



Bob Lenz

Life Promotions Founder & President

Maybe I'm Worth Loving

Truth is I don't want to do another story from the road. I don't want to share another story about abuse, neglect, heartache or another wounded kid. Those are the thoughts going on in my head right now.

Maybe you're thinking the same thing. You probably don't want to get your heart wrung out again either. But I don't know what else to do because the stories keep coming. I can't hide my head in the sand and pretend it's not reality.

So here goes...

She sheepishly came up to me with her head facing downward after I spoke at a rally in Colorado. "You gave me hope today, Bob," she said. "Maybe I'm worth loving." She snuck a glance at me and I caught a glimpse of her beautiful brown eyes. But then she turned her head again to stare at the familiar floor.

"What do you mean?" I asked. "Maybe there is a future for me," she replied. "See, before today I'd given up on people, on God and on life because the people who were supposed to love me haven't."

I asked if she wanted to talk about it. She simply replied, "No."

Still, thirty minutes later I continued listening to her share in heart-ripping detail about how a relative sexually assaulted and repeatedly forced her to have sex. It was her dad.

When she finally confided in her mom, it was met with disbelief and accusation. It all culminated with her being sent to live in foster care because of "behavioral and emotional problems" at school.

I'm tired of writing stories like this. I can almost hear you as you read it saying, "Here Bob goes again."

But she's not alone. At the same rally I had lots of kids lined up to talk with me. Sure, some just wanted my autograph. Yeah, I know; my kids laugh at that too. So I signed some shirts and follow up materials. Some even wanted me to sign their bibles and write an encouraging verse. Others wanted their picture with me. But many wanted to talk just like the girl I shared about.

For two hours I sat and talked with kids and listened, and three others had similar stories to the one I just told you. Sometimes it's hard to go to sleep after a rally because I can't stop crying for the youth of our nation.

Continued...

Maybe you're a skeptic like me when you read some of the statistics. Aren't a lot of kids just making up these stories and looking for attention? Sadly, no. According to research, only 1-4% of reported abuse is fabricated. On the contrary, most experts believe the majority of abuse is not being talked about or reported, with the best estimate being only 10% of abuse being disclosed. And the saddest part of this is even when they do get reported, 97% of rapists will never spend a day in jail. It infuriates me.

And we wonder why this girl was in foster care? It's easy to say it's because of emotional and behavioral issues. That's probably what the paperwork says. But we know that's not the real reason. We need to see beyond the behavior and understand where the pain truly comes from and what is causing it! Her behavior was an attempt to cover up the pain inside. Only God, who is true love, can begin to heal her heart. Sadly, she grew up mistrusting Him too.

"I used to go to church with my parents," she told me. "But how can I believe in a God they believed in when they treated me the way they did? All I wanted was to be loved, Bob. I feel like I've been closed off, but something you said in the school today made me want to come back tonight. You can't believe how hard it is for me to trust anybody, especially a man, but somehow I trusted your words." I waited with anticipation for her to finish her thoughts...

"Maybe I am loved. Maybe God does care and this isn't his fault. I let Jesus into my heart tonight."

My heart soared at the words. Yes!!! Is the battle for her soul over? No. But she's taken the first step towards wholeness and there are people in place to take the baton and help her grow and heal. In fact, one of her teachers is a Christian and is part of the follow up team to contact kids, pray with them and connect them with a loving church family. She's not alone in her faith or life's journey.

I know our little tag line "Instilling hope in youth" may sound like a cliché. But that's what we do. We introduce them to faith. We introduce them to Jesus. We introduce them to people in their own community who care and will walk with them through the trials of life. If that's not instilling hope, I don't know what is!

Let's not give up. Will you help us bring those words, "You gave me hope, maybe I'm worth loving," to the hearts of other students? We want to reach more and need you to partner with us.

WAYS TO GIVE

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UPCOMING EVENTS

November 2, 2013 • Radisson Paper Valley • Downtown Appleton, WI

A celebratory roast of Bob Lenz, with dinner, special guests and surprise moments.

<http://www.lifepromotions.org/events/other-events/>

November 16, 2013 • Power of One • Christ the Rock Church, Menasha, WI www.powerofoneonline.com

July 10-13, 2014 • Lifest • Oshkosh, WI www.lifest.com

THE FACTS

1 out of 3 girls and 1 out of 6 boys are sexually abused before age 18

Every two minutes someone in America is sexually abused

- 34.3% of the time it's from a family member
- 58.7% of the time it's a friend or acquaintance of the family
- Only 7% of the time is it from a stranger

WHEN SOMEONE IS SEXUALLY ABUSED THEY ARE...

- 3 times more likely to suffer depression
- 6 times more likely to struggle with PTSD
- 13 times more likely to abuse alcohol
- 26 times more likely to abuse drugs
- 4 times more likely to contemplate suicide

For the Kingdom,

Bob Lenz

Founder & President
Life Promotions, Inc.

