

Walking the Bridge

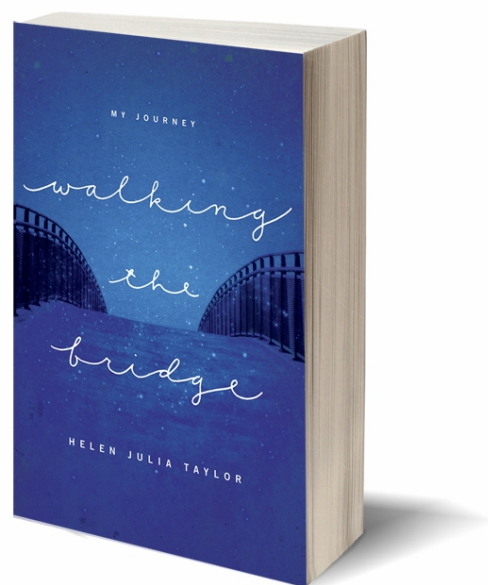
My Journey

Helen Julia Taylor

As a young child, Helen dreamed of living a big and bold life for the Lord. Although she grew up in a broken home, Helen pledged herself to Christ and longed to find spiritual meaning in an imperfect world. But at age eighteen, those dreams seemed far away as she stood on the edge of a bridge, ready to step into the darkness—ready to end her life.

Walking the Bridge is the triumphant true story of a girl coming of age in New Zealand. Author and life coach Helen Taylor shares her amazing and oftentimes heartbreaking testimony of a life restored. While abused and ostracized by her own family, Helen discovers that she was never abandoned by her heavenly Father, who continued to love her and reveal Himself at all the right times.

As Helen found, the Christian walk is similar to a trek across a long bridge. It may feel shaky and unsure. The fog and high winds can be discouraging. We may be tempted to turn around and retreat to where we came from, where it appears safe. Sometimes we forget that Christ *is* the bridge and the only way to cross to restoration and peace. With Him, our footing is sure. The structure is strong! ***Walking the Bridge*** is an unforgettable story of faith and of a life worth living, one step at a time.



Please Contact Jami Carmichael at: jami@deepriverbooks.com for more information.

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Helen Julia Taylor - Auckland, New Zealand

Helen Taylor's degrees in psychology and occupational therapy have led to a variety of interesting roles, including pastoral ministry. Now working in training and development, as well as a life coach, Helen loves adventure and remains active in her church in Auckland, New Zealand.

Endorsements for Walking the Bridge:

As someone familiar with the journey of restoration and redemption through my own story, I appreciate the strength of character and level of wholeness it requires to put pen to paper and let the world see into your life. Helen Taylor's story is one of both courage and intimacy with a Savior who is the only one who can bring complete healing to these areas. Helen is a woman of integrity, sharing openly and honestly of her journey to wholeness and restoration. Her story will both inspire and encourage the reader to a greater depth with Jesus—the ultimate great redeemer.

—Maree de Jong, co-senior pastor of LIFE (along with her husband, Paul de Jong)

www.lifenz.org.nz

During my time overseeing pastoral care here at LIFE in Auckland, I had the privilege of watching Helen walk out this journey of healing and restoration. Helen was incredibly courageous in the way she embraced her pain, and she has found purpose through that pain—which she openly shares with you in the coming pages. I have been blessed to know Helen as her pastor, mentor, supervisor, and friend for many years. Her deep and intimate relationship with her Saviour comes through in all she writes. I pray this book finds its way, as a gift, not only into your hands but into your heart and that you, too, discover the incredible love and power of a God who not only redeems, but restores. "Let the redeemed of the LORD tell their story." Psalm 107:2 (TNIV)

—Sharon Bohane, care and connection pastor, LIFE

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If you have ever suffered pain and trauma as an adult or child, *Walking the Bridge* is a must read. Your life will never be the same as you discover keys to becoming a “restored overcomer”—restored to the person you were always meant to be. Helen has indeed communicated in a way that allows the Holy Spirit to go deep and bring true freedom and complete healing, by revealing the courage, determination, and commitment needed to walk restoration road to a destiny called freedom.

—Phil Camden, senior leader of Church180, Newcastle Australia; NSW state executive member of the Australian Christian Churches

Walking the Bridge recounts an honest journey of courage to face painful experiences, and the search for restored personhood. Helen Taylor writes with compassion and shares life-giving keys for those whose stories have been shaped in ways they did not ask for or invite. Her story shines with the positive outworking of Helen's indomitable spirit and her relationship with God. Here, readers will find trust, faith, and hope for restoration from difficult childhood circumstances.

—Helen Harris, New Zealand director, Living Waters; counselor, LifeWorks

In *Walking the Bridge*, Helen Taylor gives practical keys and truths about how to live life free following a horrific childhood of abuse. This is an inspirational read; whatever your background, you, too, can apply these truths and live a life of freedom from your past.

—Kerry Petrie, executive director, A Girl Called Hope www.agirlcalledhope.org.nz

Suggested Interview Questions for Helen Julia Taylor Author of Walking the Bridge

My Journey

Q: What motivated you to write so honestly about your own journey of brokenness?

A: Two things motivated me to write so honestly: first, I have always had people come up to me in my paid and volunteer leadership positions at my church and ask questions on how to do life well, how to manage their brokenness and so often I found I really only have time to share small snippets of my own journey to encourage them. But I knew that a book containing the journey I have been through and some keys God had shown me would be so much more valuable than a small snippet of conversation here and there. Seeing people struggle and not move forward was a big motivator to write a book— people need honesty as it helps them in turn open up to what God wants to do in their life. I wrote the book for all who are on a journey of restoration and this meant I needed to share honestly about my own journey! Being real is what helps people find hope that they too can walk through the journey. I was motivated to encourage people to truly allow God into their own life to bring healing and to empower them with some keys on how to do this. Secondly, I had a strong sense that God was encouraging me to write the story of my journey and to no longer wait around for a better time. When you sense God like that you find great motivation to get going on sharing in what ever way He asks, which for me in this case was writing the book.

Q: You share openly about your family life. Was that a difficult decision and how did you go about deciding what to share?

A: This was very difficult, and not a decision I took lightly. I agonized over it during the process of writing because my deepest longing was to honor God and to not cause my birth family harm or have any impure or wrong motives. If left to my own thinking I would not have shared but wise counsel and lots of prayer went into everything (and I mean everything!) within the book. In fact one of the wise people who read the draft asked me to go back and share more detail because the power of the story of what God has done is found in me actually sharing the truth of my family situation. To leave out the detail would not have allowed for people to find hope that whatever their story is there are some keys forward for them too. There are many things I have not shared. I shared enough to set the scene and help people to see the brokenness to then be able to travel with me through the journey to see the amazing keys God revealed as restoration took place. The aim was always to point to Jesus and His healing not to shame or blame the family I grew up within. This meant every story within the book I prayed about sharing and thought carefully through as to whether it was helpful to have it within the book.

Q: Why do you feel that the local church is so important in someone's journey of restoration?

A: I am passionate about the role the local church plays in walking beside people as God restores them as I have seen first hand how powerful this is. Without community (which is what our local home church is meant to be) we are isolated and can so easily go astray in our thinking and actions. Being in the House of God regularly and connecting with my church family has placed a hedge of protection around me, modeled to me true love, family and care, along with rightly challenging me so I have grown. I see this as essential for anyone walking through the journey of restoration. I have not seen a truly restored person who hasn't been firmly planted within a local church. But I have sadly seen many people walk away from the very environment (the Church) that they need because of their own brokenness and wrong thinking about how amazing the body of Christ— His church is.

Q: You talk about the love of God a lot, so how does someone grow in their understanding about God's love of them if they have come from significant brokenness?

A: I really do talk about it so much I agree! That's because it is the bottom line— everything else is based on this foundation. Knowing God is love and experiencing His unconditional love has transformed my entire life. I believe that if we are serious about wanting to know God's love despite our broken past we will be able to. It will take time and effort. To be honest everything I wrote in the book is the HOW TO— meaning even if someone just picked a few of the things I said helped me and they applied them I can guarantee they will come to experience God's love in a deeper way. I think reading books, meditating on the Bible scriptures on love and developing our personal relationship with God are all significant keys to helping someone grow in their understanding about God's love. And most importantly have it go from head knowledge to a heart revelation! I don't believe our brokenness needs to remain the barrier keeping us from growing in our understanding of God's love for us if we are serious about pursuing Him and therefore His love.

Q: What would you say to someone who is just starting out on the journey of restoration and struggling?

A: I would say everything I have said in the book and to keep reading the book until it sinks into their heart! And I would encourage them to find people who can walk with them— to not walk alone. I also would say it's okay— there is no rush, small baby steps forward are okay— God is lovingly beside them and is not expecting them to run when they can barely crawl. I learned that every dark tunnel always did have light at it even if I couldn't see it so I know it will be the same for anyone else too...the darkness is not forever if they keep moving forward even if it be ever so slow and yes painful.

Q: For people who haven't had significant brokenness in their own life what are the key messages from your book?

A: I have to say the whole book is for them just as much as people from a broken past. Our Christian life is meant to be one where we have a deep intimate relationship with our Lord and Saviour. Many people from great families who have even grown up in a Christian environment are not necessarily close to God or living their life well, this is where the book can be of significant encouragement to them. I frequently have conversations with people who don't always know or follow a process of developing a close relationship with Jesus— this book has key messages about that. The messages of Love is Everything, Forgiveness, Ugly behaviors, Short-term fling or Long term Commitment, Power of the Word are all significant messages to any Christian.

Please Contact Jami Carmichael at: jami@deeperiverbooks.com for more information.

