Twitter Thread by Morgan Tomberlin



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Two years ago next week my whole world crumbled & I'm feeling so many things about it. Mostly, I'm just grateful I'm still alive & I'm doing things I love. But I'm also grieving & I want to share this because I know I'm not alone in going through scary stuff & there is hope.

I experienced some of the most traumatic events of my life in Feb 2019, when leadership of the church I was a part of decided after nearly a year they were not ok with my decision to speak up about abuse I had suffered during my time there.

The leader who assaulted & abused me was no longer there, & up until this point I had believed platitudes that the rest of the team cared about what had happened. But I never saw any actual reform or self-reflection about the fact that this happened to an 18 year old intern.

The trauma from being assaulted was obvious & expected. But the trauma that came from the institutional betrayal was the deepest cut. Leaders who had prayed with me sat in front of me & laughed as I cried over words they had said about me behind my back. I was devastated.

Most of my friendships existed within that institution, & when this betrayal happened those friendships went silent. Overnight, I lost my entire support system, over lies said about me that I wouldn't have access to read until I got a lawyer & they had to turn them over.

I left that town a few days later with a half-packed bag & my dog, & never went back. Friends & family packed up my house & moved my things into storage. I resigned a job I loved & then laid in bed eating Xanax like candy for weeks. I missed my best friend's wedding.

It took about two weeks for me to even walk outside. This was trauma & loss compounded on trauma & loss, & I legitimately didn't think I would survive.

But I did survive. It has not been roses since, there's been more pain & loss, but there has also been gain & I'm learning to hold those things at the same time. I have been able to slowly build a life & community of people who know & love me & whom I trust. That is miraculous.

So I am just sharing this as a bit of honesty that this time of year is kind of rough for me. But also, that we can survive unimaginable things. If you've been hurt by people you trusted, I know that pain & I am sending you my love, & my door is always open. ❤■

P.S. I often worry about talking about this on here these days, because people (esp women) who talk about these experiences are often labeled vindictive, angry, grudge-holders, etc. Of course I'm angry, & these events do affect me still. PTSD is a real feature of my life. Yet...

I am living. It is possible, necessary even, to acknowledge the pain we have suffered and to keep living. We must do both, & shaming people for doing both is one toxic way our culture enables abusers and institutions. So I will tell the truth of my experience AND keep living. ❤■

Let me also add: another take-home lesson for everyone else here is that if you're a part of any institution (we all are) where you have knowledge of abuse/assault/harassment of any kind, it is your duty to speak up about it. Loyalty to institutions is how these things recur.

We must have loyalty to the truth, and to vulnerable people, above that of institutions and people with power. That is a decision we all must make in our respective circles. Please to that.