

# The Gift of Will: Marie Palmer Recounts Her Escape From the 'Children Of God'

Marie Palmer's ebook [The Gift of Will: A Road to Forgiveness, A Passageway to the Divine](#) is available [here](#). [Richard Enos](#) of Collective Evolution visited with Marie. He shares his interview in an article which you'll find beneath the following excerpt and book description:

*"When I landed in California in 1989, I followed the rest of the passengers to baggage claim. There, one woman caught my attention. I knew she was my mother, even though I hadn't seen her since I was three. When our eyes met, she knew who I was, too. The closer I got, the colder and more distant the space between us became. This was my first memory in my new world, my first jolt of freedom."*

The pain and shame and worthlessness that I experienced when I escaped the Children of God cult at fourteen became something of a self-fulfilling prophecy. I was derivative of the abuse and severe neglect I had suffered since birth. And so was my brother, Michael. We were born second-generation Children of God cult members and had known no other life. Our father was devoted to the organization and was abusive both physically and emotionally, and our mother had parted ways with him when we were just two and three. Adults had started experimenting sexually with us by the time we were ten and eleven. We had been brainwashed to believe our leader, "Moses David," was to be followed without question. We read the Bible daily; we read "Mo Letters" about rape and hell and the fate of "backsliders"—people who went against the cult. We were told that horrible things would happen to us if we left. Our subconscious minds ruled our behaviors once we entered the

real world, the "Whore," as the C.O.G. called America. Deluded as we were, we backslid into our own demise.

I started experimenting with drugs, alcohol, and sex. I attempted suicide. Yet, I still managed to graduate from high school with the help of my aunt and uncle. By that point, however, my mother and stepfather said I was an adult, and so I was left to figure out how to exist on my own. I had no understanding of the big world. I had no useful social skills or any skills. I didn't even know how to drive. I lived with one boyfriend until he realized I was an empty soulless human shell, and then I'd move onto the next.

After spending several years on the streets in Hollywood, I ended up wandering Venice Beach for a few months. I would stare at the ocean longingly, begging for it to take me home. It was so beautiful, and I was nothing.

Then one day, a couple police officers found me standing on the median of a Freeway down in Santa Monica. They took me in and I spent a year in a mental institution recovering.

And then I was released.

I was up north again, wandering around San Francisco. This was in 1998. I was at a gas station. My brother walked up. I hadn't seen him in years. His smile was as magnetic as ever. He saw the tracks in my arms and asked me to please stop hurting myself. He bought me a burrito, said I was too thin.

I wanted to be better for Michael and myself, so, I went to the Children of God cult in San Francisco—to recover in the safety of the only arms I'd known as a child. But my story doesn't stop there...

To imagine a happy ending with a life like mine seems impossible. They wanted to take away my body, my soul, my choices, and my voice. But, the one thing they did not anticipate was that I would find within myself the strength of

will to do more than just survive. And the gift of will would become mine.

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by [Richard Enos](#)

September 12, 2019

[Source](#)

## **Marie Palmer Recounts Her Escape From The 'Children Of God' Sex Cult In New Book**

### IN BRIEF

- **The Facts:** Marie Palmer recounts her escape from the 'Children of God' cult and the long journey of healing she went through afterwards in her book '[The Gift of Will](#).'
- **Reflect On:** Can we see that one of the keys to our own liberation from the past is forgiveness?

Marie Palmer did not choose to be part of the 'Children of God' cult that was founded in California in 1968 by a former Christian pastor named David Brant Berg. She was born into it. And as such, her entire worldview was founded on the inexorable indoctrination and brainwashing that was used. In itself this is even more tragic than the plight of those hippies like her father that had joined the movement as adults, and who believed, ironically, that they had found a path of greater liberation and truth.

Marie was brought up as a child in an environment that on the one hand promoted an unhealthy lack of boundaries, but in other ways was dangerously restrictive. The toxic and

twisted principles that emerged from the mind of founder David Berg were laced with enough pseudo-validation from Christian scripture to convince many lost and downtrodden souls that they were actually on the right path to God and salvation—in fact the ONLY true path, for many of its devotees.

What has emerged over time, marked by the testimony of ex-members like actress Rose McGowan and the tragic murder-suicide of Ricky Rodriguez, whom Berg dubbed 'Davidito' and was grooming as the heir-apparent to his throne, is that the psychological and emotional disorientation and trauma brought upon children born into this cult was so extreme that it was difficult or impossible for many of them to survive in the world, let alone establish a normal life.

Marie Palmer has written a book entitled '[The Gift of Will](#),' which explores the impact of the brainwashing of the 'Children of God' cult on her personally, her escape from the cult, and the long and difficult journey she has been on to overcome the trauma and confusion she had been beset with. It was after reading this book that I felt it would be worthwhile for CE to go down to Oregon to talk to Marie in person so that we could provide a full 4-part interview of her story for our members on CETV.

Go [here](#) for Richard Enos' full article and to find links to videos.