

# CovertIncest.org

## A Journey towards Wholeness

Whether real or imagined, I've noticed people's life stories tend to begin with an idyllic childhood. But in my case, the grass wasn't greener as a child. Growing up was especially painful for me, and even as a young boy I often fantasized about one day being my own person and living out the life that I believed I deserved. This is probably why I often have difficulty understanding why so many adults look back in envy, wishing for a more carefree existence, even to the point of being intentionally ignorant of what goes on around them. This is because as far as my life is concerned, I am far better off today than I ever was and my life continues to get better the older I get.

My story began almost 40 years ago when my parents crossed paths by chance in Denmark and found what they were looking for in each other at that moment in time. My father was looking to be successful and believed that having a family was a key part of that equation. My mother was just looking for a way out of her dysfunctional family. So within a very short period of time, they got married and moved to Tokyo where I was born. My father provided for us, while my mother took care of the household. As a result, I hardly knew my father, as he was always working. He was a freelance journalist, writing about politics and economics, believing that it was his duty to uncover the truth. My mother, on the other hand, was around me all the time. She was a simple housewife. Even though she had worked as a nurse and later in an office, she was really not driven to do anything.

This family arrangement lasted for about a decade, after which everything came crashing down. My father accused the police of corruption in newspaper articles, which is a big no-no in Japan. He was arrested and charged. As a result, he was alienated by his business partners and his business subsequently collapsed. We went from being financially well off to almost going broke. And then he got multiple sclerosis. Although he eventually recovered both physically and financially and was handed a suspended prison sentence, our family life was forever shattered. Tensions that had been building between my parents came to the forefront. He finally had enough of my mother's controlling nature and moved out. Consequently, my mother couldn't cope with all of this and sank into a deep depression. She slept late into the afternoons and became a hoarder.

But what made it even worse was my mother turning to me for emotional support. I became her surrogate spouse, as I was the only person she would confide in. In every way, we were enmeshed. She would walk into my room whenever she wanted. She would insist on bathing me, dressing me up, all the way into my teenage years. She said I couldn't do it well enough myself, but that was really an excuse to satisfy her need for intimacy since she wasn't getting it from my father anymore. She made out with me, teased my private parts, strip teased in front me, bought me pornographic material, made me touch her vagina and insisted that I sleep in her bed when she was lonely and scared. When she was upset with me, she would scream at the top of her lungs and slap me. Anything could set her off. She was totally unpredictable. As she considered me to be no more than an extension of herself, I wasn't allowed to be myself and had to be the person she wanted me to be. And since she never accepted me as a distinct person with my own separate needs, I

# *CovertIncest.org*

learned to keep my thoughts and feelings to myself. It was the only way I could survive in such an environment.

As my father never returned home, I became the messenger boy soon after he left. My parents would communicate to each other through me. In the beginning, my father wrote letters to me in Japanese, which were usually about what he thought of my mother. My mother would then demand that I translate it for her, which I did. This would result in her yelling and crying. After an absence of a year or two, my father suddenly started coming to visit us for a few hours every Sunday. These visits were extremely unpleasant for everyone involved. He would come for dinner, but my mother would almost always be late. A fight would usually ensue. There would be lots of yelling and my mother would end up crying and running into her bedroom. And my father often would leave in anger. Again, I would have to shuttle messages between them. I would spend time with my father while my mother was preparing dinner, and then once he left my mother and I would talk about what my father and I had talked about. This sort of behavior continued all the way up until I left home.

Needless to say, I didn't have much of a life apart from my mother during those years. For the most part, I was kept at home, as my mother hardly let me go out by myself, though this changed during my late teens. I couldn't have any friends over from school because it was too embarrassing with the place being such a mess. As I got older, I demanded more independence from her but it was hard to win any concessions. By the time I got to high school, my life improved somewhat as I was able to hang out with friends outside of school. At the same time, my mother became increasingly anxious about me going off to college. The thought of having to live all by herself absolutely frightened her.

It wasn't until 1989 when I arrived for college in America that I truly tasted freedom for the first time. I decided to go to school in Washington, DC. In choosing a school on the other side of the world, I was able to get as far away from my mother as possible. But although I was now physically separated from her, the process of undoing the emotional dependence had only just begun, as she was still able to control me through our phone conversations. Like clockwork, she would call me every weekend. I dreaded answering that morning call. It was a one way conversation, with my mother interrogating me about what I had done during the week, followed by a run down of what she had done even though I never asked her. It usually ended with me screaming at her as she would insist on asking the same question over and over again until she was satisfied with my answer.

While this went on for the next several years, I sought out answers as to why I felt so miserable all the time. I delved into everything from Objectivism to Scientology, but nothing explained why I felt the way I did. It was not until I started talking to people about my childhood that I began to realize that I suffered from years of abuse. So soon thereafter, I signed up for a class at the Learning Annex about child abuse. And to my surprise, the instructor described a childhood that was eerily similar to mine. He said it was called covert incest. As one might expect, I rushed out and bought whatever books I could find on covert incest, and from that day forward, it all made sense to me.

# *CovertIncest.org*

In time, I came to realize that in order for me to grow as a person and become the person I was meant to be, the nature of the relationship between my mother and I had to change. So gradually, I took steps to remove myself from her control. In 1994, I graduated from college and got a job as a computer programmer, which made me financially independent from my parents. I also took the necessary steps to remain in the United States permanently by applying for a Green Card. By 1998, I was able to gain permanent residency through my second employer. With my immigration status secured, I was no longer dependent on school or work to remain in the country. Not being obligated to stay at my former job in Washington, DC, I moved to Southern California, which seemed like an ideal place to live because of its mild climate. It was an opportunity for me to start anew, to be able to do whatever I wanted to do without anything or anyone holding me back. Finally, I was liberated.

As for my parents, we became increasingly estranged over the years until I no longer had any contact with them at all. Even though I had written a letter explaining the family dynamics and how unhealthy it was for everyone involved, neither one of them showed any willingness to accept how I felt or to work through their problems. They wanted to sweep everything under the rug and continue on as before, with me being the eternal child caught in a balancing act between two very sick adults. For me, this was unacceptable. So I did the only thing I could do, which was to work on myself. Since 2001, I have entered therapy, read books on psychology, attended seminars and joined group discussions, both in person and online. And in the past few years, I've made peace with my past to the extent that it no longer haunts me. I've also taken symbolic steps, such as visiting the place where I grew up in Tokyo, as well as my cousin in Denmark who I was able to get back in touch with via the Internet.

Today, I view life as a journey towards wholeness. Life hasn't been easy for me, but the obstacles I've encountered along the way have helped me grow as a person. Without them, I would remain the same person forever. And while there is much in life that is beyond my control, I do have the power to determine how best to respond to situations I find myself in. I may not be able to avoid having problems, but I can always get better at handling them. Whether I want to or not, life has a way of pushing me forward.

Moriji