


[Sample Storytelling]

# Karen's Journey



Kathy Williamson

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[Sample Storytelling by Kathy Williamson]

Karen sat silently in her car outside of Ruth's home. This was the opportunity she had hoped for, but now she wasn't sure she could go through with it. Ruth was supposed to be a lady who could help any addict with their problems. Karen was scared. All she wanted to do was go home and take another pill and forget about life. Yet something stirred inside her. Something she hadn't had in a long time. A little ray of hope. Maybe, just maybe, Ruth could help her stop smoking marijuana, taking pills and drinking.

Well, it was worth a try. Nothing else had worked so far.

Karen got out of her car and slowly walked to the front door. When Ruth answered her knock, Karen was met by a middle-aged lady who seemed to be full of joy and happiness. A lady who radiated love toward her. Something Karen hadn't felt in a long time. Maybe, just maybe, this time things will work out.

Ruth and Karen settled out in the patio by the pool. It was such a beautiful spring day. The bright flowers were a stark contrast to the brown brick wall along the back of the property. Karen smelled the freshly mowed lawn, which brought back childhood memories of she and her brother taking care of their yard.

After some friendly chit chat, Ruth broke the awkward silence, "Tell me a little bit about yourself Karen. I know your friend Frank recommended that you come talk to me. So what's happening in your life?"

"Well, I'm 22 and I couldn't finish my last year of college. I just couldn't keep my focus. So instead of flunking my classes I withdrew from college. My parents weren't too happy about that. But I just couldn't handle it any longer." Karen's eyes darted between Ruth and the pool, trying to keep her emotions under control.

"I know college can be stressful these days. My days in college were nothing compared to today's academic challenges as well as today's fraternity parties. You said you couldn't keep your focus. Do you know why?"

Karen took a deep breath and released it. She knew that Ruth knew she was dealing with an addiction. That's what Ruth was known for—helping addicts. *Well, here it goes*, Karen thought. *I'm either going to go for broke with Ruth or continue to fool myself into thinking I can handle*

*things in my life.* As she looked at the radiant joyful countenance of Ruth, her decision was made. She saw something in Ruth that she wanted.

“Yeah. About a year ago I started hanging out with a group at college that seemed like a lot of fun to be around. They were the life of the parties. And I was ready for some fun in my life. College seemed so stressful and I didn’t feel like I could make it through. So I kept going to these parties, trying to get out of my shyness. Pretty soon my entire life was focused around being with this group and going to parties. Yeah, we eventually would end the evening doing drugs or drinking.” Karen was waiting for some type of response from Ruth over her admission of doing drugs.

Ruth continued to listen and sip her soda. “Was this your first exposure to drugs Karen?”

“No, not really. In high school when I was 16 I started smoking marijuana. It was just the thing to do to be cool and it helped me with my emotions. But I enjoyed it so much that I just continued to do it more and more.”

“What about your parents? Did they know you were smoking marijuana back then?” Ruth asked.

“I don’t think so. I didn’t do it at home. I would always go to a friend’s house or to a party and smoke. I think they might have had an idea that I did, because my grades dropped and sometimes I would sleep a lot. Then I would cut back on my smoking and get my grades back up again because I knew I wanted to go to college. But I always returned to smoking marijuana. It was okay. Quite a few of my friends were smoking too.”

“Do you have any brothers or sisters?” Ruth asked.

“I have one older brother, Tim. He’s six years older. He’s married and has a five-year old daughter. They still live in this area. He joined the Army right after high school. He got home about three months ago from a deployment overseas and seems to be having a rough time adjusting.” Karen only shared the basics. She knew about Tim doing drugs in order to cope with his P.T.S.D. from being in combat. She was having trouble communicating with Tim because he would ignore her attempts to get together.

“Were the two of you very close growing up?” Ruth inquired.

“Yes. We were very close. And now we’ve drifted apart.” It took all Karen had to keep from crying.

“That must be hard on you,” Ruth said as she noticed Karen struggling to keep her emotions under control.

“Yes, it is.”

“Tell me about your relationship with your parents. Do you live at home?” Ruth knew when to change the topic, especially in the first few sessions. Getting Karen to trust her meant she had to gradually cover various topics before digging deep.

Karen sighed again. “No, I live with two other roommates near the college. There’s not much to tell about my parents. Basically there isn’t much of a relationship. They are busy with their jobs. We lived very tight financially. I knew to never ask for money, because the answer was always *no*. Because they worked so much we didn’t do much together as a family. They never attended any of my activities from school. But Tim would always attend if he was in town.”

“What did you like about high school? Did you excel in any of your classes or activities?”

This question brought back fond memories for Karen. “I was in the marching band. I played the clarinet. It was weird because when my family moved in the middle of my sophomore year, I went from being in probably the worst high school band in the state to being in the best. I learned so many lessons and it was so much fun to be in such tight competitions throughout the state—and to win almost all of them!

“The band leader actually made me one of the squad leaders. That was a total surprise to me. I was such an introvert, yet I knew there was another person inside of me who wanted to come out. The band leader must have seen this because he was always giving me more responsibilities. Some just totally shocked me. But I didn’t disappoint him. I carried through and handled everything he gave me. Being in that band and having the influence of that teacher made a major change in me.”

“Tell me more about that major change” Ruth commented with curiosity.

“Well, growing up, like I said, I was an introvert. Extremely shy. Both Tim and I were very shy. I kind of grew up watching life from the outside. My dad was very protective. He thought some things were too dangerous to have. Do you know I didn’t have my first bicycle until I was 20? Anyway, our home life was boring. My parents worked and didn’t have any outside activities or friends. I remember we used to go to Big Bear Lake and watch people ski during the

winter. I would sit there and be dying on the inside because I wanted to go ski! I didn't want to sit around and watch others have fun. I wanted to have fun!"

"Did you ask your parents if you could go skiing?" Ruth asked.

"Oh no! I knew not to ask my parents for anything. Not money. Not love. Not for encouragement. Nothing! Because they didn't have it to give." Karen's lower lip began to tremble.

"I am sorry you had such a rough childhood Karen. Is that why you started smoking marijuana?"

"Not really. Um, I don't know, maybe. I had found a few friends who I got close with. One day we began experimenting with smoking regular cigarettes. We didn't really like them, so we tried marijuana and we liked it. Pretty soon it became a habit for us. It was something I could control when and where I smoked. Like I said, if my grades started falling, I would cut back and get my grades back up. And during the fall season when the band was active in football halftime shows and other competitions, I would rarely smoke."

"I see," Ruth said. "What happened in college to make you lose focus? Apparently you made it through the first three years okay. What was different in this last year? Did the partying increase? Did you start using other drugs or alcohol?"

"Sometimes when I would think about life after college I got really scared. I don't know what I want to do with my life. Even if I had a degree in Social Work I'm not sure what kind of job I can get. And the possibility of not getting a full-time job is scary. My parents were helping out a little financially each month, but that ended when I dropped out last October. I work a part-time job at a convenience store, but that's not enough to live on. Now I'm on my own, without a degree, and no prospects of what I want to do with my life. As I approached the last part of this semester I got really scared and began taking pills and doing some drinking to help me cope. And each day I get worse."

"Karen, do your parents put a lot of pressure on you to perhaps follow in their footsteps of working hard and long hours?"

"Yes, especially my dad. He is kind of old-fashioned and has worked the same job for years. I can't see myself doing that. I would get bored! And if I become a mother down the road, I don't want to be working 60 hours a week and miss out on being a part of my children's lives, like my



parents did with me. There's more to life than making money. Yes, I know we need money to survive, but it shouldn't be what motivates us in life."

"What should motivate you in life?" Ruth quickly inserted.

"I'm not sure. But whatever it is should have some meaning to it. What do you think should be our motivation in life?"

Ruth smiled as she saw a turn in Karen's attitude. "I would imagine for you, coming from a childhood where there didn't seem to be much love from your parents, and the lack of friends from being so shy, that you would be seeking genuine friends. People who could love you. People to do things with. Somebody to be your best friend, especially now that Tim is less available since he is involved with raising his own family. Does that sound about right?"

"Yes."

"But to find the kind of people who will become long-term friends takes some risk and knowledge of where to find them. Are you ready to go that route?"

"Yes, I am. Especially now that I need some direction in my life. The only friends I have are my roommates and a few friends at college. But they all smoke marijuana and do drugs and that's what I'm trying to get away from!" Karen said in exasperation.

"I know. I know." Ruth said. "Let me explain the direction we will go over the course of our meeting together. Our goal together is to eventually get you away from smoking marijuana, taking pills and drinking. Instead, we will work on finding your passion in life and help you create an awesome future for yourself. We will also work on resolving some of the underlying issues that are causing you to want to escape through your addiction. But first, I want us to work on shifting your focus to dreaming dreams for your life and have you focus on building your future, rather than focus on *not* doing your addiction.

"The reason we do this shift is because when a person is operating out of their passion in life, it provides them with a lot of emotional and physical fuel to keep them headed in the right direction. It brings hope back into your life. When you focus on your future, that is when the magic happens. As a byproduct of this, your desire for your addiction goes away. How does this sound to you?"

"I'm all in!" Karen finally showed some excitement in her voice.

"Let's take a look at a couple of things I want you to do between now and when we meet again next week," Ruth continued. "First, it takes time to shift your thoughts and your beliefs as

well as your actions to get you out of your addiction. So we will take it a couple steps at a time. I don't want you to get upset at yourself if you don't stop smoking or doing drugs immediately. That would be ideal, but perhaps not realistic. Okay?"

"Okay."

"You mentioned you don't know what you want to do with your life. I want you to take pen and paper, don't do this on your computer, and write out all your dreams for your life. Dream big. Write out those hidden dreams within your heart that nobody knows about. Later on in our discussions we will go further into this aspect, but for right now I want you to start dreaming again. Don't share your list with anybody. They won't understand and they will try to put you down for dreaming big.

"Every day, when you first wake up, during your lunch time, and before you go to bed, re-read your list. Add to it. Write down scenes you can see yourself in while carrying out that dream. Where are you, what are you doing, what are you saying, what are you wearing, who is helping you to succeed? Don't worry about the *how* aspect of accomplishing your dreams. I just want you to start dreaming again. Do you think you can do this?"

"But I don't have any dreams!" Karen said in frustration. "My dream was to get a college degree, and I failed at that. Without that degree, my dreams for a good job just fell apart!"

"Not really, Karen. I'm talking about more than just a job. I'm talking about what it is that ignites the fire inside of you. It may or may not turn into a full-time job. For right now I ask that you do this exercise and be open to what comes out of you as you dream. Okay?"

"Okay."

"Second, I want you to look for a second part-time job since you can't find a full-time one. Even look outside of the type of jobs you've been looking for."

"Well ... actually ... I don't have my part-time job any more. I lost it because I couldn't get myself out of bed to get to work on time" Karen said not looking at Ruth.

"Okay, then you have two part-time jobs to look for. Look for jobs that you would enjoy doing, so you have the motivation to get out of bed in the morning. I know you may be thinking that you would take anything just to get some income. But if you start dreaming about the type of job you want, you may be surprised that it will come to you."

"Well I AM desperate for a job!" Karen exclaimed.

“I know. But your emotion of desperation may keep you from getting a job. Next week we will go more into how your thoughts and emotions create your circumstances. At this moment I need you to trust me and to follow my instructions.

“Now I want you to find friends who love to do the kinds of things you like to do. Think of what hobbies you have, or want to have, and go to [www.meetup.com](http://www.meetup.com) and find a local group on that topic. Check it out. Go to their meetings and meet the people. What we are aiming for here is for you to find friendships focused on things other than overcoming addictions.”

“What about my support groups? Do I still go to them?” Karen inquired.

“Our goal is for you to eventually stop going to them. But if that is your only source of interaction with other people, then you may need to go. Once you begin to make new friends at these other places that are focused around your various interests, then you eventually will stop attending the support group. When you start making friends with more emotionally-stable people, you will also get new perspectives on your life plus see how they handle their problems.

“Like I said, I am not asking you to make drastic changes to your life overnight. So there’s no need to feel overwhelmed. Yet you do need to be willing to try different approaches to help you stop your addiction and start living a normal life. Are you still open to trying the things I suggest?”

Karen once again looked at the joyful glow coming from Ruth and decided she had to try. “Yes, I am,” she said with a smile.

“Okay. I think that’s enough for today. If you find yourself getting anxious or really scared in the coming week as you try these things, I want you to check out something on my website that can help. It is a free eBook called “Tapping Away Your Addiction.” It teaches you a technique called Tapping—also known as Emotional Freedom Technique or EFT for short. The book is pretty self-explanatory. It will help you relieve your negative emotions that lead you to smoking or doing drugs. We will get into this technique more and more as we go through this process to help you get over your addiction and discover what you want out of life.”

“That sounds great,” Karen said.

As Ruth was walking Karen to the front door, Karen began to feel better. She had a glimpse of hope. Something she hadn’t had in a while. She couldn’t wait to start writing out her dreams for her life and finding new friends. *Perhaps there is a way to find people to love me for who I*



*am and to recognize the greatness inside of me, Karen thought. Yes, I am ready for this new season in my life!*

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Karen’s week had more ups and downs than she anticipated. She hoped Ruth would be able to give her guidance today on how to handle things better.

Ruth and Karen sat in Ruth’s living room. Karen noticed how bright and cheery the room was. She could hear the birds singing outside the back screened door. Quite a contrast to her room in her apartment. With three college students in one apartment, things were always cluttered and dirty dishes needing to be washed.

“Well, Karen, how did your week go?” Ruth asked.

“Actually, it was quite a struggle. I liked the part of writing out my dreams, but you were right—my thoughts kept telling me that it was hopeless to think about ever accomplishing them. It took me a while to really figure out what I wanted to do with my life. And I’m still not a hundred percent sure.”

Ruth was glad to see Karen’s energy level was a little higher than last week. “We will get more into putting together your dream for your life each week. But for now I just want you to continue to dream, and to dream big. Tell me, what is your initial dream for your life?” Ruth asked.

“Well, believe it or not, I always thought that when I got older—like maybe in my 50s—I would do something to help the elderly. But then I got to thinking, why do I have to wait until I am older to do something to help them? Why can’t I do it now? What I am thinking about doing is helping them in two respects. First is to somehow connect my generation with them. You know, to provide companionship for them, visit those living in assisted living places, or even helping those in need of finances.” Karen said with a heart of love.

“What is behind your dream Karen? It’s unusual for a 22-year-old to be thinking about helping the elderly. Yet I see you have a lot of love and compassion for them. Tell me more.”

“I guess a couple of things have stuck with me. I read horror stories about the elderly being abused in assisted living places. I also hear about how lonely some of them are because nobody comes to visit them. I can’t imagine living my whole life being full of friends and families and purpose, and then *being put out to the pasture* so-to-speak. What a tragedy.

“The second thing that made a deep impression on me was a radio program I heard one night. This lady was telling how she dressed up as different types of ladies, from different lifestyles, and went out in the public to get the reactions from other people. She was easily accepted as the upper- to middle-class lady. But when she dressed up as an old lady, she got ignored, people made fun of her and she felt like an outcast. Even worse was when she played the part of a homeless old lady living on the streets. It was so sad to hear how she was treated and the name-calling and total disrespect she received, even being kicked by a passerby as she tried to sleep on the sidewalk.

“Then she got permission from a nursing home to secretly play the role of an old lady living in the facility. What she saw and heard broke her heart. In talking with the residents she heard sad story after sad story of how they were once somebody, but now nobody comes to see them and they felt devastated and hopeless. Depression hits most of them because they don’t have anything to live for. Granted, some of them have mental and physical limitations due to their aging bodies and illnesses, but their drive for life was gone,” Karen sighed.

“I guess I’m looking at that and thinking, *is this how my life is going to end up? I’ll have a fantastic life but in the end everything disappears and I spend my elderly years alone with nothing to look forward to?* I guess that’s my motivation for wanting to help the elderly. How I will do that, I don’t know,” Karen said looking out the window wondering what life is all about anyway.

“Karen, you have a big heart and I can see that. I’m glad you have that dream because the world needs people like you. I’m wondering whether you see their plight so well because in a way that is what you are going through yourself. You are looking for connection with people. You’re looking for a reason to live, a purpose that is bigger than you. You want relationships that will last forever, even if you end up in a home for the elderly. Nobody should feel like their life is over just because they are old and their bodies can’t do what they used to do.

“It is a great dream because the elderly can’t necessarily make the changes in society to help themselves. They need someone like you who has the passion and the drive to make a difference in their world. Yes, even at your young age you can accomplish this dream. It’s not a college degree that provides the motivation behind dreams—it’s your passion. Although sometimes a college degree is required for certain jobs. Do you recognize as you were telling me your dream

how your heart felt? How you felt *driven* to do something for the elderly? You felt a purpose for your life?”

“Oh yes. I have all this love and passion but I’m so young that I don’t know what to do! Is it really a realistic dream for me?” Karen asked, searching for more hope for her life.

“Yes, it is totally realistic and we will work together to find out the ways to make it happen. For right now, I want you to continue daily to go over your papers where you have written down this dream. Continue to review it at least three times a day, adding more emotions to it and imagine scenes of it being accomplished. Next week we will get into it in more depth. Will you do that?” Ruth asked.

“Yes, I will,” Karen said.

“Before we get into today’s discussion about beliefs, tell me how the rest of your week went. What were some of your other struggles? And did you still abuse pills and alcohol as much as you had been doing? Did you find a job?”

Karen had so much to share she wasn’t sure where to start. “Well, no, I didn’t find a job yet. I am still waiting to hear back on some applications I filled out.”

“Oh, I hope you get something this week. I know how anxious you are to get some regular income to help your situation,” Ruth said.

“Thanks. I did go on your website and checked out the thing called Tapping ...”

“Oh yeah, I forgot I told you to do that. How did that go?”

“I guess I’m not sure about the whole thing. It seems kind of *out there* and not sure if it is something I want to do, to be honest with you,” Karen stated.

“I understand. Perhaps after today’s discussion about beliefs and how our bodies are made up of various energy paths, and how our past experiences can get stuck in those energy paths, you’ll have a better understanding. I won’t have time to go into it in full detail today, but I will touch on it to help you get a little bit better understanding. The thing is, you don’t need to understand every nuance of Tapping. It works whether you believe it or not. Did you download the free ebook and try some of the tapping?”

“I did download it. I just took a quick look through it and then set it aside because I wasn’t too sure about it. Maybe I’ll give it a try this week.”

“Yes, I wish you would,” Ruth responded. “It will help you when you go through struggles and your anxiety level goes up. Right now I just ask that you trust me on this and give it a try.”

“Okay, I will. The other thing I tried to do was to find a group on Meetup.com. I didn’t get very far. I did find a couple of groups I signed up for, but chickened out at the last moment on going to the events. I don’t know. It’s hard for me to go to a group of strangers. I knew I would back out and I did.” Karen reflected on her desires versus the reality of who she is.

“That’s okay Karen. You took one step and over time you will take the second step and actually go to an event. Tell me, what types of groups did you sign up for?”

“One was a singles group for people my age who like to go hiking. And the other was for people who want to start their own business. I think they called themselves *Entrepreneurs*. Like you said, maybe eventually I’ll get up enough nerve to go to them.”

“Karen, one way to overcome your fear of going to a group of strangers is to focus on the activity of the group, instead of your fear of what others will think about you. Or your fear of what to say to strangers. By focusing on the activity, think ahead of time if there are tips you can share with the group, or just one person in the group, about the activity. Or questions you have about the activity, especially for the entrepreneur group. Then think about how good you will feel after you come home from the group. Happy that you made it to the group, that you handled it a lot better than you thought you would, and the activity was quite pleasing to you. This will propel you to go back a second time and keep on going and eventually develop new friends. Do you think this approach might work for you?”

Karen took a moment to reflect on it. “I suppose so. The hiking group is going to one of my favorite spots this month. So maybe that would be a good one to go to. The other group feels so much out of my comfort zone, yet it also sounds like it could help me in some way. Guess I could come up with a list of questions to help me through one of those meetings. Yeah, I think if I change my focus it might work.”

“Great,” Ruth stated. “Now let’s move on to talk about your beliefs and how they create your life’s circumstances. Earlier you shared with me a big dream to help the elderly. Yet I recognized some apprehension about your belief in your ability to accomplish your dream.

“The number one belief you need to have is that you *can* be who you want to be, do anything you want to do, and have anything you want to have. The problem is how to get from your state of unbelief into believing. Most people focus on changing their external circumstances so they can accomplish these things. I am here to tell you that when you change your internal

beliefs and thoughts, that they then create better external circumstances and bring into your life the right people and situations you need.

“Today I am going to go over a few beliefs about addictions, and I also want to discuss your beliefs in general and how they have brought you to your current circumstances in your life. Are you willing to be open and honest with me as we go through this?”

“Yes,” Karen said.

“Okay. Let’s start with what led to you quitting college. Think back to what was happening at that time and the thoughts that were going on in your head. Can you share with me what was going on?”

“Well,” Karen started, “I fell behind in my studies, which led to me not passing my exams. Then, to get over the guilt I felt for failing, I started drinking more and more. I began to feel more guilty for drinking instead of doing what I should do, which was my homework and study for exams. Then I would start missing classes because I didn’t have my homework to turn in or I knew there was a test that day. Then I would drink some more. Everything just snowballed on me and pretty soon I knew I had to drop out. There was no way I could continue and flunk my classes. That would be too embarrassing, especially to have to tell my parents about it. Instead I decided to withdraw from my classes. I eventually told my parents a lie by saying the work was just too hard. My parents weren’t happy about that. After all, I made it through three years, why couldn’t I force myself to get through the last year? I didn’t have an answer for them.” Karen felt ashamed at admitting the truth.

Ruth recognized Karen was having difficulty sharing, but Ruth needed to persist to help Karen understand her struggle.

“Karen, what was going on in your thoughts at that time? Let me give you some suggestions and see if any of them ring true for you. It was your fourth year of college. Going to school is all you knew in your life. Looking at the future without school in the picture became frightening. Since you don’t know what you wanted to do with your life, your future became fuzzy and fearful.

“Also, most people your age don’t know what they want to do with their lives. So they go the traditional route taken by their parents of getting an education, find a good-paying job, and like what your father has done, stay in that job for what seems like forever. Even that picture is kind of bleak! You already saw how your parents’ lives turned out, which is non-relational and

money-focused. And that's not what you want in life. I can tell by what you've shared that you have a lot of love and compassion in you, something that wasn't in your parents. But you don't know how to use that love and compassion in your career. This added to your confusion about your future. Am I right so far?"

Karen was trying to process what Ruth was saying. Yes, she did have a big heart, but how did Ruth know? Yes, she was confused about her future, especially since all she had to observe as role models were her parents.

"Yes," Karen replied. "I guess that's why I want a degree in Social Work because I know that Social Workers want to make a difference in other people's lives. Yet I couldn't see myself sitting in an office all day counseling people. You know, I never shared with anyone until today my dream about helping the elderly. Maybe that's why I am sitting here and having you help me with my problems."

"That's probably true," Ruth replied. "Let me explain what I see was happening in your life. Your lack of a clear vision for your life left you in a state of confusion. You didn't know how to clear up that confusion, because you didn't believe you could become someone better than you were at that moment. Without a clear vision you let the circumstances of life take you where they wanted to take you—instead of you stepping up to the plate to push through obstacles to pursue your dream.

"One major obstacle was your lack of a clear vision. A second major obstacle is that according to society you are an addict. And that label of an addict carries with it the underlying lie that it is a disease and you will never get over it. Society now says that at your core you are an addict. That is who you are. Now that would take away all hope for your life and whatever dreams you may have had. Before you put up a wall against what I am going to say about addiction not being a disease I want you to remember that we are discussing about how our beliefs and our thoughts create our reality. Okay?" Ruth asked.

"Okay. I'll try," Karen responded, curious as to what Ruth could say to change her mind.

"Good. Why do you think that some addicts get clean, never have to attend support groups again, and move on with their lives? Ruth asked.

"Probably because they weren't really addicts to begin with. Or else they weren't as heavily involved in the drugs or alcohol, or they simply have more will power than I do. I know some addicts lie about being clean when they're not," Karen responded.



“Could it have to do with what they believe?” Ruth asked. “Most of our beliefs come from our childhood, our parents, society and influential people. However, not everything we are taught is true. But if you don’t know that it’s not true, you believe it and let that belief control your life. If you expect to relapse, you will. If you expect to have to deal with this problem the rest of your life, you will. If you expect to have to attend support groups the rest of your life to maintain control over your addiction, then you will.

“But look at the people who have overcome their addiction. I can bet you that their beliefs were different. They believed that there was some underlying issue that they were using alcohol or drugs to escape from. They believed that if they uncovered those issues and dealt with them, then they wouldn’t need to abuse drugs or alcohol. They believed they could overcome obstacles in life and live a normal life. They believed their addiction was a habit or a phase in their life they were going through, and not part of their core being. They believed they had the ability to rise above whatever life threw at them and come out a winner.

“There are thousands of addicts who overcame their addictions by their beliefs. But most addicts are not being taught this perspective. The reason many are opposed to changing their beliefs is because they have tried, perhaps for years, to live their lives doing things their way and never overcame their addiction. They tried and tried, but relapse was always waiting for them. However, if they were taught some of these elements that are missing from the typical recovery program, they would regain hope and begin to live differently.

“It’s not a matter of will power, but of motivation. And your motivation is fueled by your beliefs. Let me give you an example, using some aspects of your life in it. Is that okay?”

“Yes, please do!” Karen exclaimed.

“When you were in high school and started smoking marijuana, you may have done so because your friends pressured you into it. And you thought, *why not?* You liked the way it made you feel. Then whenever your emotions reached a point where you didn’t want to deal with them, whether it was emotional pain from your past or your current living situation, it was easy to smoke marijuana. Even boredom in life arouses negative emotions and questions we don’t like to face. You eventually subconsciously believed it was easier to escape these negative feelings by smoking. Since most people have never been taught how to handle negative emotions, it is easier to find an avenue of escape to deal with them.

“Then in college there was the added stress of balancing homework, working a part-time job, and having fun. We always would rather do something fun over something stressful. But when we do that, eventually we start feeling guilty for not doing the right thing. Thus, you end up drinking more. And the cycle keeps repeating itself. Am I right so far?”

Karen felt like Ruth had secret information on her. How did she know all of this?

“Yes, that’s right,” Karen responded.

“Add to that what you have been taught about addictions being a disease, and this adds more shame to your life—another emotion you want to escape from. Pretty soon you don’t know what to believe about life.

“It’s all so confusing. Then you begin to wonder, *What is life all about? What is my role in life? Do I even have a role? How come I’m not as successful as so-and-so? Why does everyone else seem to get all the lucky breaks? I guess I am just doomed to this life I’m now living.* And you know what? That’s exactly the life you attract to yourself.”

“But, Ruth, how do you change your beliefs that you’ve had your whole life?” Karen interjected. “I’ve tried to be more positive, but it doesn’t last very long. I’ve tried to be more outgoing, yet I always end up back in my shyness. I’ve got this big vision and passion, but I don’t believe that I am capable of carrying it out. Yes, it is all so confusing!

“I know my friend Frank said you helped him to get over his problem with drugs and I can see a change in him. But Frank was more of an extrovert to begin with, so he didn’t have to struggle with trying to break out of his shell. I’m 22 and I don’t want to live the rest of my life struggling every day to let out the person who is inside me! I don’t want it to take 30 to 40 years for that to happen! I want to live now! Do you think you can help me?” Karen asked in desperation.

“Karen, it doesn’t have to take years and years to allow yourself to live the life you want to live and be who you want to be and have what you want to have. Yes, we can work together to help that person inside you to come out and live. It’s not a matter of being an introvert or an extrovert. It’s a matter of defining what you want in life, changing your beliefs, taking action, and riding the roller coaster ride. Yes, there will be times when it is hard to push through obstacles. But that’s where your purpose and passion in life pull you through. It’s not a matter of will power, but of motivation. At your age it also entails gaining more knowledge of how to do what you want to do in life. Will you commit to stick with the process even when it gets hard?”

Karen felt exhausted. Yet hopeful. “Yes, I will. But I may need you to kick me in the butt once in a while if you see me coming up with excuses or not doing things because of fear.”

Ruth chuckled. “Yes, I can hold you accountable. Maybe not in the manner you stated, but I have my own ways.”

They both laughed.

“Karen, once you begin to realize how much of your life is created because of your beliefs, you will begin to recognize the truth that if you want to change your outer world, you must change your inner world. When you discover your passion in life and switch your focus from “me, myself, and I” to the people who will be impacted because of your vision, it gives you the motivation to step out of being an introvert and to do whatever is necessary to fulfill your dream. And once you make that decision, the whole universe conspires to bring to you the right people and circumstances to get your dream started and eventually fulfilled.”

“That sounds great. But how do I begin to change my beliefs?” Karen asked.

“I want us to focus on three aspects. First, it is a choice. Second, old beliefs are replaced by new beliefs through repetition. And third, Tapping will help get rid of the unconscious beliefs that are stuck in your energy meridians within your body. So you see, Tapping not only helps with your current anxieties and emotions, it also helps get rid of stuff you don’t even know exists that is keeping you from moving forward. It will also help you implant your new beliefs faster too.”

“Guess I’d better take another look at that Tapping ebook, right?” Karen interjected.

“Yes, that’s right. Remember, each week we meet we will be discussing changing your beliefs and how those beliefs apply to the material you learn that week. But let me tell you a little bit about each of these three aspects.

“In order to make a different choice on what to believe, you need to identify what you currently believe. This coming week I want you to make a list of your current beliefs in three areas of your life. First, what do you believe about addictions. Second, what do you believe about your personal goals. What are those goals, and do you believe you can achieve them? A good statement to say to yourself on each of your goals is, ‘I can’t do that because ...’ and fill in the blank. Those statements will identify your beliefs.

“The third area is your career goals. I know you may not know what you want to specifically do for your career, but list out what you believe you are or are not capable of doing with your

life. Don't look at what you haven't been able to achieve so far. Again, do some dreaming and see what negative thoughts pop up in your head that tell you can't do that because ....

“Now, next to each negative belief, write out what you want as a new belief. And write it in the present tense. Instead of saying ‘I don't want to drink any more,’ say ‘I am living a life of purpose that includes taking care of myself by doing great things for my health and my body.’ Another example would be, ‘I am living a life full of happiness, love and great friendships,’ instead of ‘I can make new friends.’ Do you see the difference?”

“Yes, I do,” Karen responded.

“Now when you catch your thoughts dwelling on your old beliefs, immediately stop them and replace them by stating out loud your new belief. The reason I say out loud is because you will also be hearing your new belief in addition to voicing it. This adds strength to the new belief. Like I said, it takes repetition of your new beliefs to override the old ones.

“Let me warn you though. This week may bring on new emotions as you struggle to identify your beliefs and then write out new ones. Even as you're writing out the new belief your mind is going to tell you, *Who do you think you are? You can't do that. Look at your past. You'll never change. You're a nobody. You'll never be able to come out of your shyness, so just give up. You're too young, who would listen to you? Your friends are just going to laugh at you if they knew what you are trying to believe.* Actually, these are some of your beliefs. So right them down too, and come up with new beliefs and thoughts to replace them with.”

Karen sat there amazed. *How did she know what's been going on in my mind? How does she know all these things?*

“Karen, you might wonder how I know all these things. It's because I was in your shoes when I was your age. I was once shy and introverted and dealt with all these negative thoughts that kept me stuck for years. I can relate to your not wanting to wait 30 to 40 years to start living your life. I had to wait way longer than I wanted. I wish I would have known this information when I was younger. It would have given me a much fuller life. But I'm not wasting my time dwelling on what my life could have been like. I have full control over my life today. Yes, I still slip once in a while and let negative thoughts run me for a while. But I always stop it and choose to believe better about myself and life. I get myself back on track and those times of negative thoughts and behavior become fewer and fewer. I share this to let you know that changing your beliefs isn't an overnight change. It takes time, and is a lifelong process. Sometimes I didn't

know what was stopping me from going forward. That's when I would turn to using Tapping to unlock and release the unconscious beliefs that would free me to pursue better things in life and to come out of my shell. So I know your struggle to let that little girl inside you to come out and live life to its fullest. To love and be loved. To risk and experience the better things in life. To know that you have a purpose and that the world wants you to share your solution with them.

“Karen you have a lot of love and compassion to share and to make a difference in this world. I believe most people do. Yours I can readily see. Other people it takes time for them to recognize they have greatness inside them waiting to be recognized, explored and delivered to the world.”

Karen was no longer hiding her tears. She was grateful that somebody *finally* could see the real her. She finally felt validated for who she is, even if she wasn't able to fully express it at this time. Ruth's sharing cracked open the door to her soul. A place she had kept hidden for fear of rejection or of not being good enough to be loved. She finally found someone who understood her deepest secrets and her deepest longings in life. *Yes, this time things are definitely going to change* Karen thought.

Ruth reached over to hold Karen's hand. “Karen, from this day forward things are going to improve in your life. Together we will work on helping you express your true self. You will reach a place where you will no longer fear doing new things or meeting new people. Yes, your dreams can and will come true.”

“Thanks,” Karen replied.

Ruth gave Karen a couple minutes of silence to gather herself.

“I think that's enough for today,” Ruth stated. “Your homework is to write your lists of beliefs in those three areas—addictions, personal, and career goals—and then write new beliefs next to them. Also review the Tapping ebook and begin to use the technique. Don't worry about what to say for the Tapping process. The ebook gives you examples to use. If other thoughts come up as you use the ones in the book, then use those too. There are no right or wrong words to say in the process.

“And I will be praying that you get a job this week. Not just any job, but one that will excite you so you can get up every morning with excitement to go to work.”

As they were walking to the door Karen asked, “What's on next week's agenda?”

“Next week we will review your homework, and then begin diving into your dream of helping the elderly. Don’t forget to continue to add to your list of dreams and to review that list at least three times a day.”

Karen sat in her car for a few minutes. She reviewed everything that had happened and her emotional responses. She started to cry again, but these were tears of joy. Tears that there is hope for her, hope she hadn’t had in a long time. She headed home to see if there were any responses in her email to her applications for jobs.



[End of Sample Storytelling]