

The Freedom of Honesty

I came to prison in 2015. Two years later, God revealed the truth about my entire life being one big lie. In the past, I could not tell the truth to anyone or myself, and I have a long history of hurt, destruction and manipulation. It feels like I've come full circle back to the authentic man God intended me to be. My release date is approaching, and I don't want to hide from anyone anymore. But how can I expect people to trust and accept me for the changed man I am today if they know the truth about my past?

The discovery of your truth through a new connection with God while incarcerated is a beautiful, inspirational story. The power of your life's narrative to affect others positively, as well as to help create new and mended relationships, would not be complete without *all* the chapters.

Your transformation is just the beginning. Faithful and honest living will be a constant practice, but you have established a strong foundation and are well on your way. And life will undoubtedly tempt you to revert to old and familiar survival strategies. That is being human. But you are simultaneously a divine creation, capable of and designed for conscious evolution. So when you are afraid or unsure what to do, go back to God.

In your time of prayer, confess your human feelings, failings and frustrations — no hiding here, either. Then surrender it all and ask to be guided. Remember, God has always known your wholeness, and God knows what to do through you to create a new and fulfilling life.

Being honest about your past will empower the man you now know yourself to be. However, not everyone needs the whole story. When you choose to share, there is no guarantee of understanding and acceptance. But holding back and editing, especially in close and important relationships, is another form of manipulation.

You can trust that living as the authentic man God intended you to be will bring the right people to you. And remember, you already have the most trustworthy supportive forever-friend imaginable in God. Trust that. ☸



STEF SWINK, RScP, has been a practitioner since 1999. As protégé and assistant to Louise Hay, she was a frequent ghostwriter for the "Dear Louise" column. Through speaking, spiritual counseling and workshops, she inspires others to create fulfilling lives they love. Connect with her online at StefSwink.com/Ask-Stef-Submission.