

VICTIM TO VICTOR: With 83 arrests and 19 years of homelessness, abuse, addiction and prostitution in her rearview mirror, advocate and author Tonier Cain is transformed and changing women's lives across the country

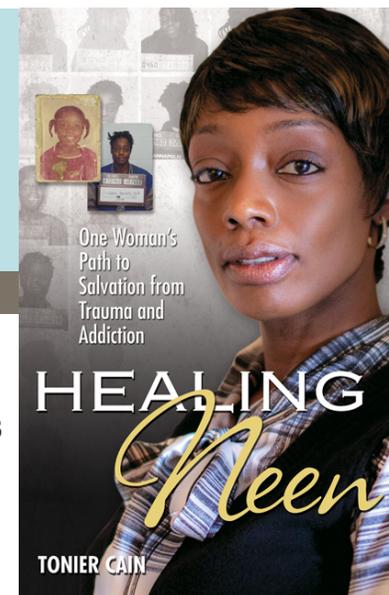
ANNAPOLIS, MD - After an abusive childhood spent with a drug-addicted and alcoholic single mother, in which she was sexually assaulted by neighborhood men, Tonier Cain spent 20 years homeless, hustling and prostituting on the streets of Annapolis, MD, desperately feeding an insatiable crack addiction and racking up 83 arrests. Rapes and beatings were a part of her daily life. Home was underneath a bridge. She literally had four children taken from her arms.

But, in 2004, pregnant (again) and incarcerated (again), she was finally provided the opportunity to go to a community trauma, mental health and addictions program, where, for the first time, someone asked her a very important question. Instead of 'what's wrong with you?', she heard 'what happened to you?' Realizing for the first time that she'd been a victim, she began to heal and reclaim power over her life. 'Healing Neen: One Woman's Path to Salvation from Trauma and Addiction', published by HCI and scheduled for release in September 2014, is her powerful story of redemption.

"I've been asked what the low point was for me. Well, my whole life was a low point. All of the pain and suffering over so many years ... there was no time for me that was worse than any other. Pain was pain. If you'd asked me where I'd be in ten years, I'd probably have told you I'd be dead. Certainly, no one thought there was any hope for me to ever do anything of significance with my life," Cain says. "But, my story is proof that everyone's life has purpose and meaning. Everyone's. There is redemption and healing. If there's breath, there's hope."

Today, Cain not only works for the National Center for Trauma-Informed Care and speaks all over the country with women in prisons and hospitals, she's opening her own trauma-informed care clinics. A victim-turned-crusader in the war on addiction, incarceration and the cycle of poverty, she's determined to walk out her purpose and make a difference in the lives of others.

"The system generally uses one model in rehabilitation, forgetting that people are individuals with their own individual issues and traumas. Treatment plans should be glove fit to meet each individual's need," she says. "My ultimate goal is to open centers around the world and continue to speak up as a survivor and an expert, because that's who Tonier Cain is today. People need hope. Those that have been traumatized need to know that healing is possible. And, I'm proof of that."



BOOK DETAILS

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WHO IS TONIER CAIN?

For two decades, Tonier Cain hustled on the streets of Annapolis, Maryland, desperately feeding an insatiable crack addiction and racking up 83 arrests along the way. Rapes and beatings were a routine part of life; home was underneath a bridge or inside the locked cage of a prison. In 2004, pregnant and incarcerated for violation of parole, she was provided the opportunity to go to a community trauma, mental health and addictions program.

Feeling safe for the first time in her life, 'Neen' confronted the haunting childhood memories that she tried to numb with drugs: filth and chronic hunger, sexual assaults by neighborhood men, routine physical and mental abuse dished out by her drunken mother. Realizing for the first time that she had been a victim, she began to heal and reclaim power over her life. Today, she works for the National Center for Trauma-Informed Care, dedicating her life to being a voice for those still lost and silent as she travels the country, speaking and working one-on-one with women in prisons and hospitals.

MORE ON THE BOOK

Healing Neen isn't just another story about victims and survivors or recovery and redemption. Ultimately, it's a testament to God's grace and presence. It's the story of one woman's path to salvation and a propitious glimpse into the potential buried deep within some of society's most vulnerable people.

It's also about the value of human life, the depth of suffering, and the heights of grace. And, not to be overlooked, it's a convincing *cri de Coeur* for better practices in the way we treat and counsel those caught in the cycles of trauma, addiction, and serial incarceration. Cain brings us face-to-face with the ubiquitous corruption, neglect, and abuse in some of the systems meant to safeguard at-risk women and children, yet she leaves us with hope that things can change for the better.

WHY YOU'RE BOOKING HER

- Inspiring storyteller, speaker; Has served as keynote speaker in the presence of the President of the United States, United Nations, multiple government agencies, teachers, community and civic organizations and convicted felons
- Team Leader for the National Center for Trauma-Informed Care
- Featured in the documentary "Behind Closed Doors: Trauma Survivors and the Psychiatric System" and the subject of "Healing Neen", a documentary based on her life as she moved through multiple systems of care.
- She hasn't just studied addiction, trauma and rehabilitation in books and doesn't speak of it in cold, clinical terms. She learned it by living it and speaks of it passionately and personally, having spent many years homeless, prostituting herself and addicted to crack cocaine, the victim of a lifetime of physical, sexual and emotional abuse. Cain was arrested 83 times and lost four children.

EXPERTISE

- Trauma-informed care, mental health
- Addiction, recovery
- Domestic violence, abuse
- Rehabilitation
- Criminal justice system
- Welfare, poverty, homelessness

AUTHOR Q&A

Q: Why do you think people need to read or know your story?

A: *My story is a story of hope. And people need hope. Those that have been traumatized need to know hope and healing is possible.*

Q: Who is Tonier Cain?

A: *Tonier Cain is a survivor. Where once I was a victim, without hope, not wanting to live and just ... existing, today I'm a joyful spirit, enjoying life, embracing healing, advocating for those that haven't found their voice yet.*

Q: Is 'Neen' her alter ego?

A: *Neen is the abused child, the abused wife, the prostitute, the convict, the mental patient, the homeless crack head and the rape victim. Neen is the pain.*

Q: What was the lowest point for you?

A: *My whole life was a low point, all of the pain and suffering over so many years ... there was no time for me that was worse than any other. Pain was pain.*

Q: What are we getting wrong in the way of rehabilitating people in this country, i.e., the addicted, abused and/or serially-incarcerated?

A: *The system is designed to help people do well while they are in the system, nothing is put forth to help people maintain it in the community. We forget that as a provider, we should be the GPS system for people, allowing people to drive their own lives, by including them in the decision making regarding their lives, giving the direction to get to their destination (goal), sometimes using turn by turn direction, meaning very hands on, but certainly allowing them to make mistakes and rerouting them when they do. Also, the system generally uses one model, forgetting that people are individuals with their own individual issues, so treatment plans should be glove fit to meet the individual need, not the one size fit all treatment plan.*

Q: How far back does your healing, referenced in the title, reach?

A: *My healing had to begin at the first onset of pain – the abuse. And my healing levels have matched the level of pain. But, in order to truly believe and embrace healing, I had to relive the worst of the pain. Only then, was there any chance for me to heal.*

Q: Why do you think your life was spared? Did you ever want to take it?

A: I think my life was spared to walk into my purpose. We all have a purpose in life, given by God, and no matter what, His purpose for our lives will prevail. This is what I believe.

Q: How will your story will impact youth growing up under similar circumstances today? Who do you want it to reach?

A: My story impacts people of all ages. I want young people to know that they're not alone, and that it's important to find someone safe to talk to. My trauma began as a child and didn't end until I was almost 40 years old. I want to prevent that for as many young people as I can.

Q: What message do you want your story to send around the world?

A: My message is 'where there's breath, there's hope' ... and that healing is possible for ALL.

Q: In your travels, have you found that the issue of trauma is one that is global?

A: Yes, trauma impacts every race, gender and age. What I've discovered, too, is how many people there are that are in the profession to provide services to traumatized individuals, that have their own unaddressed, untreated trauma.

Q: Did you ever think you would make it to this place in your life? What does your family think about how your life has been transformed?

A: Heck no. If you had asked me ten years ago where I would be today, I would've said "probably dead". I was told there was no hope for me ... and I believed it.

Q: What is your ultimate goal on this journey?

A: My ultimate goal is to open trauma centers around the world and continue to speak up as a survivor and an expert, because that's who Tonier Cain is today.

Q: Why do you feel this book is important/relevant?

A: It's important that we don't give up on people. With my horrible, extensive background, I was deemed hopeless. Everyone that provided me with services either re-traumatized me or did very little. No one has the right to deem someone else hopeless. I want people to understand that given the right opportunity to heal, we can and will become productive. Mine is a story of hope. I want people to see that God is always at work in our lives.

Q: What message do you have for those that feel trapped or hopeless? Stuck in a cycle of poverty or neglect or pain that they just can't escape?

A: I tell my story so that people like me can find hope. I want to tell people that no matter what your life looks like, what it feels like, it can and will get better. I've been through every system, and nothing worked for me except when I finally realized that it was beyond me, that I needed something greater than human resources ... that I needed Jesus. Sometimes, we believe that God doesn't love us because of all we've been through or because of the things we've done, but I'm a witness. Not only does He care, He will bring us out of any situation, victoriously.

Q: What was the point for you when you realized that there was hope and that you had a future?

A: When I truly gave my life to Jesus, and inviting him in, everything about me changed, my talk, my walk, my thoughts ...

Q: Is there a particular verse of scripture or two that you hold particularly close?

A: Luke 1:37 "For with God, nothing shall be impossible" and Proverbs 19:21 - "Many are a man's plans, but God's purpose will prevail". He has a purpose for my life as He does for all and nothing was going to stop it -- not even me. What the world said was impossible for my life, God said differently. Guess who won?