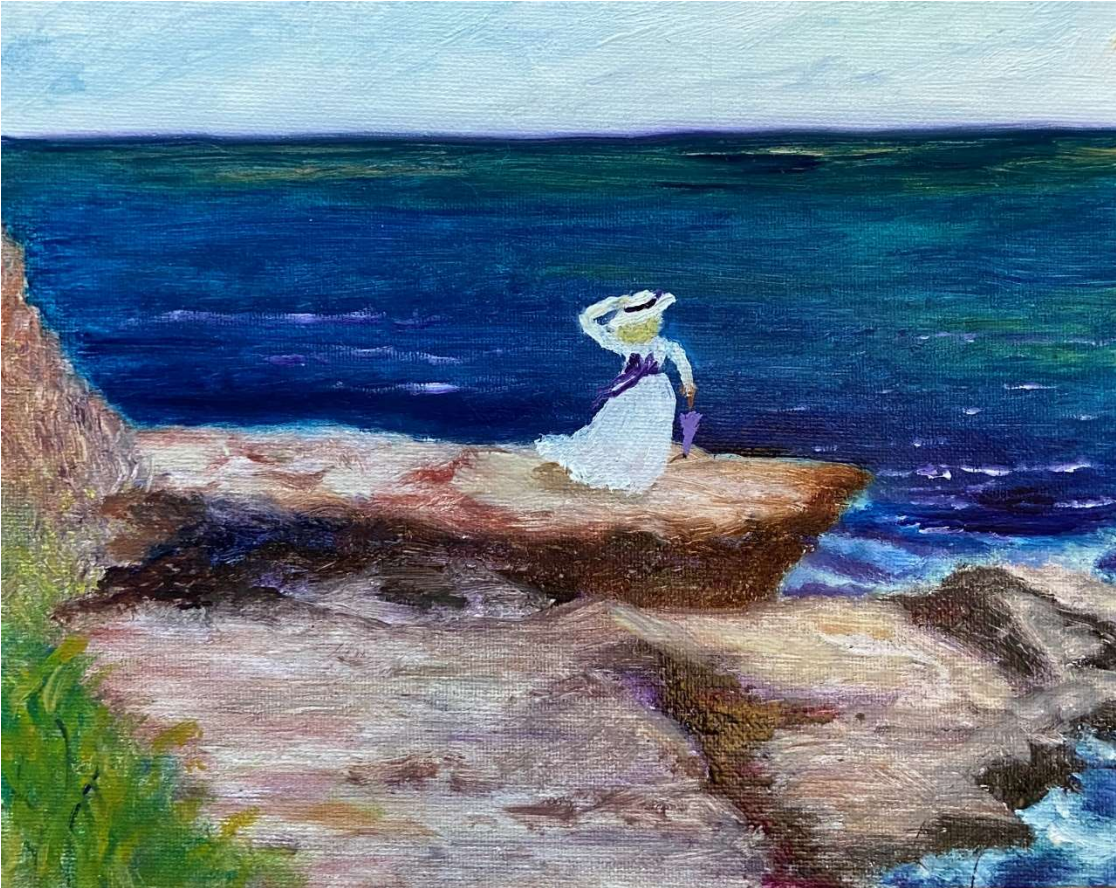


# Find a Way to Tell Your Story

*Everyone has a story. Sharing your real story allows others to share theirs: creating bonds and common ground – this is how we learn to travel with others through our journey of acceptance.*

## Set Forth



I felt alone looking  
out to the deep,  
dark, blue sea

Wondering is  
anyone out there  
who travels like me

I waited and  
wondered are  
there others who  
see

How difficult my  
new situation is  
only to me

I started journaling  
my story with tears  
rolling down

Eventually someone else said, “Oh, that happened to me”  
The more I told my story the more support I found  
In listening to others who were experiencing similar to me  
It was then that I realized the power set forth in story sharing to be  
It not only helped me but supported others to accept and be more free

Learning by becoming more self-aware and then starting the journey of acceptance takes time, energy and patience. It is work, but a journey worth taking. During a time when I knew of only one other with symptoms like me, I felt that the way I was, was the way I would always be. After 3 years of being sequestered in my house to recover and be well enough to go to outpatient rehab for traumatic brain injury, my aloneness and grief was extremely painful and I didn’t know how to manage my symptoms. Although I hadn’t been creating art, I found comfort in breaking china and putting it back together as a mosaic. It was symbolism at its best: piecing my life together one broken shard at a time.

Finally, after 3 years I was able to go to rehab. It was there that I met others who experienced what I was going through. It was within this group with similar situations that I learned:

- I am not alone
- I am not the only one with these symptoms
- This is how I can better manage what I am living with
- These people by sharing their stories lets me know that there are possibilities for my life to be better

While sequestered in my house for the 3 years I had been curious about many forms of art and I played with materials as often as I could. And then when invited to share my art, the recreational therapist asked what a certain painting was about. I answered with my story of how my life seemed to me at that moment. That led to putting words to my art and telling my story. I learned:

- Self-awareness
- That I love to write
- I love to create
- I am curious
- I can help others which in turn helps me
- I found purpose – leading to a reason to get out of bed in the morning
- The more I shared the more people I met with similar experiences
- The more I shared the more I learned how others found ways to move forward in their life
- I learned to accept the way I am which led to being able to move forward with my life
- Eventually I learned to be happy, something in the beginning I thought could never happen again.

And so I share my story in a way that I can and encourage others to share theirs. Find support. If you cannot find what you are looking for, find a way to create it and make it happen. Ask others for help when you need it. Learning to tell your story leads to self-awareness and acceptance. You can find a way to tell your story through writing, art, blogging, talking, making a YouTube video or whatever means you find interesting.

What platform would you like to use to tell your story?

For in setting forth to tell your story, you will be ready to listen and learn from others and their stories. This will put you in the position to be in supportive relationships. In doing so, you will be on your journey to reinvent oneself.

**Journal Prompt:** This is my story that I want to tell.

**Affirmation:** I am ready to accept my story and present it.