



Helping OTHERS Heal

By Cynthia Fodor

"WHAT YOU SEEK IS SEEKING YOU. WHEN YOU HAVE THE DESIRE, WHEN THE STUDENT IS READY, THE TEACHER WILL APPEAR. WE ARE ALL CONNECTED." -AMY DAVIS

Sometimes, you just need someone to listen. When you meet Amy Davis, you feel her warmth and easily want to share your thoughts and feelings. You sense you're with someone who understands. She gets you because she's been there. Amy has an understanding born out of her own real life experiences.

"Sometimes people struggle with being who they are, being authentic. Peeling away the layers, unlearning and relearning, that's a lot of what life is," she says.

Amy listens, objectively without judgment.

"This is a safe place. A lot of people hold things inside. I see the relief they feel when they speak their truth. A lot of times people are scared they will be judged," Amy explains.

"I see their potential that they can't see in themselves. All the stuff they experience in their life, when they can release that and somebody says, 'You're OK with who you are. How do you want your life to look? What steps do you need to take to get there?' A lot of times, we have these blocks. We're scared of moving forward."

As a Clinical Social Worker and Therapist, Amy understands each person has their own story. She knows because she has HER OWN story. It was through her own struggles in life that she found her

purpose in life. She grew up with instability with a mother who struggled with mental health issues.

"She struggled her whole life. She was on and off substances. We moved around a lot. I wasn't safe," Amy shares.

After her mother's suicide in 2011, Amy knew she needed help and joined a support group for survivors of suicide loss. Shattered and lost, she learned she wasn't alone. She felt motivated to make a difference.

"I don't want anyone else to experience what I did. I wanted to make an impact on the world. After many months of heartache and asking 'why me?' I received an answer back of 'why not me?' I signed up for school the next day."

The single mother of two daughters went back to school for seven years, earning her Bachelor's Degree at Grandview University and her Master's Degree from the University of Iowa. She specializes in grief counseling and Obsessive Compulsive Disorder. She is also President of the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention here in Iowa.

Advocating at our state and national capitols to help make changes in mental health laws, providing mental health support at survivor of suicide loss events, and publicly speaking of her loss while offering hope are ways that Amy gives back. She

co-hosted the First Annual Diamonds & Donations Gala for Free Mental Health Care alongside Foster's Voice, Suicide Awareness. The event raised \$26,000 for free mental health care in Central Iowa.

Amy named her practice Diamond Heart Therapy. "The reason is that we all go through stuff just like diamonds. Carbon has to go through pressure in difficult times. A lot of it is having resilience and bouncing back, saying the pain is awful, the fear is debilitating but I can work through this."

Her advice is to seek help if you're struggling. Amy is teaching others that life goes on and you can find good in the worst situation. She has found the silver lining in her own dark cloud.

"I have empathy for anyone who struggles. Stephen Covey said, 'Seek first to understand and then to be understood.' I had to learn to understand myself first. A mom's job is to teach and my mom taught me invaluable lessons," Amy says through tears. "Not in the way that was gentle and sweet, but her hard lessons changed my life."

Her mother taught her life lessons in the only way she knew how. The events that caused Amy Davis the most pain have led her to a path of purpose.

"My mother lives on through me and I honor her now. She is in my heart and that never dies. Grief is love disguised as pain."

Amy is now full of joy, listening, helping others smile again, as they find their way through the ups and downs of life. She knows, "In the midst of all that sorrow, we can still have peace, joy and love." *

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