

Wounds and Scars

By Pattie Vargas, Partnership Coach and Mother of Joel

*I have collected multitudes of wounds as I've walked this addiction journey.
Assaults on my heart, my mind, my body, my memories.
Brutal thrusts of pain – unjust, unwelcome certainly, unwarranted.
Carving deep, jagged, ugly lacerations that it seems will never heal.*

Wounded by the despair of watching my child slide further into the grips of addiction and further away from my arms – from my ability to wrap them in love and security.

Wounded by an unworkable treatment system I was ill-equipped to navigate. Not knowing it would take a secret decoder ring to figure out the ins and outs and unwritten rules.

Wounded by a society that victimizes those with addiction, deems it a character flaw with hurdles to wellness we'd never put in the way of other diseases.

Wounded by a culture threatened by grief – expecting me to bury my child and then move on – or, even worse, make themselves feel safe by blaming me for his illness.

*Wounds that come in the form of old pictures, forgotten songs, memories of days good and bad. The joy tinged with the bitterness of loss and regret.
Dreams of what could have been – should have been.
Dreams that can mutate into nightmares if I spend too much time there.
Wounds. So many. I could write for days.*

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*But lately, I've been noticing some of those wounds morphing into scars.  
And the interesting things about scars ...*

*Sometimes they completely seal over with a smooth, shiny covering – you can remember the injury was there but it's protected by strong, thicker skin that prevents it from re-opening.*

*Other times the scar forms between the jagged openings of the wound – a deep, crude, uneven gash that can't be joined so the tissue conspires to knit together and bridge the gap.  
Scars are much stronger than wounds.  
They provide a sacred protective barrier against the assault of life – ensuring that the painful, vulnerable abscess is safely sealed away.*

*It's a process, this moving from a wound to a scar.  
Like having a sore in your mouth that you just can't resist probing with your tongue  
Until one day you realize it doesn't hurt the same.*

*Wounds can't scar over unless we're alive.*

*My scars prove that I keep moving forward ....  
Even if my progress is measured in minuscule increments.  
I'll keep my wounds to myself, honoring the healing process no matter how long it takes.  
No one else can really understand.*

*But here – see my scars – they're proof that I keep living.  
Proof of my resilience.  
Proof that my loved one was worth it.  
Proof that somehow, I still believe.*