

# FAITHFUL TRUE

## What I Know for Sure

by Debbie Laaser

*What I Know for Sure* is that nearly all truths are complicated. They require a both/and statement. Here is a truth of our early married life: life together and with our children was very *good* in so many ways AND it was not *great* because we were living with secrets and unhealthy coping. We learned that any secrets, lying or hiding in a marriage creates distance. We were slowly growing apart and we didn't always recognize it because there was too much that was *good*.

When the secrets were exposed, Mark was met with very Godly people that led both of us on a path of healing. *What I Know for Sure* is that wise help delivered quickly is the best kind. Mark and I came to believe that God's hand was surely in the "Crash and Burn" of his addiction as we witnessed the quality and timing of help He provided. And this was over 30 years ago when professionals barely knew about sexual addiction or how to counsel.

One of the most important things that our therapist said to Mark upon initially meeting him was, "You must have been in a lot of pain to do the things you did." There was no blaming or shaming. There was understanding and help. *What I know for Sure* is that those are the elements that help people heal. *What I Know for Sure* is that the foundation of transformation for Mark and me was built on these Christian principles:

God loves ME. I was uniquely created with passion and purpose.

In our fallen world, we are confronted by painful experiences and we fall away from this truth.

In our pain, we find ways to comfort ourselves. And those behaviors often hurt us and other people in the process. They are sinful.

Jesus died for these sins and forgives us our trespasses. And because of his sacrifice, we can have hope for a newly resurrected life.

Healing comes from finding the root causes of pain and then replacing unhealthy coping with healthy community, self-care and service to God.

It can also mean facing the consequences of the pain we caused.

God will not waste our pain. He will use it to grow us individually, relationally, and spiritually.

Faithful & True was built on these Godly truths. Healing sexual addiction is not just about stopping behaviors. It is not about living in silence and shame the rest of your life. It is about acknowledging your story, rewriting the chapters that led to growing away from God's truth about you, and about learning to live loved and to love others well.

Mark and I founded Faithful & True AND we are not Faithful & True. Faithful & True is not just Mark and Debbie Laaser. It is practicing love the way we believe Jesus practiced it. It is helping hurt people find the root causes of pain so that they can change. It is caring about every person that is led to us. One of the greatest gifts we can all give Mark is to continue the counseling center he birthed out of his life-long passion to have God use his story.

Our staff at Faithful & True have been trained and practice in the way Mark and I practiced.

They are experts in the field of sexual addiction. Most have lived through their own stories of addiction and now are open to share their stories as well. They are “faithful and true” to God’s principles of forgiveness, second chances, the preciousness of all lives, and the hope that in all things, God will work for good.

I am devoted to lead Faithful & True into the future with our amazing staff. While we will all miss Mark’s presence, we have all sat under his words and humor and wisdom for many years. They are ingrained in our brains! Our counseling, podcasts, and workshops will be filled with all the wisdom and encouragement that has always been there. Our staff is ready to serve you!

What *I Know for Sure* is that our counseling center is bustling with love and desire to help people live more abundantly in God’s love. I am quite sure that the outpouring of love that I have experienced this month and the tributes so many have shared in honor of Mark are happening because we chose to live out of our story—both the happy chapters and the difficult ones. We have trusted that God would teach us something in our trauma and that He would use us for His glorious purposes. And so He has...

“Blessed is the man who perseveres under trial, because when he has stood the test, he will receive the crown of life that God has promised to those who love him.” (Js. 1:12 NIV)

