

BookLife Talks with Aimee Cabo Nikolov

Abuse survivor Nikolov, whose story made national headlines, inspires with her account of resilience and healing.

What is the story behind *Love Is the Answer, God Is the Cure*—what inspired you to write it?

My memoir tells the true story of how faith and unconditional love helped me to face sexual abuse and domestic violence and to persevere against all odds. I was inspired to empower people who are suffering from abuse so that they seek help early and don't feel alone.

The *Miami New Times* covered the events that form the heart of your memoir under the headline "The Case from Hell." How did it feel to see your life story in the headlines? To what degree was writing a memoir a way for you to reclaim and recast your experience on your own terms?

The *New Times* told my mother's side of the story at the time of the trial. My memoir allows me to tell the full story to a wider audience, as it actually happened, in my own words. Although the *New Times* reported that my stepfather was found guilty of sexually abusing me, a second judge refused to set the ruling aside five years later.

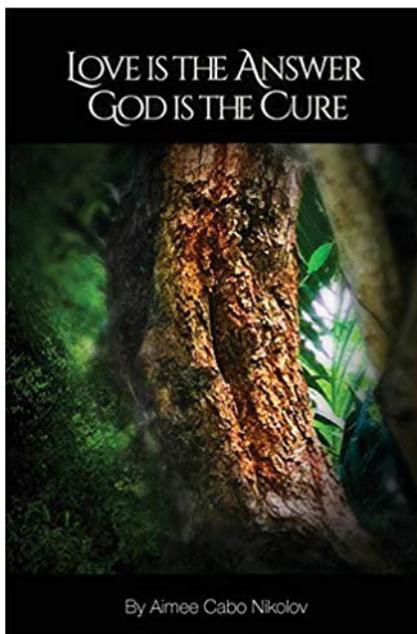
When and how did you undergo the conversion that inspired the second half of your title, "God Is the Cure?"

I was told to write a book when I was 15 years old. Prayer became a source of strength for me. I was able to sober up and live a life in which I felt closer to God. Now, at 43, feeling close to God is what has helped me to write and to start the healing process.

Why or how do you think this book is particularly relevant now, in the era of #MeToo?

I wrote *Love Is the Answer, God Is the Cure* to tell

people that they are not alone and that God loves them. Also, I am hoping that the transparency of my story will aid others in seeking help earlier than I did. Speaking up is the main step in the healing process.



How do you make sure you are telling "the truth," or how do you refresh your memories when writing?

I looked up articles and court transcripts, and I spoke to many witnesses from that period. I also reviewed the transcripts of my recordings of my stepfather admitting to everything he did to me.

Who is your ideal reader and why? It could be a particular person, or a kind of person, or someone imaginary. Or, if you could pick anyone to give this book to, who would it be and why?

Sexual abuse and domestic violence are incredibly prevalent. One in four women will experience domestic violence during her lifetime. One in four girls and one in six boys will be sexually abused before they turn 18 years old. According to a 2015 Children's Bureau report, roughly 17 million women and men suffer from abuse each year. As these statistics show, everyone is my ideal reader; we need to be there for each other.

Even if you were not abused, my book may help you to notice the signs and to be able to prevent or stop it from happening to someone else. You can encourage potential victims to speak out and prevent further instances.

People have already contacted me to tell their story of how *Love Is the Answer, God Is the Cure* has helped them.

What is the one thing you most want to tell readers, other writers, booksellers, publishers, or agents about you or your book?

I'm sharing my experiences so I can be there for as many people as possible. I believe in helping others. This book is my way to do that.

For more information, visit booklife.com/nikolov