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# A Story of Healing Through Radical Forgiveness

## And How it Saved My Sister's Marriage

*by Colin Tipping*

**T**his is a glimpse into the story of how the wisdom of *Radical Forgiveness* saved my sister's marriage.

You'll find the full story in Chapter 1 of my book, *Radical Forgiveness*. But I wanted to share this with you now to give you a sense of how profoundly the principles of *Radical Forgiveness* can heal your heart and your relationships.

When my sister Jill and her husband first agreed to let me share this story back in 1997, none of us had any idea how many people it would touch around the globe. But it has virtually taken on a life of its own!

**Well, it's not just Jill's story...**

I am now convinced that the purpose of this story is much more than to provide an informative narrative of how two people restored and healed their marriage and their love for each other or to be a preamble to the rest of my book about the revolutionary methods of Radical Forgiveness.

I see now that the purpose of Jill's story is to heal people directly. And that's still happening today. Almost every day I get phone calls from people, still in tears, after reading about Jill's story! They tell me that they saw themselves in it and that a light bulb came on for them. Suddenly they see their whole life differently and they know that a profound healing has begun.

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Jill's story became their story. It spoke to their pain and frustration. Because Jill's story isn't just Jill's story. It's the story of so many of us, evoking the situations and hurt feelings that most of us experience at some point in our lives.

But the secret underlying *Radical Forgiveness* is that freedom doesn't come by changing your situation— but by changing your perception of it.

## **Totally transforming**

I'm not simply talking about a superficial "positive thinking" kind of change in perception, either. I'm talking about a radical shift that rings true on the inside and then bubbles up to light up your consciousness and change you forever.

It's a shift in perception that helps you see your troubling situation with a wholly different, completely compelling interpretation of it— one that is liberating, empowering and totally transforming.

*Jill's Story* doesn't just resonate with people who are hurt in relationships, either. It awakens us to our addiction to our stuck perceptions and shows us that there is life beyond them. It tells that we can get beyond the fear, the hurt, and the rage, and open our hearts once again. It tells us that we can reclaim our power, feel safe again and experience love like never before.

Enjoy!  
Colin

## Jill's Story (Abridged)

(Read the full story in Chapter 1 of *Radical Forgiveness* by Colin Tipping)

As soon as I saw my sister at the airport, I knew something was wrong. I could see she was in pain.

As soon as we got into the car to head north to our home, Jill said, “Colin, Jeff and I might be splitting up.”

This surprised me. I had always thought she and Jeff were happy in their six-year-old marriage. Both had been married before, but this relationship had seemed strong.

“What’s going on?” I asked.

“Well, it’s all quite bizarre, and I don’t really know where to begin,” she replied, “but Jeff is acting really strange, and I can’t stand much more of it. We’ve gotten to the point where we can’t talk to each other any more, and it’s killing me. He has totally turned away from me and says that it’s all my fault.”

“Tell me about it,” I said.

“Do you remember Jeff’s eldest daughter, Lorraine?” Jill asked. I nodded.

“Well, her husband got killed in a car crash about a year ago. Ever since then, she and Jeff have developed this really weird relationship. Any time she calls, he fawns over her, calling her ‘Love,’ and spending hours talking to her in hushed tones. You’d think they were lovers— not father and daughter. If she comes to our home, they huddle together in this deep and hushed conversation that excludes everyone else— especially me. I can hardly stand it. I feel totally shut out and ignored.”

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JoAnn and I listened attentively. We made suggestions as to how she might talk to him about his behavior and generally struggled to find a way to fix things, as would any concerned brother and sister-in-law. It was too soon to introduce the idea of Radical Forgiveness.

What seemed strange and suspicious to me was the uncharacteristic nature of Jeff's behavior. The Jeff I knew was affectionate with his daughters and certainly co-dependent enough to badly need their approval and love, but I had never seen him behave in the manner Jill described. I had always known him as caring and affectionate towards Jill.

The conversation continued all the next day. I began to get a picture of what might be going on from a Radical Forgiveness standpoint, but decided not to mention it— at least not right away. She was too caught up in the drama to hear it and probably too committed to being the victim in the situation.

However, on the second day, I decided the time was right to try the Radical Forgiveness approach.

Tentatively, I said, "Jill, Would you be willing to try looking at this situation differently?"

"What do you mean?" She asked.

"Well," I began. "First of all, let me say that nothing I am going to say invalidates your story. I believe that it happened exactly the way you said it happened. But I want to give you a hint of what might be going on underneath this situation."

"What do you mean, underneath the situation," Jill asked, eyeing me suspiciously.

"Well, it's perfectly natural to think that everything out there is all there is to reality," I explained, "but maybe there's a whole lot more happening beneath that reality."

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“Take your situation. You and Jeff have this drama going on. That much is clear. But, what if, beneath the drama, something of a more spiritual nature was happening— same people and same events— but a totally different meaning? What if your two souls were doing the same dance but to a wholly different tune? What if the dance was about you healing? What if you could see this as an opportunity to heal and grow? That would be a very different interpretation, would it not?”

Both she and JoAnn looked at me as if I were now speaking a foreign language. I decided to back off from the explanation and to go directly for the experience.

“Looking back over the last three months or so, Jill,” I went on, “What did you feel mostly when you saw Jeff behaving so lovingly towards his daughter, Lorraine?”

“Anger mostly,” she said, but continued thinking about it. “Frustration,” she added. Then, after a long pause, “And sadness. I really feel sad.” Tears welled up in her eyes. “I feel so alone and unloved,” she said and began sobbing quietly. “It wouldn’t be so bad if I thought he couldn’t show love, but he can and he does— but only with her!”

She began to sob uncontrollably for the first time since her arrival. She’d shed a few tears prior to this, but she hadn’t really let herself cry. Now, at last, she was letting go. I was pleased that Jill had been able to get in touch with her emotions that quickly.

A full 10 minutes went by before her crying subsided and I felt she could talk. At that point, I asked, “Jill, can you ever remember feeling this same way when you were a little girl?” Without the slightest hesitation, she said, “Yes.” She was not immediately forthcoming about when, so I asked her to explain. It took her a while to respond.

“Dad wouldn’t love me either!” she blurted out finally and began to sob again. “I wanted him to love me, but he wouldn’t. I thought he couldn’t love anyone! Then along comes your Lorraine, Colin. He loved her all right. So why couldn’t he love me, God damnit!”

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Jill's reference was to my eldest daughter. Coincidentally, or rather, synchronistically, she and Jeff's eldest daughter were both called Lorraine.

Crying felt good to Jill. Her tears served as a powerful release and possibly a turning point for her. A real breakthrough might not be far away, I thought.

"Tell me about the incident with Lorraine and Dad," I said.

"Well," Jill said, while composing herself. "I always felt unloved by Dad and really craved his love. He never held my hand, or sat me on his lap much. I always felt there must be something wrong with me. When I was older, Mum told me she didn't think Dad was capable of loving anyone, not even her. At that time, I more or less made peace with that. I rationalized that if he wasn't really capable of loving anyone, then it wasn't my fault that he didn't love me. He was not a bad father. He just couldn't love. I felt sorry for him."

She cried some more, taking her time now. "I remember a particular day at your house," she continued. Your daughter Lorraine was probably about four or five years old. Mum and Dad were down, and we all came to your house. I saw your Lorraine, take Dad's hand. She said, 'Come on, Granddad. Let me show you the garden and all my flowers.' He was like putty in her hands. She led him everywhere and talked and talked and talked, showing him all the flowers. She enchanted him. I watched them out of the window the whole time. When they came back in, he put her on his lap and was as playful and joyful as I have ever seen him.

"I was devastated. 'So, he is able to love after all,' I thought. If he could love Lorraine, then why not me?" The last few words came out as a whisper followed by deep long tears of grief and sadness— tears held in for all those years.

I figured we had done enough for the time being, and suggested we make some tea.

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Obviously Jeff's behavior was unconsciously designed to support Jill in healing her unresolved relationship with her father. If she could see this and recognize the perfection in Jeff's behavior, she could heal her pain—and Jeff's behavior would almost certainly stop. However, I wasn't sure how to explain this to Jill in a way she could understand at this point in time. Luckily, I didn't have to try. She stumbled on the obvious connection by herself.

Later that day she asked me, "Colin, don't you think it's odd that Jeff's daughter and your daughter both have the same name? Do you think there's a connection?"

I laughed, and replied, "Absolutely. And that's not the only one. Can you see other similarities between the situations?"

"Well," said Jill. "Both of them were getting what I don't seem to be able to get from the men in my life."

"What?" I enquired.

"Love," she said in a whisper.

"Go on," I urged gently.

"Your Lorraine was able to get the love from Dad that I couldn't. And Jeff's daughter, Lorraine, gets all the love she wants from her Dad, but at my expense. Oh, my God!" she exclaimed. She really was beginning to understand now.

"But why? I don't understand why. It's a bit frightening! What the hell's going on?" she asked in a panic.

It was time to put the pieces together for her. "Let me explain to you exactly what happened and how it has affected your life up until now," I said.

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“As a little girl, you felt abandoned and unloved by Dad. So you concluded that there must something wrong with you and that you really were unlovable and not enough. That belief anchored itself deeply in your subconscious mind and, later, when it came to relationships, began to run your life.

“As a child, the pain of not getting Dad’s love was more than you could bear, so you stuffed it down. Later, when you began to realize that your father was not a naturally loving man and probably couldn’t love anyone, you began to feel better about it, so it remained dormant.

“Then, along comes the bombshell that knocked you right back to square one. When you saw him loving Lorraine, that triggered your original belief. You said to yourself, ‘My father can love after all, but he doesn’t love me. It is obviously my fault. I am not enough for my father, and I will never be enough for any man.’ From that point on, you continually created situations in your life to support your belief that you are not enough.”

“How have I done that?” Jill asked.

“Well, how was your relationship with Henry?” I responded. She had been married to Henry, the father of her four children, for 15 years.

“Not bad in many respects, but he was always looking for opportunities to have sex with other women, and I really hated that.”

“Exactly. And, you saw him as the villain and you as the victim in that situation. However, the truth is, you attracted him into your life precisely because, at some level, you knew he would prove your belief about not being enough. By being unfaithful, he would support you being right about yourself.”

“Are you trying to say he was doing me a favor? I sure as hell don’t buy that!” she said.

“Well, he certainly supported your belief, didn’t he?” I replied. “You were so not enough that he always was on the lookout for other women, for something more.”



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“So Henry was reflecting my belief that I would never be enough— and making me right. Is that it?” she asked.

“Yes, and to the extent that he provided you with that opportunity, he deserves credit— actually, more than you realize right now. On the surface, he was just acting out his sexual addiction, but his soul— working with your soul— chose to use the addiction for your spiritual growth. Recognizing this fact is what Radical Forgiveness is all about.”

I then switched back to Jeff. “In the beginning, Jeff was extremely loving towards you, wasn’t he? He really doted on you, did things for you, communicated with you. On the surface, life seemed pretty good, right? She nodded.

“Yet this didn’t fit with your picture of yourself— your belief about yourself. But because your soul knows you must heal that belief, it colludes with Jeff’s soul to bring it to your awareness. On the surface it seems that Jeff begins to act strangely and totally out of character. He then taunts you by loving another Lorraine; thus acting out the very same scenario you had with Dad many years ago. He appears to be persecuting you mercilessly, and you feel totally helpless and victimized.

“But the real truth is that he is doing it for you, not against you. Not that he is doing this consciously, of course. He really isn’t. He is probably more perplexed at his own behavior than are you. Remember, this is a soul-to-soul transaction. His soul knows about your original pain and is aware that you will not heal it without going through the experience again.

“So, once more Jill, you’re at a point of choice. Whether to heal and to grow— or to be right,” I smiled. “If you make the choice people normally make, you will choose to be the victim and make Jeff wrong, which, in turn, will allow you to be right. Or, you can choose to move into forgiveness by recognizing that Jeff is offering you a wonderful chance to heal.”

Jill still looked a little confused and uncertain.

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“Look,” I said reassuringly. “There’s no need to figure it out. Just being willing to entertain the idea that something else is going on is a giant step forward. In fact, the willingness to see the situation differently is the key. The healing occurs the moment you become willing to let in the idea that your soul has lovingly created this situation for you. If you can really surrender to the idea that the Universe will handle this for you if you turn it over, you won’t need to do anything at all. The situation and your healing will both get handled automatically.”

“Wow!” Jill said, and took deep breath. She relaxed her body for the first time since we had begun talking about the situation. “I feel as if a weight has been lifted off my shoulders,” she said.

“That’s because your energy has shifted” I replied. “Imagine how much of your life-force energy you have had to expend just keeping this whole story alive.

“What do you think would have happened if I had left Jeff?” Jill asked.

“Your soul would simply have brought in someone else to help you heal,” I quickly replied. “But, you didn’t leave him, did you? You came here, instead. You have to understand, this trip was no accident. There are no such things as accidents in this system. You— or rather your soul— created this trip, this opportunity to understand the dynamics of the situation with Jeff. Your soul guided you here.”

“So, what do I do with this now,” asked Jill. “What do I do when I go home and see Jeff?”

“There really is nothing for you to do,” I answered. “From this point on, it’s a question of how you perceive the situation. Do you get that you are no longer a victim? Do you understand that Jeff is no longer a persecutor? Do you see that the situation was exactly what you needed and wanted? Do you feel how much that man loves you— at the soul level, I mean? He was willing to do whatever it took to get you to the point where you could heal.

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“Jeff is not naturally a cruel man, so it must have been hard for him. Few men could have done that for you while risking losing you in the process. Jeff truly is an angel for you. When you really understand this, you will feel so grateful to him! Plus, you will stop sending out messages that you are unlovable. You will have the ability to let in love perhaps for the first time in your life. You will have forgiven Jeff, because you will be clear that nothing wrong ever took place. It was perfect in every sense.

“And, I promise you this,” I continued. “Jeff’s soul will already have picked up that you have forgiven him and healed your misperception about yourself, so his behavior is changing already. Time is not a factor where energy is concerned. As you change your energy, his changes too.

Getting back to her question, I said, “I want you to promise me that you won’t do anything at all when you get back. In particular, do not, under any circumstances, share with him this new way of looking at the situation. I want you to see how everything will be different automatically simply as a consequence of you changing your perception.

“You will feel changed as well,” I added. “You will find yourself feeling more peaceful, more centered and more relaxed. You will have a knowingness that will seem strange to Jeff for a while. It will take time for your relationship with him to adjust, and it may still be difficult for a while, but this issue will resolve now,” I concluded with conviction.

The day she left, Jill obviously was nervous about going back to the situation she had left behind. As she walked down the tunneled ramp to her airplane, she looked back and tried to wave confidently, but I knew she was scared that she might lose her newfound understanding and get drawn back into the drama.

She needn’t have worried. Apparently the meeting with Jeff went well. Jill requested that he not question her immediately about what had happened while she was away and to give her space for a few days to get settled. However, she immediately noticed a difference in him. He was attentive, kind and considerate— more like the Jeff she had known before this whole episode began.

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Things went on well for some days and Jeff's behavior with his daughter, Lorraine, changed dramatically. In fact, everything seemed to be getting back to normal with regard to that relationship, but the atmosphere between Jeff and Jill did remain tense and their communication limited.

About two weeks later, the situation came to a head. Jill looked at Jeff and said quietly, "I feel like I've lost my best friend."

"So do I," he replied.

For the first time in months they connected. They hugged each other and began to cry. "Let's talk," Jill said. "I've got to tell you what I learned with Colin in America. It's going to sound weird to you at first, but I want to share it with you. You don't have to believe it. I just want you to hear me. Are you willing?"

"I'll do whatever it takes," replied Jeff. "I know something important happened to you there, and I want to know what it was. You have changed, and I like what I see. Tell me what happened."

Jill talked and talked. She explained the dynamics of Radical Forgiveness as best she could in a way Jeff could understand. She felt strong and powerful— sure of herself and her understanding, secure and clear in her mind.

Jeff, a practical man who always is skeptical of anything that cannot be rationally explained, did not resist this time— and was indeed quite receptive to the ideas that Jill asked him to consider. He voiced openness to the idea that there might be a spiritual world beneath everyday reality and, given that, saw a certain logic in the Radical Forgiveness concept. He didn't accept it totally, but he nevertheless was willing to listen, to consider and to see how it had changed Jill.

After the discussion, they both felt their love had been rekindled and that their relationship had a good chance of surviving. They made no promises, though, and agreed to keep talking to each other while they watched how their relationship progressed.

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It did, indeed, progress quite well. Jeff still paid attention to his daughter, Lorraine, but not as much as before. Jill found she didn't care anyway, even when he did behave in this manner— which I think he did (unconsciously of course), to test her. She passed, for it did not trigger her to regress emotionally and react from old beliefs about herself. And within a month of their conversation about Radical Forgiveness, all that stopped. Lorraine didn't call or visit as often and she got on with her life.

And so it was that everything slowly returned to normal. That was quite a number of years ago and they are still together, and so far as I can tell, very happily married.

