

Mary Magdalene's Life Story & Diary

Title	Self Punishment & Joy
1st Century Person	Mary Magdalene
Modern Day Person	Mary Suzanne Luck
Location Written	Wilkesdale, Queensland, Australia
Date/Time	21st January, 2011, 9am

Self Punishment and Joy

I was chatting to our friend Joy the other day. We were discussing blocks, the things that prevent us experiencing our emotions and connecting to God.

I mentioned self-punishment, the state of berating ourselves for not 'getting it', not being 'good enough', putting ourselves down and projecting anger at ourselves.

Joy said casually 'Oh yes, self-punishment, I tried that for a day. It was terrible! No wonder people feel like giving up on this path if they self punish.'

I burst into laughter. Self-punishment is HUGE for me. I felt so happy for Joy that she could try it on and realise how damaging it was so quickly. If only I had just tried it out for a day, thought 'this is ridiculous' and given it up!

But seriously self-punishment is a big block for me for a reason. I wasn't born with it – I was taught it in my childhood. If I blamed myself for how I was and what I felt, then no one minded. If I spoke up just to say what I felt, if I felt something was unfair, if I felt I was unloved, then there was trouble. I was blamed. The resistance in my parents to feeling their own emotions was so big that I got seriously guilty and made to feel wrong if I triggered them. So I learnt that I *must* be bad.

Right now, in my day-to-day life, it takes courage to stop self-punishing. Underneath my self loathing and bashing lie the feelings of how much it hurt to be blamed, how unloved and alone I felt and how much I feel like a horrible person, completely unworthy of being loved. These are the feelings I must release.

Dr Susan Forward says *"until you honestly assess who owns the responsibility.. (for the pain in your childhood).., you will almost certainly go through life shouldering the blame yourself. As long as you are blaming yourself you'll suffer shame and self-hatred, and you'll find ways to punish yourself"**

Shame, self-hatred and self-punishment have surely been my middle names.

The challenge for all of us, when we are finally brave enough to acknowledge what occurred in our childhood's, is to grieve this treatment and not to go into blame, hatred and punishment of those who failed to love us. This is just another block and only damages us further.

To heal we must face the truth of what happened in our childhoods and grieve the lack of love. Only through the grieving can God reach us and teach us.

The fallacy that our parents did a good job only keeps us suppressing our pain and primes us to inflict damage on our own children when they arrive.

In my childhood I was ridiculed, treated condescendingly and laughed at for being my expressive, passionate self. My desire to punish myself now is only perpetuating what I was taught. It takes courage to cease punishing myself, to honour my own experience and to submit to the pain. I am convinced however that this is the pathway to happiness and where I will uncover my joy.

Wishing you courage on the journey to find your joy,

Mary

** Dr Susan Forward ' Toxic Parents ', pg 214*