There Was No Right Way

there is no right way to respond to being hurt

There was no right way to being hurt

No perfect way to survive.
No correct amount to time to grieve it.
No single path that tells us how healing should look.

Some of us talked,
Some of us became quiet,
Some kept moving because stopping felt impossible.
Others withdrew because the world no longer felt safe.

We may have buried ourselves in work, relationships, caring for everyone else, anger, achievement, isolation, control, or simply getting through one day at a time.

We did what we knew how to do in the MOMENT
and perhaps that is something we need to stop
judging

We Were Never Meant to Respond the Same Way

Two people can experience something similar and carry it very differently.

One may remember every detail.

Another may remember very little.

One may want to tell their story.

Another may need years before they can put words around it.

One may appear strong, when inside they are struggling.

Another may fall apart and slowly rebuild.

Neither repsonse tells us how deeply someone was affected

MARIA OLSON
PHOTOGRAPHY

Our experiences are individual becausee we are individual

Our histories are different

Our bodies are different

Our support sustems are different

Our sense of safety is different

So why would we expect our survival, or our healing, to look the same?

And yet there is an umbrella we all share

Although our stories and responses are different, many of the effects can feel remarkably familiar.

Fear.
Shame.
Hypervigilance.
Difficulty trusting.
The need for control.
Feeling disconnected from ourselves.
A body that reacts before the mind understands why.
The question underneath so many of those responses is often the same:
Am I safe?

That is the umbrella many of us find ourselves standing beneath.
Not because we handled our experiences incorrectly.
But because something happened that changed the way we understood safety.

we did what we did
in the moment...

There can come a time in healing when we look backward and judge ourselves.
Why didn't I leave?
Why didn't I tell someone?
Why did I stay quiet?
Why did I become angry?
Why did I shut people out?
Why did I pretend everything was fine?
But those questions are being asked by the person we are today, looking back at the person who was simply trying to make it through then.
That person didn't have everything we know now.
They had that moment.
And they responded with whatever resources, strength, understanding and protection were available to them.
Maybe healing includes being able to say →

I did what I needed to do with
what I had at the time

The Part That Was Never Fair

There is something deeply unfair about healing.
Someone else can make a choice that hurts us, and somehow we are left with the work of carrying what followed.
We didn't choose the wound.
We didn't choose the fear.
We didn't choose the memories, the triggers or the ways our bodies learned to protect us.
And yet, eventually, we are faced with another choice.

What do I want to do with what was left behind?

what do I want to do with what was left behind

Healing does not excuse what happened.
It does not make the person who caused the harm less responsible.
And it does not mean forgetting.
Healing is choosing, little by little, that someone else's actions will not have the final word in our lives.

Your Road Is Yours

There is no timeline.

There is no finish line everyone must cross.
There is no single definition of what "healed" looks like.

Your road may include counselling.
Faith. Writing. Rest. Anger. Forgiveness, or not.
Boundaries. Tears. Laughter. Speaking. Silence. Starting over.

Or finally understanding why your body has been responding the way it has for years.

your road

belongs to you

Your road does not need to look like mine.

And mine does not need to look like yours.

Perhaps what matters is that somewhere along the way, we stop asking:

Did I handle this the right way?

&

Begin Asking

What Do I Need Now?

What do I need now?
Because we survived in the ways we knew how.

And now, when we are ready, we get to discover what it means to live beyond survival.

There was no right way to survive
There is only the way we found
And from here
Healing can become our own

A Final Whisper

Perhaps one of the greatest things we can offer one another is understanding without expectation.

We don't need to have shared the same experiences, made the same decisions, or travelled the same road to recognize the weight another person may carry.

Our common ground is not found in having identical stories. It is found in recognizing the effects of experiences we never asked for and respecting the different ways we learn to live with them.

There is room for every story, every response,
and every individual journey.
Sometimes understanding begins when we
stop expecting another person's journey to
look like our own.