

My name is Staci and I'm going to share with you my story of healing. In July 2015 I decided to go to a women's workshop at the House of Heart. I was one year sober from a horrific 12-year drug addiction, struggling to find peace with my past and find a way to live in the present. I was 31 years old, anxious and depressed, couldn't hold down a job, and so out of touch with myself. But I was willing to try anything to find some peace.

What I found and received was so much more than that. During that short weekend I connected with my own spirit, my soul, for the very first time. I felt things that I didn't know were possible to feel. Things like unconditional love for myself and others, connection, forgiveness for those who I felt had abandoned me as a child. I left that place a different woman. One who was capable of learning how to not live from her wounds. Empowered to build a relationship with herself, and one who has a purpose and a place in this world.

What I learned was that I had been screaming out, begging for acceptance and love, when in reality I had not learned how to give those things to myself. I was angry at my parents for trying to change the fact that I was gay, and for wishing I was something different than I am. I was operating from a belief that I was never going to amount to anything because as a young adult I was told by judges and police officers that I was a failure. The religious beliefs of my family told me I was going to hell. And I had accepted all of it as my fate. Until I came to do this healing work I had never been able to believe anything else about myself, no matter how hard I had tried.

I can't explain the healing that I received that weekend, but I can tell you how different my life looks because of it. In the 2.5 years since that workshop I have become self-sustaining for the first time in my life. I got a driver's license and a bank account, all firsts for me. I have stayed sober and even quit smoking. I started my own business that is doing very well. Relationships with my family were non-existent before and today I am very close with each of them. I'm in a healthy loving relationship and recently got engaged! Everything in my life is blossoming and growing. I help to facilitate a weekly meditation group and help staff the workshops at the House of Heart. There I have witnessed many women heal and reclaim their lives. This work of healing ourselves and helping others to do the same has become my life. I believe in it with all that I am. Because of it I am alive and thriving. My prayer is that many more women and men get the same opportunities that I have been given for a second chance. Opportunities to remember who they truly are and find a community to support them and love them through this process as we all walk each other home.

Staci M