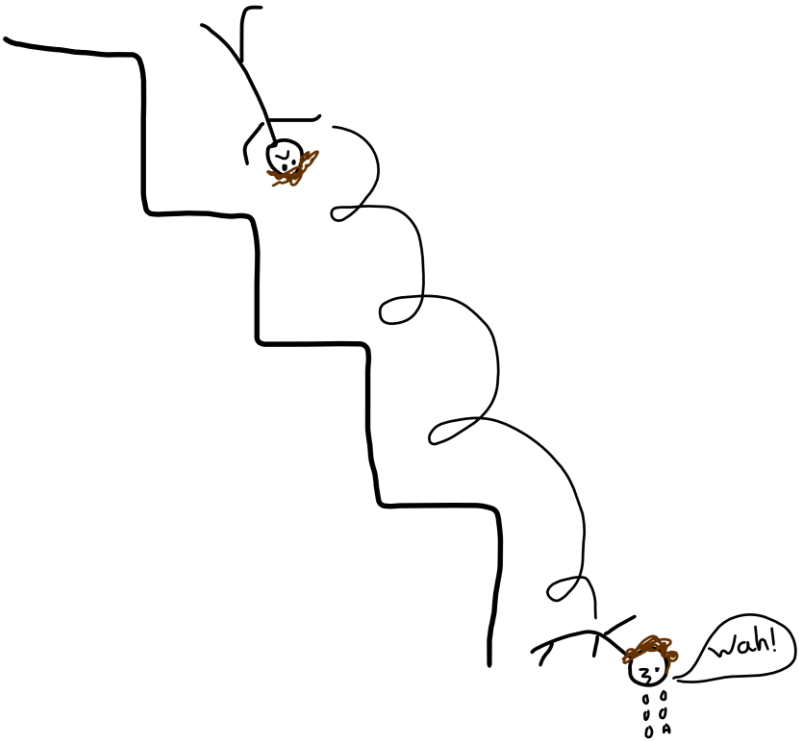


Jesus Doesn't Pretend

He doesn't pretend He's fine

When He hurts

And I don't need to either!



Jesus Doesn't Pretend

(Zoey speaks)

When I am hurt,
I am hurt.

Jesus doesn't pretend
He isn't hurt
When He is hurt.

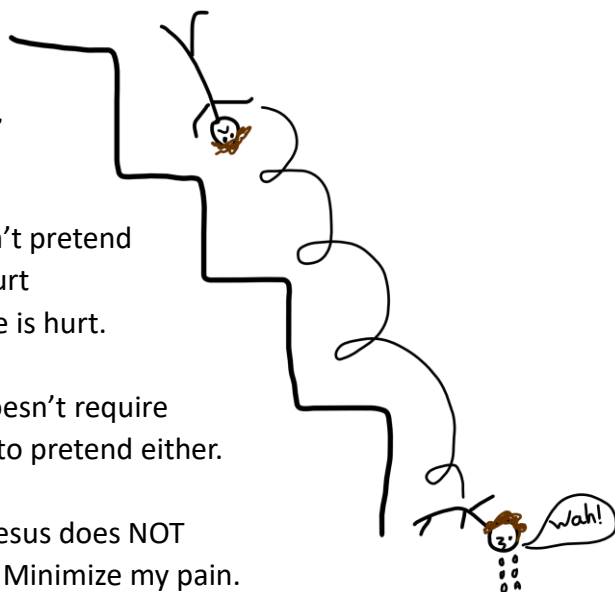
He doesn't require
Me to pretend either.

Jesus does NOT
Minimize my pain.

Jesus doesn't abuse
Nor keep abusing me.

**HE DOESN'T REQUIRE ME
TO KEEP SECRETS,
BAD SECRETS,
LIKE AN ABUSER DOES.**

He doesn't tell me
That it is my fault
When it is not—
When it is
My abuser's fault.



**AND HE SURE AS HECK
DOESN'T REQUIRE ME
TO PRETEND I AM FINE
WHEN I AM ALL
TWISTED UP INSIDE.**

Or when my heart bleeds.

Or when blankets of shame
Put on top of me
By the abuser
Weigh me down
And I don't know how
To throw off the shame.

**SMILING AND PRETENDING
I AM FINE
WHEN I AM NOT
Are old skills –
Survival skills –
Of being in an unsafe home.**

Oh yes, I also
Smile and pretend I agree
When my insides
Are screaming my disagreement
Without words.
I fade from
Being present.
I disappear in plain sight.

Jesus, You are different
Than my abuser.

**THANKING CREATOR
FOR THE
GIFT OF JESUS.**

When under
Blankets of shame,
Jesus lifts them off
One by one.

And He kneels before me,
Lifting up my head,
As He looks,
Into my eyes
With compassion.

He puts His arms
Around me
And shelters me
From storms
Too heavy for me.

Jesus stands with me
Face-to-face
And our foreheads touch
And He gently
Holds my face
In His carpenter-roughened hands.

**AND HE TELLS ME
I AM HIS.**

**AND HE TELLS ME
I AM NOT ALONE.**

**AND HE TELLS ME
THAT HE'D DO IT ALL OVER AGAIN—**

**BE NAILED ONTO THAT CROSS
FOR ME,
AGAIN AND AGAIN.**

But thankfully,
One time on that cross
Was enough –
For me,
For the world,
For Him.

Jesus tells me
That I have no need
To pretend.

I don't need
To pretend I'm fine
When I am not.

Jesus
doesn't
do that!



Jesus does
NOT
smile + pretend
He is fine

I don't need
To pretend anymore.

Jesus tells me that
It is okay for me
To be authentic.

Jesus tells me
That He doesn't want me
To pretend anymore.

And He takes my hand in His,
Guiding my hand
To touch the nail scars
On each of His hands
Then up to the scar in His side.

He says,
"I died so you could live!"
He died but death could not hold Him.
Creator raised Him from the dead.

HE DIED FOR ME TO LIVE.

HE DIED TO SET ME FREE.

HE DIED BECAUSE HE LOVES ME.

“You are free, My girl—
Pretend no longer.
I want you to show up and live free.”

Who Jesus sets free
Is free indeed.

I am free!
Help me, Jesus, to pretend no more.

The End

About “Pretending I’m Fine.”

The phrase “pretending I’m fine” sounds like a conscious choice—and it can be. However, in homes that are not safe enough, children automatically and unconsciously suppress their emotions. These kids don’t know what they are feeling. It keeps being this way throughout life, until something changes.

Zoey smiled and pretended she was fine without even realizing it for a very long time. It was just what Zoey knew to do—she didn’t know any other way. It was unconsciously done. To change that pattern, Zoey has to learn to recognize that pattern.

So, Zoey would “smile and pretend.” Then a day or week later, she would think, “Oh, yeah, I did that ‘smile & pretend’ thing and now I feel shutdown.” Then Zoey would get out a

feelings list (because she didn't know what she was feeling) to help her figure out what emotions she had unconsciously repressed. Then Zoey would write a new poem, crying, as she would start to feel those repressed feelings. That process helped Zoey come out of being shut-down and be able to be more connected to herself, Jesus, and people.

Questions you might want to consider:

- Tell Jesus about a time when you smiled and pretended you were fine when you were not.
- Do you recognize yourself in a part of the poem?
- What feelings do you experience as you read the poem?
- What does this poem remind you of in your own life? Any adult memories? Any kid memories?

Feel free to mark up this poem—make it yours! Put your name in it, rewrite passages, cross out what doesn't apply. Share with others if you want!

***I created the character Zoey to help people
understand and heal from childhood trauma***

Created by Tammy at zoeysgotguts.com

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