

LAURA *Dabney* MD

Tricia's Story

A Runner Who's No Longer Running Away

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CASE STUDY

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Tricia was in her fifties by the time she sought Dr. Dabney's care. Though not because she'd been procrastinating. She'd been trying to get help for decades, having started and stopped treatment with practitioners up and down the east coast for nearly thirty years.

"I'd seen a number of people ... from psychiatrists to psychologists to religious people," she says. "And you know, I never got through to where I did with Dr. Dabney. She just helped me, like, work it through to the end."

"What Dr. Dabney helped me see was that I was not letting go of my past."

It took a suicide attempt with a handful of pills to get her into Dr. Dabney's office, but once there, Tricia unraveled the story of a childhood filled with physical and sexual abuse and parental neglect. Her childhood experiences were so extreme, they warped everything she saw, everything she did, and her relationships with everyone she met.

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She recalls a session when, wracked with emotion, she asked Dr. Dabney if it was ever

going to be possible to feel better. “She just looked at me like, ‘Would I be doing this if it wasn’t?’”

She was right. Today, Tricia says, everything is different. “My personal life, my relationship with my husband, with my children, with people at work ... I feel like I’m much more open with myself and with others, as a result.”

Nor is the past able to control her any longer. While running away was, for decades, the only way she says she knew how to deal with emotion, she now has control over her life. A devoted runner who hits the trail every morning, she says, “I’ll be running down the path and my thoughts will drift to my parents or to something in my past and, literally, I stop my thoughts ... I say, ‘Go away. I don’t want you.’ And that’s it.”



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