about Peter. I took my 6² father in my arms at a cocktail party for a company he was the security manager for and held him like I would hold my own child a decade later and patted him on his back. "It's okay daddy, you believe in God right? You believe in heaven?" He nodded, the little boy inside him looking up to the mother he had wished he had. "Well, if you believe, if you truly believe, than you must know that Peter is looking down upon you from heaven right now and he sees you with love, pure love. And he knows that everything you did, you said, you did out of the only way you knew how to express love. He loves you pure and simple, how could he not." I became the owner of that blot on his soul..

That though is what those of us with mental illness do, we have these blots on our souls we cannot carry and we try desperately to get others to carry them for us. When we are successful, we transfer our guilt, our burden, but also our disease to that unsuspecting person.

Soul Blotches

Soul Blotches

Created from Booksie.com

Generated: 2015-11-27 12:24:19