CHANGING FROM VICTIM TO SURVIVOR

It is natural to view yourself as a victim and to experience all of the feelings and attitudes that accompany that victim status when the abuse has only recently occurred or there has been no opportunity for working through the emotions and thoughts connected to the abuse. It takes time and effort to move from the status of being a victim to becoming a survivor. The feelings and thoughts associated with being a victim are overwhelmingly negative and self-defeating. The feelings and thoughts associated with being a survivor, on the other hand, are more positive, forward looking, and confident. While it is natural and expected that everyone who has been exposed to abuse starts with feeling like a victim, realization of the potential of this person can only be realized if their status changes to that of becoming a survivor. This exercise will help you understand the differences between victims and survivors and help you define your own current status.

1. The following words or phrases describe either a victim or a survivor, but they are presented to you in a jumbled and mixed-up order. Your task is to look at each word or phrase and rewrite it under the column labeled "Victim" or the column labeled "Survivor." You will have to sort through the list to finally end up with a profile of words that describe the victim and words that describe a survivor.

<u>List of Descriptors</u>

Depressed

Has overcome pain Blames perpetrator

Pessimistic Hopeless Empowered

Trauma is in perspective

Defeated

Lives in the present and future

Helpless Hopeful

Withdrawn socially

Optimistic Ashamed

Needs sympathy

Preoccupied with trauma

Enjoys living Lives in the past Wants understanding

Enjoys people Letting go of anger Growing in trust

No energy

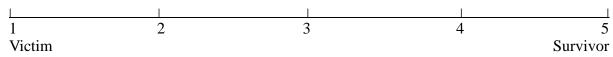
Dominated by fear More smiles than tears

Distrustful Bitter Confident

Renewed energy Focused on the pain

	Victim	Survivor	
		-	
2.	As you look through your list of words and phrases that describe both the victim and the survivor, do you see yourself more as a victim or as a survivor? Why?		
3.	Which three of the descriptor words or pyou and your current status?	ohrases are the most accurate in describing	
4.	What three words or phrases were most actrauma occurred?	at three words or phrases were most accurate in describing you as a child after the ima occurred?	
5.	What three words or phrases best describe ney toward becoming a survivor?	ed you a year ago before you began the jour-	

6. On a scale of 1 to 5, rate your degree of feeling like a victim (1) or a survivor (5).



7. What has helped you the most in moving from being a victim to becoming a survivor?