

A Different Perspective On The Term Survivor

Today's podcast is called, "A Different Perspective On The Term Survivor.

The term survivor in the context of referring to those who have endured narcissistic abuse has been a sticking point with me for a long time. While the term is often meant to sound empowering, & it can be, it also can come with expectations of being completely healed from the abuse. It can make victims feel shame for not being "over it", or being further along in their healing journey. That is one reason I have chosen to use the term "victim" instead. Plus, "victim" is a reminder that the abuse was not the fault of the one harmed, & they were free of blame. Since narcissists love to blame their victims for supposedly making them abuse, victims need a reminder periodically that they did nothing wrong.

Recently I thought of something though. In the classic car world, there are various types of conditions of classics. At one end of the spectrum is the one with the frame off restoration. This car may be sixty years old, for example, but it looks as if it just rolled off the showroom floor. It is flawless & stunning. Other cars are restored but not to that degree. They may not look like they just rolled off the showroom floor, but they certainly do not look their age either.

Then there are the cars referred to as survivors. Survivors are all original. They have the original paint, interior & engines. They are still driven regularly. They may or may not be garage kept. Sometimes, survivor cars are the ones receiving the most admiration at car shows.

I have a survivor, my late Granddad's then my father's 1969 Plymouth Fury that I call Christina. Christina needs some body work, paint & some interior work. Her gas gauge has a mind of its own. The trim over her passenger headlight fell off & has yet to be put back on. But, Christina is far from worthless!

Her imperfections tell her story. The tiny dent in the center of her rear bumper is from 1978 when a motorcyclist failed to pay attention to my father sitting at a red light. He rear ended Christina, laying his bike down while he landed on her trunk.

Her imperfections also do not keep her from running. In fact, she still runs very well, purring loudly every time she starts up, even if it has been a while. She also has solid brakes, & stops surprisingly well, especially for a two & a half ton car with four wheel drum brakes.

Some people look at Christina & see a beat up old car. They do not understand why I love her. They do not understand the connection I have to Christina. She is more than just some old car to me. She is a friend. I vaguely remember being very young, riding in the back seat with my Granddad driving her. When my father had her a couple years later, I remember him calling her "The Green Monster." As a little girl, I would pretend she was a race car, climbing in & out of the rolled down windows like a Nascar driver. I remember listening to my father's Conway Twitty or Johnny Cash eight track tape playing. I also remember the day in 1979 he drove her to the junkyard because he did not want to fix her

then failing transmission. I was in the back seat of my mother's car as she drove us away, watching Christina getting smaller in the distance, feeling like I lost my dear friend.

I also remember that day in 2005 when I first saw her, thinking she was simply a twin to The Green Monster. Then shortly after buying her, I remember my father showing me the Vehicle Identification Number for The Green Monster he had written down in the 1970's & we matched it to Christina's proving she was not a twin but his car. I had proof that God blessed me with a true miracle - my favorite car that not only my father but also my amazing Granddad owned.

My "survivor" is far from perfect, but that does not make her less valuable to me or make me love her any less. She still holds memories. She is still my special friend that I have loved my entire life.

I want you, Dear Reader, to remember that you are like a survivor car. You may have some dents & flaws, but that does not make you any less valuable. You too are precious & loved not only by people but by God Himself.

Anytime you hear the word survivor relating to narcissistic abuse, I hope you will not feel the pressure to be perfect, or that you need to heal faster. I hope instead you think of survivor cars like my beautiful Christina, whose value is beyond measure even with her flaws. You too are a survivor with a value beyond measure.

Thank you for listening to my podcast!