



**Claudia Taller**  
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# The Channel

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inspiring and connecting you to a holistic lifestyle.*



## Living Past the Trauma

By [Claudia Taller](#)

Have you ever had times in your life when you had to deal with such trauma, you were on auto-pilot and unable to even think about think what was happening? And you stopped praying?

That happened to me when I fell down the stairs and had to have two surgeries within three days and wasn't able to walk for months. It also happened to me when our daughter was a teenager and experiencing her alcoholism for the first time. It's probably no coincidence that the only new writing I did during the months when I was confined to the family room was an article about my daughter Melissa and how running keeps her sober.

I think of those times as my most spiritual. God was with me, even though I wasn't really talking to him. I felt Him beside me. I tapped into inner strength I didn't know I had.

Melissa's a runner. She was the fastest local woman in this year's Cleveland Marathon. But when she was sixteen, her behavior became erratic. We didn't know what was going on until her ten-year-old sister came home from school to find her sister dead. That's what she thought when she called her mother at work, crying and saying she wasn't going near the body. I called 911 from my office downtown and when the ERT called me, they said she'd ingested a fifth of vodka so they were packing up both girls to go to the hospital. After months of denial and worry, we found out Melissa was a Type-A alcoholic and the whole family went through rehab at Oakview.

During those months, we pushed through. Our hearts ached. We were busy trying to fit in the appointments and keeping up with life. We were taking care of ourselves. We weren't looking at the past and we were fearful of the future. Believe it or not, when I think back, we were very in the moment, and present.

It was about that time that I started journaling. Nearly every day. I found comfort in putting my thoughts down on paper. At first, I did a lot of ranting, but over time, months, my writing became a way to observe my life. I needed to get down on paper what I wasn't really thinking about. It seems as though when we're on auto-pilot, we aren't able to be honest about what's going on in our lives. I wasn't just writing about Melissa, by the way, I had a whole lifetime of issues to work out.

Today, Melissa runs. The rhythm on the pavement, the way her healthy body moves, the wind throwing her ponytail behind her, and the sound of her breath are a meditation and retreat. Sober six years, she doesn't just attend AA meetings, she runs them and sponsors many other women in crisis. When she's sitting in a quiet place and going over one of the steps with someone she's mentoring, like the second one of recognizing a higher power, she listens, acknowledges, accepts. She's been there, and she can be empathetic, but firm. As an occupational therapy assistant, she works with I work with people with disabilities, addictions, strokes, injuries and orthopedic patients, and when she does, she asks herself, "what can I do to motivate this person to go further?" She relies on her journey to help others.

Back to me falling down the stairs. It took 30 seconds for me to twist my leg in such a way that I broke my tibia plateau. I still remember getting to the bottom of the stairs and seeing my knee off to the outside of my leg and pushing it back into place. I was in shock. And then there was the ride in the ambulance, the transfer to Metro's trauma unit, the stakes to stabilize my leg, the second surgery when they put pins and plates in my leg, the hospital stay, the physical therapy at home every other day, and the inability to take a shower or to walk without hopping on my leg. Did I call upon the Lord?

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One would think so, but I didn't. It's not that I was mad at Him. I was letting him be in control. When Melissa was going through her crisis, one that stretched on for five years or so, I found calm within the storm. And that's what happened to me when I was in recovery from breaking my leg. God was simply with me. I didn't feel a need to acknowledge this spirit that is the core of who I am.

The universe responded big time. Our church just happened to be starting Stephen Ministry training at the same time I was convalescing and couldn't go to work—of course a ride would be provided. And the yoga teacher training I'd been wanting to do for years just happened to start when Stephen Ministry training was winding down and I could put 50% of my weight on my leg. Then one night, when Melissa was visiting and I told her about training, Melissa said "I want to do it too!" She signed up before I did.

Melissa took the long route to finding solutions for her life, but that has made her a better runner, and a better person. Journaling has given me a multi-layered life, a real sense of who I am and what I should be doing. As a mother-daughter team we may teach yoga, lead workshops, even open up a yoga studio or retreat center. As we meditate and listen to the rhythm of breath in asana practice, we know there's a higher power that will keep showing us the way.

We've grown to trust in the Lord, even if we don't always acknowledge Him.

Claudia Taller has published more than 300 legal, lifestyle, and travel articles during the last twenty years. Her book [Ohio's Lake Erie Wineries](#) was published in 2011. *Ohio's Canal Country Wineries and Daffodils and Fireflies* will be released in 2015. *30 Perfect Days, Finding Abundance in Ordinary Life*, will be released at the end of 2014

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