

## A Path to Self Care

Psychologist **Rahima Sue Lansdown** explores a broader meaning and application of the #metoo phenomena, suggesting, that like most things, #metoo has many shades of grey.

Learning about #metoo has tuned me in to the enormity of the phenomenal movement that is making change across the globe. I'm super impressed by the bravery and courage of women to speak out and to empower each other. Over the years I've shared, I've sat in circles and been in groups with women and I have heard all sorts of stories about how they have been treated atrociously, and it's in these process groups that I have seen miracles. Through the power of exposure, honesty, authenticity, trusting; with the support of being safely held by each other, encouraged to feel what is true, women have been able to move through their pain.

When a person feels safe they begin to reveal their personal story, with that comes the release of emotions, shame and fear. They begin to trust again. The #metoo campaign supports safety by opening up the conversation. What was once unspeakable vulnerability metabolises into strength and compassion. That liberation extends to all sides, to the perpetrator and perpetrated. By following our own healing process we allow more depth into understanding the pain of all humanity.

My own understanding takes me to following an individual's process, not to a place someone as a bad

person/good person, victim/abuser or even predator/ preyed. I feel as though I have also been all those things.

People react and express from uniquely different places and I don't know why humans abuse each other or get abused. I have my theories but my main interest is in exploring, asking, feeling, hearing, seeing and opening to each person I meet or work with without placing my ideas, concepts and beliefs on them or those ideas of consensus reality. I prefer being curious.

It has been quite a journey of self discovery and healing to find myself in this position. You see, I work with men, the essence of which is to meet men's unmet needs in a clearly defined and non-sexual way. Underpinning my work and my life is my love of men. It's easy for me. My personal history, the training and the transformation work I've undertaken, has brought out the qualities of nurturing and caring in me. It's my gift to work in this way and it is a privilege being allowed to enter, as a woman, into a man's private, inner vulnerable landscape.

My #metoo story is that I self abused, through neediness and wanting to be wanted which surfaced at its most extreme when I was at university. I used, drugs, alcohol, and sex as a way of looking for love, checking out and abandoning myself. I wasn't alone in that, many of us at the time self abused through addiction and promiscuity. At that time I was convinced it was fun. The 80s was a wild time and it left me feeling deeply lost, and utterly deficient. Why was I so reckless? Why couldn't I love myself?

My first sexual experience wasn't great but it wasn't abuse, I was naive and uninformed, it was a lack of self care, self awareness around what I wanted and



### **Rahima Sue Lansdown: Therapeutic Nurturance for Men**

I work from nurturance as a way of healing (non-sexual) 'unmet needs'. As 'little ones' not all our needs were met, for one reason or another, and we go through life unconsciously ruled by unmet yearnings, desires and needs; in some way this can leave you feeling malnourished and underwhelmed. Ultimately the way we behave in the process of yearning to be loved, seen and felt becomes struggle, numbness, avoidance, conflict, control or collapse. Nurturance sessions or coaching creates new pathways for you to receive what you need from yourself and from others. Sessions are two hours. Call Rahima on 0431 173 588

needed. It was a yearning for love and attention, it was confusion and vulnerability all wrapped up together.

As a little girl I felt very safe with my dad who I have thanked many times over. That is big in a world where kids are often not protected and fall prey to sexual predators. My childhood years were in no way perfect and I experienced other forms of neglect and abuse in the family dynamics with parents who'd had their own dramatic upbringings and struggles with all sorts of historical wounding.

We are born exquisitely perfect, vulnerable, delicate and precious, with an active reflex to survive parents or caregivers who were themselves unable to provide us with the wholeness necessary to flourish. It may have been that mum was simply not fully available, not held or feeling safe herself, not present, not sure how to really foster the environment her little one needed.

I have explored this extensively in myself and in my work — it's difficult to be embodied when we are surrounded by those who are simply not there, especially as a child. Fortunately we can get resolution of these kinds of issues through inquiry, process work and the diversity of the healing modalities available these days.

When we discover our own path, when we can breathe in a way that reconfigures our inner world, when we are held safely, witnessed without judgement or agenda, and are allowed to be OK with the unmet parts, when we can simply be with the aches, the sadness, the shame, the loneliness, the fears, the confusion, the tightness in the neck and belly, if we can go there with greater awareness, then something eases, shifts, something changes in our own inner machinations, the mind settles, innocence and openness to life can be restored.

So my #metoo story is about growing in to my own skin after being a self abuser and now as a healer, to holding safe space for men to unfold their process, for me as a therapist to witness, feel, acknowledge and be there in a way that instills the original tenets of love, security and safety.

I love my work, and at long last I love myself.

●●●●●●●●