



Julie Whitehead

JULIE WHITEHEAD is a survivor of 31 years of abuse, including child sexual abuse, domestic violence, and sex trafficking. Dr. James A. Chu, a nationally recognized researcher and professor of psychiatry at Harvard University, describes Julie's experiences as, "one of the most egregious histories of lifelong abuse I have encountered."

Julie was raised in the picturesque town of Bountiful, Utah by a religious middle-class family and community. To most people, she appeared to be a typical happy child, but things were never quite as they seemed.

At 4 years old, someone close to Julie started sexually abusing her, which lasted until her early teens. While one form of abuse ended, Julie was emotionally and physically abused for the next 12 years by her then-husband, who often encouraged her to take her own life.

With her marriage unraveling, trying to raise three children, and desperate to find hope, Julie started teaching preschool in an upper-class community of northern Utah. During this time, a student's father befriended Julie and slowly gained her trust, promising her a new life of peace and hope—only to betray her. This man was a trafficker.



Every weekend for the next five months, Julie was trafficked in multiple U.S. states, out of the country, and even in her own home, where she was repeatedly threatened, drugged, and raped. On weekdays, she returned to her regular routine: taking care of her kids and working in the community. Julie lived two different lives until, one day, someone finally noticed her and helped her escape.

Despite 31 years of trauma, Julie is recovering and finds hope in the future with her husband, Barry, and six children. Today, she's an advocate for survivors of abuse and sex trafficking and inspires others with her remarkable courage. She's also an active speaker who focuses on bringing victims out of the shadows.

Julie and Barry serve on an advisory board for the Malouf Foundation, a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization in northern Utah dedicated to confronting child sexual exploitation. They consult on a variety of initiatives for the Foundation including OnWatch™, a free digital training that raises community awareness of sex trafficking in the United States.

Through her experiences in middle-class America, Julie reveals the hidden aspects of abuse and darkest parts of sex trafficking, proving no one is immune to this American epidemic.