

Published based on [Is God Shouting to You?](#)

Is God Shouting to You?

"Pain insists upon being attended to. God whispers to us in our pleasures, speaks in our consciences, but shouts in our pains. It is his megaphone to rouse a deaf world."

C.S. Lewis

Pain insists upon being attended to. I pondered on that statement. In the natural, surely that is true. When we

stub our toe or hit our thumb with a hammer, we immediately focus on that part of our body. Our brain tells us to

take care of the pain. We hold our toe or suck on our thumb as one part of the body strives to take care of

another part.

There are many kinds of pain: emotional pain, physical pain, mental pain, spiritual pain... And if pain is a shout

which begs for attention, perhaps then it really is the megaphone of God.

Sometimes when a person has a lot of pain for a long time, they develop a certain tolerance for the pain. It is not

that they do not hurt; they just have learned to live with the hurt and perhaps deny it.

As I have examined the issue of pain in the last few months, I found that instead of allowing pain to cause me to

focus on whatever needed healing, I had learned to ignore pain – to deny its existence.

Almost a year ago I found myself in the middle of a terrible storm. I got sent to the principal's office – ha – just an

analogy. I, along with my husband, got sent to a counselor. I remember feeling embarrassed as this

announcement was made in front of 1,200 people. Now I can freely share about that experience – most of the

time!

One step of the process was filling out personal history forms for the counselor. As a complete afterthought, I

asked my husband, "Should I include that my dad was an alcoholic?" I added it on the form – just because. Do

you ever feel like God laughs at you? Not to make fun of you, but because the little things that we think are

accidental are about to send us on a journey to Him and we don't even have a clue?

Please accept my heart when I say that I don't share this to bring any shame on my family. There are many good

things I could spotlight. I only share this in order to find healing for myself and help for others.

Somewhere shortly into my counseling experience, the counselor begin to use his hammer to hit on the nail

of my growing up in an alcoholic home. I remember feeling almost dazed. He asked questions. I stared

blankly at him. Was it possible that I had been affected by my experiences growing up? Sounds incredulous

that I would ask, doesn't it? I sadly looked inside my heart and realized that as a minister myself, I had

counseled many people and listened to their stories involving alcoholic parents. I had tried to help them. Yet,

here I was, in crisis, realizing I had never once, never, never looked at this issue in my own life. It was as if it

had been hidden. Denied. I stared at my counselor. Again, I felt confused. How could I see other's pain and

not see my own? His words hung in the air. That wasn't right. It wasn't okay. Later I found that this

experience where I felt in a fog and confused about the issue is called dissociation which functions as

self-protection and causes many adult children of alcoholics to look “spaced out” or “tranced out” as

though they were in some kind of fog. (Perhaps that isn’t a great explanation; it is my beginning

understanding of it.) The counselor said something about my being an intelligent person and challenged me

to respond – to which I thought, Does he really think I’m intelligent or is he just playing with me? Could he really

know that? I felt insecurity rise. I’ve never really felt smart – especially compared to my husband who is a

brainiac. (So I am pleased that as I entered a grad program this year, I am making A's!) The counselor

suggested a book for me to read. I quickly purchased it. As I read, I found that someone could write about what

was on the inside of me – how I felt – how I reacted. I found that the experts say that almost without exception

everyone who has an alcoholic parent has been and is profoundly affected by the experience.

One of those effects is often the denial of pain. Almost as if it were shockwaves from an earthquake, the waves of

realization and understanding continue to come to me. I found that in a list of 20 characteristics of adult children of

alcoholics, I probably had 16 of them.

These experts say that the rules of an alcoholic's home are Don't talk, don't trust, don't feel. Truly I had learned to

deny my feelings of pain. Even in this terrible crisis, I was denying much of my heart, much of my pain.

With shock, I began to realize that I even denied pain in my physical body – which can also be characteristic of

ACOA's. I remembered just a short time before as I stood before a doctor with a herniated disc in my neck and

he said, "I don't understand why you are not in the floor crying in pain. Even a grown man would be in tears." (to

which we women reply, "And the point is?" We know we are greater pain bearers than men!) I just looked at the

doctor and said, "It's not that bad." My radiologist, who is a wonderful friend of mine, said "That is the worst

herniation I've ever seen." Yet I was not feeling the pain as I should have. Some said, "God was protecting

you.” Now I wonder about that. The denial of that pain actually put me at risk physically – I could have done great

damage to myself by not attending to the pain. And I went to the surgeon and decided just to tough it out. Ever

heard the term “hardheaded”?

I remembered many other similar experiences.

Wow. So I pondered. I’ve learned to deny pain. And if God is trying to shout to me in my pain and I deny it, I

can't hear Him. The puzzle pieces began to snap together.

Embracing pain is - well – painful! But we must embrace pain in order to embrace healing. We must submit to the

necessary surgeries of the heart that God desires to perform. But He can't perform the surgery if we never show

up at the hospital. So I checked myself into God's surgery room. Recovery is not that much fun either! But

eventually it brings healing and new strength and a new outlook.

I still don't like pain, but I am learning that my pain does mean there are things I need to take care of –

emotionally, physically, mentally, and spiritually. So I can thank God for pain. And as I learn to pay more attention

to it, I can hear God more clearly before He has to “knock me in the head with a hammer” so to speak.

Is there somewhere you have denied your pain?

God is truly the Great Physician. Healing is a gift from Him. And I think I could go as far as to say that pain also is

His gift. Many times we like to choose our own gifts, don't we? That way there are no disappointments. We like

to be in control. But when we are in the operating room, we are not in control at all. We are trusting our surgeon.

It's a little frightening, isn't it? Relinquishing control. Submitting to the surgery. Awakening groggily. Recovering

slowly.

Attending to pain.

Jesus embraced pain on the cross – he refused the bitter wine that would deaden his ability to feel pain. He took

all our pain on himself. That doesn't mean that we will not feel any pain. It means that in our pain, we can identify

with him because he felt it in his own body. According to Hebrews 4, he can sympathize with our weaknesses. He

can be touched with the feelings of our infirmities. By his stripes we are healed. Because he took our pain and our

sin, we can come with boldness into his presence and ask for mercy and grace to help us when we have needs.

When we are in pain, there is someone to help us and heal us.

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You can also find this article published on [Is God Shouting to You?](#), and on the tag pages [alcoholism](#), [counseling](#), [Pain](#).