

# **How to Keep a Brighter Outlook on Life During the Pandemic**

Bettina 'Sparkles' Obernuefemann

*Love the Lord your God with all your heart  
and with all your soul and with all your  
mind.*

*Love your neighbor as yourself.*

*Matthew 22:35-40*

## **INTRODUCTION**

**I took on a challenging subject, “What is the purpose of life?”**

**Then, inadvertently made the project even tougher, by attempting to pass on my learnings by comparing my personal experiences of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, PTSD, back in 1990 and the trauma of COVID-19 in this year 2020.**

**With the Grace of God, I found the strength and perseverance to face the PTSD with many healing processes. The same Help is not only necessary but also available to all of us now as we cope with the Pandemic. All we need to do is “ask.”**

**The original, lengthy PTSD healing activities benefited me by leading me unto a spiritual path. I found answers to biggie questions including, “What is my purpose in life?”**

**The answer is: learning to love God and myself, and to extend His Love on Earth. Focusing on this activity keeps my soul a constant -work-in-progress and makes my journey here happier.**

**By the time you read this, the demons of COVID-19 will have attacked our bodies, minds, and spirits just like PTSD does. The Virus has cast its net of fear of illness and death over the entire globe.**

**It is causing inner and outer anxiety and panic.**

**All lives on Earth have been turned upside down with closings of schools, businesses, places of worship, sporting events, and endless other activities.**

**The world is under siege with economic turmoil and other sufferings, individually and collectively.**

**What can we do to make this dark picture brighter?**

**Well, we can join in prayer and envision that the virus becomes a “wakeup call” for us all - to change our attitude of disrespect for all life on Mother Earth.**

**Our blue planet has been abused—with inequalities economically, racially, politically, environmentally, and more. The Earth is at the edge of healing- something IT has been yearning for a long, long time.**

- Maybe when the Virus dies out, doors will open to new beginnings?**
- Maybe more people will respect all of life on Earth?**
- Maybe family relationships will improve?**
- Maybe we will see wonderful acts of kindnesses, the end of poverty and homelessness?**

**As you are listening to my dream about such a rosy outcome, you may wonder if I always had such trust in life?**

**NO WAY.**

**Prior to becoming aware of PTSD, my entire life had been chaotic and filled with fear until I was fifty.**

**I had been stuck in the darkness of unhappiness.**

**I felt alone, misunderstood, and unloved.**

**In this state of mind, I remember only once asking a friend, “Why are we even here?”**

**Inner voices haunted me continually, “No one cares about me. Life just is that way. There’s nothing I can do to change this crazy life.”**

**But I was able to turn my life of suffering around and make changes for the better.**

**My life has been more content than I could ever imagine for the last 30 years,**

**Yes, and YOU can cope better too and keep a brighter outlook on life as well, especially during the pandemic.**

**What helped me to stop my insane roller coaster ride of life was a recall of childhood abuse. It led to PTSD diagnosis, and recovery and most of all it led me unto a wonderful spiritual path.**

**I hope you will find the following highlights of my healing journey- interesting and inspiring.**

## **Triggers For Child Abuse Recall**

**One trigger before the important Recall was the fact that I had started praying again after putting God on the back burner over 20 years. It started with reading a little page daily from a devotional booklet. One result was that it changed my view of the *punishing* God from my childhood to believing in only an *all-loving* God.**

**The next trigger was working a military charter flight—as a flight attendant—from St. Louis to Frankfurt, to Saudi Arabia and back.**

**Our crew had a 24-hour layover in Frankfurt.**

**I was extremely excited to be back on German soil, the land where I was born.**

**A few of the flight crew and I took a short ride on the Rhein River and visited some of the quaint little 900-year-old towns surrounding city of Frankfurt. And of course, we also enjoyed delicious German meals.**

**Soon, it was time to prepare for the flight to Saudi Arabia. In the middle of the night, I put on my uniform and while packing turned on the international CNN TV channel.**

**The Desert Gulf War had started and the skies over Baghdad were lit up with sparklers. The sight frightened me, and instantly, fear vibrated through my entire body.**

**All I wanted to do is go back to my new homeland, the good old United States of America, where I would be safe. Fortunately, during times of war, flight attendants have a choice to proceed to the war zone or return home. Without thinking twice, I chose to fly back home to Memphis.**

## **Scary Memories**

**Once I had returned to Tennessee, life surrounding me seemed normal, but my inner life was in turmoil. Within days I had terrible nightmares and frightening daytime visions.**

**Memories of my little girl came up.**

**I was taken back in time to a small country village in Germany where my mother, grandmother, aunt, cousin, and I found safety at a farm, to escape from the bombing in our hometown. In exchange the adult women worked for the farmers.**

**Mother and I lived in one tiny rented room. I had a flashback vision of my little 3-year-old girl sitting in a chair and felt my hands tied to the arms with strips of cloth. I could feel my little body quivering.**

**My eyes were fixed on a bowl filled with thinned porridge right in front of me on a little table.**

**Next to the bowl was both a regular and wooden spoon. My mother was screaming that I eat but I refused because I knew what would happen when I was finished.**

**The next flashback showed me with a handkerchief wrapped around my head over my mouth.**

**I found myself in darkness, feeling clothes above me and some shoes next to me. I saw a dim light coming through a tiny crack. I was locked up in a closet.**

**Whenever I came back to the real time and watched any war updates on Memphis TV, I was so frightened, and the horrific memories returned.**

**Thank goodness, I had my fiancé, Michael, to confide in and give him the weird, scary details.**

**He said, “Sounds like something terrible happened to you when you were little. You need to get help right away.”**

**I was blessed and found a wise, spiritual psychologist.**

## **Dr. Weiss**

**I summarized my life for Dr. Weiss.**

**My story began with two whammies.**

**I was born in Germany 1940, one year after World War II started.**

**In addition, my mother was an unstable, seventeen-year-old and my father went off reluctantly to fight in the war.**

**Father did return and our small family immigrated to America when I was ten.**

**Mother told me to forget the past in Germany, all my loved ones and friends and enjoy my new home.**

**I did to a certain extent but always felt like an outsider.**

**Eventually, I became a stewardess (now called flight attendant), a 38-year career I loved dearly.**

**Ironically, even though I was among thousands of people while “flying”—airline lingo for both pilots and flight attendants—I still felt alone, troubled by inner insecurity and fear.**

**That inner, empty feeling was covered up by a mask. My smiles were sincere but unknown hurts made me cry on the inside.**

**Our tendency is to fill the void with temporary relief. I did it, too, with parties, a failed marriage, many romantic relationships, and alcohol.**

**The wise doctor picked up on my background quickly and went right to the point asking, “So, Bettina, tell me why you are here today.”**

**I told him about the horrible memories that had surfaced recently. Gently, he continued, “Tell me how you got along with your mother when you were little.”**

**“I don’t really remember my first seven years but know I never felt wanted,” I replied.**

**“Mother always told me what to think, feel and do; and, if I didn’t, she either used the wooden spoon or threatened to leave me forever.”**

**At the end of the session the counselor summarized:**

**“It’s quite apparent that you are hyper-vigilant and suffered from low-grade depression all your life.**

**Both are symptoms of PTSD.**

**“You medicated yourself with alcohol in order not to feel the hurts of the past and avoided looking at your child abuse.**

**The feelings of anger and resentment are stuffed deep inside of you and if they are not resolved, you will never find the inner peace all people long for.”**

**The kind doctor explained I could stay in my PTSD suffering OR finally face the pain of the old wounds, forgive -to let them go and find peace inside.**

**He added, “It can be done but will take time.”**

**This is the first time I had an answer to my lifelong unhappiness.**

**Also, it was the first time I heard I had a “choice” and tasted hope.**

## **Honoring My Inner Child**

**The main therapy Dr. Weiss used was Inner Child work by applying *Videotape Feedback*.**

**This is how my first session began.  
I got comfortable in a big lounge chair.**

**The doctor instructed me, “Say ‘hello’ to your little girl, your Inner Child, who suffered much abuse when barely three years old and had never been told that she didn’t deserve that bad treatment.”**

**Slowly I started talking, I began “Hi sweet little Bettina.  
I am finally here for you. I really am.  
I know you have waited way too long for this to happen.  
Now, I want you to know what a brave little girl you were.  
You are so important to me.  
From now on I will take care of you,  
pay attention to you and listen to you-so can finally relax.  
And, you don’t have to be upset, anxious or afraid anymore.  
Now you are safe, and you can get all the sleep you need.  
I know it is hard for you to believe this yet.  
But it’s true.  
Be happy. I am here for you.”**

**My little girl answered, surprisingly in German, literally talking in a young toddler’s manner, using my adult voice.  
The dialogue felt real and I experienced deep emotions when she answered**

**“I never thought that you would talk to me or understand me.  
As long as I can remember, I’ve been constantly in fear because you were upset. And, when you were upset, you had no time for me.**



**When you calm down, I can feel better.  
I am so happy you are here for me now.”**

**Immediately afterwards, I told Dr. Weiss that I felt my whole  
body relax and let out a big sigh.**

**He explained, “We’ve just touched the tip of the iceberg.  
There are more inner demons to face and process.”**

**“Yes, I am willing,” I answered from the bottom of my heart.  
After that, the good doctor and I had many more conversations  
with my Inner Child.**

**Six months of intensive care had begun, and counseling  
continued, on and off for ten years.**

## **Finding Spirituality With My Inner Child**

**Dear Dr. W., as I would often call him, helped heal many core issues and old wounds.**

**My life improved step by step over the years and there is not enough space in this chapter to describe it all.**

**Here, I would just like to emphasize that the “Inner Child Work” was most important for because it caused me to open me up to spiritually.**

**In addition to the Inner Child dialogues with my counselor, I wrote down many more conversations in journals and, we also chatted back and forth out loud when home alone.**

**One meditative night I settled down and relaxed, listening to Brahms’ Lullaby while reflecting quietly about my past.**

**Suddenly my mother’s angry face appeared in my mind.**

**Frightened and puzzled, my little girl screamed from deep within, “What did I do - to upset you so much, Mami?”**

**My body began to tremble, and little Bettina continued to cry, and plead, “Please don’t hit me, Mami. Please stop hitting me. Please, please!”**

**As usual my Inner Child could not understand why she was so mistreated and thought it was all her fault and that she was not good enough.**

**At the same time, my adult cried out loud in prayer.**

**“Dear God, I so want to forgive my mother. I do want to forgive her. Oh God, please can we work this out together?”**

**That moment I felt an incredible sensation surge through my body. A male voice spoke slowly, clearly, but with a slight German accent. I took in every word as I heard myself speak.**

**He explained, “I am Mr. Monk. We have come to assist you as you have requested, to get through the current struggles.**

**You want to work on forgiveness?**

**It is a task that must be done!**

**It takes time, much time, indeed.**

**You are questioning what is happening. We are so proud of you, indeed, my child.**

**‘Up’ come the words; ‘up’ come the memories, at last! This is of help to you. Your hurt is felt through all dimensions.”**

**Mr. Monk continued and explained I had trust issues but not to worry that I was crazy and hearing voices of multiple personalities. Instead, he insisted I was connecting with my deeper Inner Source also known as Inner Child and my Higher Self.**

**I have continued to talk to “Mr. Monk” often and still do, to this day.**

**You might call the tel-apathic communications, “channeling.” A friend of mine refers to them as “downloads” of the Divine.**

**My spiritual eyes were opened to the invisible.**

**I also discovered the spiritual principle that our bodies are only “earthen vessels” for our souls or spirits, the direct connection to God - as we journey through this life into eternity.**

**Here is what I learned from this Inner Child work. First, I was acknowledging that I, Bettina when I was little, was terribly mistreated.**

**Later, I was no longer having dialogue with my physical child, but felt I was addressing my soul, some also call Inner Child.**

**It is our “aliveness” inside of each one of us while living on Earth and into eternity. Many of us also refer to this soul or spirit as “the Spark of God.**

**This brings me to the story of why I adopted the middle name, “Sparkles.”**

## **Why Sparkles?**

**Here is a slight distraction from the intense fear-energy we are all feeling as the Corona Virus Pandemic moves over the entire Globe.**

**Did you know that many spiritual seekers, prophets, and saints are name-changers? Those who are looking for their Truth, often change their first, middle, or last name.**

**For example, spiritual icon Eckhart Tolle took his first name from Meister Eckhart who was a fourteenth century German monk. His main teaching was “Let God be God in you.”**

**I also was guided to a spiritual name during my PTSD recovery**

**At a one-day workshop, the facilitator informed about 20 of us, “Today, you will meditate to ask your Higher Self for a personalized spiritual name to keep you on your purpose in life.”**

**I loved the idea. Afterwards, the group members shared. Many actually “heard” their spiritual name but nothing had come up for me.**

**However, my prayer was answered a few days later.**

**My legally blind, long-distant friend, Ron, telephoned.**

**He lives life in the Presence of the Christ Light all the time and constantly sends out prayers for peace into the world.**

**He greeted me cheerfully, “Hello, sparkle eyes.”**

**He had never called me that before.**

**“Hi, Ron, what made you call me that?”**

**“Because you always sparkle, and I can “see” Light around you right now.”**

**Believing in synchronicity, I told him about my search for a spiritual name. “How does ‘Sparkles’ sound to you?”**

**“Sounds really good, ‘Sparkles.’”**

**“That settles it. I am ‘Sparkles’ from now on. Thank you, for helping me.”**

**But Ron insisted, “Oh, it wasn’t me; Jesus gave it to me - to give to you.”**

**I was jubilant about my new spiritual treasure which has kept my life on purpose until this day.**

## **“Pick Up Your Cross...”**

**“Pick up your cross and follow me” is one of my favorite teachings of Christ.**

**The new me, Bettina “Sparkles” has devoted the last thirty years to her PTSD recovery and spiritual soul growth.**

**Only with God’s Help was I able to carry my PTSD and other crosses.**

**We cannot—nor do we have to—do life alone.**

**I started by asking for Help by turning all challenges over to my Higher Power.**

**I slowly changed many thoughts of fear to Love, as Christ demonstrated in His Life.**

**I have forgiven most of my past and have no regrets.**

**I am grateful for temporary and eternal life.**

**I enjoy a closer relationship with God.**

**In this world of duality, history repeats itself to teach us to evolve, grow and expand our consciousness about God’s Love. Humankind is constantly overcoming. The Old Testament, New Testament, The Plague of the Dark Ages, The Spanish Flu of 1918, and many, many wars are only some examples of collective crosses we face along with our individual crosses.**

**In this year 2020, how do we deal with the COVID-19 Cross?**

**First, no matter how we pray, let us join in prayer. This is powerful because we honor that we are connected in body, mind, and spirit.**

**As a former flight attendant, I use the metaphor of flying in an airplane, to show we are all together on this journey called life.**

**Now COVID-19 is also proving how we are connected for better or worse, relying on one another to survive and thrive.**

**Together we must let go of grieving for our old way of life and find a better way.**

**Would it not be wonderful if all of us remembered our frontline heroes, the ones carrying their crosses openly during this Pandemic—the health workers, those who are dying, and millions of others.**

**May people around the world hear COVID-19 as a Wake-Up Call, an opportunity to do inner healing and be reminded of the teaching of Jesus, “Love the Lord your God with all your heart ... and “Love your neighbor as yourself.**

**This teaching of Christ was meant for all nations, for all of humanity.**

**Acts of kindness are already increasing while I am completing my article about life’s purpose, Easter 2020.**

**You probably already know your purpose of life or, hopefully, found some gems in my writing.**

**Each one of us can take part in improving our world by living on purpose.**

**\* \* \* \***



**Bettina 'Sparkles' Obernuefemann**  
**Website: [bettinasparkles.com](http://bettinasparkles.com)**  
**Visit: [amazon.com/author/bettinasparkles](https://amazon.com/author/bettinasparkles)**

**Bettina 'Sparkles' Obernuefemann's passion to share began the moment PTSD recovery processes gave back her self-worth and improved her outlook on life.**

**She wanted others to know, "You have the power to change your life and feel better, too."**

**Bettina 'Sparkles' has written several articles and three books to date: one memoir, another on PTSD recovery and the third explains how to find one's spiritual path.**

**She is shown above with her beloved, Michael.**

**'Sparkles' says, "No matter how fearful and unhappy we were in the past or are uncomfortable we are in the present with COVID-19, we must take time out, to go inside ourselves and reflect deeply to find our Inner Child.**

**This is how we connect with our souls or spirits, home of the Divine and realize what our individual and collective purpose of life is."**

---