

## Forgiveness and Healing

Callie Greer, aka Momma Callie



*Momma Callie organizes MAVIS (Mothers Against Violence In Selma) on the 3rd Thursday of every month at 6 pm at the Selma Center (pictured above), to tell our truths, share our joy and pains, listen to healers and other inspirational speakers, and share about self-care, mental issues, celebrations and more. Want to know more? Want to donate? Contact Momma Callie at the Center ([calliegreer1960@gmail.com](mailto:calliegreer1960@gmail.com) or 334-357-0660 or 267-4191)*

As a part of the work we're doing here at the Selma Center for Nonviolence, Truth and Reconciliation through the Kellogg Foundation's Truth, Racial Healing and Transformation (TRHT) enterprise, we all write blogs. Now given I have never written a blog, this was a challenge. Also the work we're doing has 5 specific components/ areas (Narrative Change/Truth, Racial Healing and Relationship Building, Law, Economy and Separation). And it's like a elephant to me. And how do you eat an elephant? One bite at a time. We believe that truth and reconciliation must happen within and between communities--in families and in oneself. For my first blog I am writing about my personal truths on Truth, Forgiveness and Healing. And mine came in this order--truth, then forgiveness and then healing.

For me these are very important, life changing, life saving, and life giving or life taking issues. There are so many areas in my life that are healing and that need healing. So when I started writing this "blog," my mind started racing all over the place. What hurts would I share? What healings would I share? Who or what would I share about? And at every question there was some intimate areas that I wasn't sure I was safe enough to share with Selma and others. So I prayed and started and stopped and prayed again. Since I've started doing this kind of work I've taken a real hard look at myself and how I practice nonviolence, truth, healing and RECONCILIATION in my life. This is some tough stuff to live by. And even though as "Believers" we tend to think we live our lives this way everyday, for me that is not always the truth. So I have decided to just share. Share in my Truth, my Healing, and how I have reconciled and am reconciling with folk that are here and have gone on in my life. Let me share why this is important for me to do this. First as a Believer, I believe that if I don't forgive, I will not be forgiven!!! That's scary for me. I have done a lot of things that I need and want forgiveness for/from. And I wanted to look at and measure the amount of forgiveness I would give based on my need for forgiveness from my own stuff. Well that didn't work. There's no way for me to do that because I can't measure the depth of hurt I've done to others and the scars it caused because of them. We all hurt, but differently, and we can all heal, and we heal differently. How do we make space for others to heal in their own way? And

really respect that and become a part of that healing agent/balm in OTHERS' lives? Okay! Enough of that for a minute. Let's get into what I really agreed to share.

I chose to start with Mercury. Mercury is our oldest son. He was the first man in my life that I can remember that ever tried to protect me. If you want to know more about that you'll have to come to the "Chat and Chew" and ask. I wasn't a very present mother in my children's lives for a very long time and so the relationship and memories some mothers have with their children is not one I had with my own children. So with that said back to Mercury. He graduated high school in Florida and I remember a coach from Arizona Christian College coming to Florida to recruit him to play basketball on a partial scholarship. He was an amazing power forward and I/we were so proud of him. He was also a young man that had friends that were into "gang related" things as well and so he was involved as well. Say what you will. Mercury was/is my son. Mercury was shot the Saturday before Father's Day in 1999. I arrived where he was before the ambulance got there. When they arrived to transport, him they said to me "he'll be okay. This is not life threatening." We followed the ambulance to the hospital and he was taken into surgery. Hours went by. He was the youngest person in the emergency room. All were hopeful that the bullets hadn't done too much damage and that he would heal without any lingering disabilities. I laid on the floor and fell asleep waiting to go and see Mercury. It was early Sunday morning when I was awakened and told Mercury didn't survive! I can't tell you what I felt because I had never felt it before.

They allowed us to go back and see his body and I was just.....let me say that I was only a few weeks clean from my 20+ years battle from crack cocaine and no one was sure what the full lost would be from this. I now know I was in a state of Grace from God. And because I had been forgiven and truly and totally received that GRACE and FORGIVENESS, God brought me through. Carrying me the whole way. The funeral was surreal. There was a caravan of Folk from Florida that came and his Pastor from there gave part of the homegoing service and so did I. Mercury had been a youth minister in Florida going out into communities and bringing in young folk to the church. The church we attended was about 97% white and we were fully engaged. Anyways, after the service and all had gone back to their own lives, I had a moment. I was all alone and I had been in my mind pretending that Mercury was back at college and that he would be coming home soon. That was my way of coping. And since no one was around me that was really paying attention, it worked for a while. And then one day I was looking at his picture and it hit me like a hard slap in the face. He Is Not Coming Home!! Now there was the trial that had to happen and there were also Folk that were not feeling in the forgiving way. But it was my call. And I was chosen to be the spokesperson for our family. And I didn't know what I was going to say, but I did know it wasn't hateful. At the trial we consoled the young man's mother and she was very, very remorseful and asking for forgiveness. We did. We supported her as we went before the Judge. When it was my turn to speak, I just opened my mouth and the Spirit of God did the rest. Because I had been forgiven of so much and I was in a state of Grace, all I could do was give it back. To say the least, the Judge and the entire courtroom was in awe--including me. We forgave. I believe that act of forgiveness saved me and my family's lives. And almost 20 years later we still walk in that forgiveness, grace and healing.

If I may touch on another in my life, I will. It's even more personal. Molestation, Rape and the aftermath. I know there's a lot of conversation about this going on right now and that is as it should be. It could have come sooner but may not have been as effective or as embraced if it had. I can remember being molested at the age of maybe 3. It came back to me in bits and pieces and then like a huge rushing wave of water covering me but not drowning me. Knocking the breath out of me but not knocking me out. Opening me up and shutting me down at the same time. And all of the other incidents of this kind started connecting to it as if being drawn together by some strong magnetic force that created a very vivid picture of my life that was buried deep inside of me purposely so that I didn't have to remember it--covered up by drugs, alcohol, men, women, lies, prison, jail and shame. I had to really ask myself if I wanted to deal with this given my past life on the streets and given the opinions and thoughts people already had of "women" like me. Some even saying I deserved it, even though I was only 8 or 9 when I first said something about it. No doubt some of you have become very uncomfortable and are second guessing any further connection to me--it's cool. I'm good with me and my truth. Even though I value relationships, before I go backwards in my truth and open closets, I'll release myself and others because my sanity and safety and truth are just as important as others who worry about what people will say about them being in any kind of relationship with me. I have forgiven most of the Folk that committed these things and I am in a constant mind of forgiving myself and those that still haunt me because I have not fully let go. One of those people had done harm throughout my family. I was given the opportunity to care for this person until they took their last breath in my house holding my hand. And I can truly say I cared for this person lovingly the entire time. And that's how I know I had forgiven and that they had been released to forgive themselves and enter into rest.

Forgiveness is a Powerful Tool. But there must be TRUTH before it. For me it's this way because if there are half-truths, which are whole lies, then we have to continue to return to the forgiving process and then can never reach the process of healing and reconciling yourself with/to others. This is a terribly beautiful thing. Because for me it is/was terrible what happened, but once it was said and done, I was free and able to begin the healing. When Folk hurt me and act as if I should just go on and be alright with it or use words to try and make me see their justifications in doing so, I am more angered. It makes me feel devalued and that they feel that what they believe, say, or do is of more value and that their "Big Picture" of things outweighs me or mine. It is important for me to try and straighten things out ASAP and show value to other Folk. Humans hurt. And yes, sticks and stones will break my bones, But WORDS can really Kill Me. I am going to bring this to a closing because I feel myself going all over the place again. But I wanted to share a little bit about my life and open the door for Folk that might not otherwise feel they are invited to the Table, because they have nothing in common with the Folk you think are at the Table, or that the issues you are struggling with are not the same, or whatever the reasons you have for not being at the Table. Let me reassure you there is ROOM at the Table For You. Just like a hungry person can't hear you because his stomach is growling so loud, a hurting person can't hear you because they are trying to STOP the bleeding. But if you don't come to the Table and speak your Truth, how can we know your needs?!

Just two last things:

First, if you're not at the Table! You're on the MENU.

Second, just like hurting people, hurt people, healing people, heal people.

So come and be a part of the TRUTH, HEALING and Reconciliation process that is happening in Selma.

Until next time, with love and good food,

Momma Callie