Wounded Warrior by Michelle King Eigemann

*"Behold, I will bing it health and healing: I will heal them and reveal to them the abundance of peace and truth" Jeremiah 33:6*

To create something different you first need to do something different. We don't change by remaining in our comfort zone. Change happens when we choose to take even one step away from comfort. We can think of our comfort zones as a spectrum, on one end is comfort and on the other end is extreme discomfort; what lies in between is based on the individual. My tolerance may be greater or less than yours. The goal is to locate the space that offers enough discomfort to foster change.

I want to introduce you to a little girl named Elle. She is about 7 or 8 years old, she's sweet, kind and works really hard to please others. She longs to do what is "right" but struggles to regulate her emotions. When she becomes upset she cries and tantrums which results in punishment. She is then left to feel and deal with her emotions on her own. Eventually Elle realizes that emotional pain is uncomfortable so she shifts into self-preservation mode and creates emotional safety by avoiding. She has no idea that what she's done will create a pattern of emotional numbness that will result in dangerously risky negative coping skills as an adult. She only knows that for once she feels safe and protected.

As this girl grows into a woman she begins to notice negative patterns in her life. She's had a series of failed relationships yet takes no responsibility. She desires change but hopelessness, depression and shame have become her sounding board. Suicidal thoughts have become all too common and keep her chained to a past she desperately tries to avoid. While a storm brews inside the outside smiles, laughs and works hard to always be the center of attention.

Although the woman is grown the little girl still calls the shots. Elle sits in the watchtower on guard at all times and sends out the warning signal when an uncomfortable emotion is spotted on the horizon..."run, get away, hide an emotion has been detected. You must get to safety immediately." Elle's job is to create emotional safety and the only way she knows how to do it is by avoiding it.

But one day something shifts. The grown woman is tired of running so she decides to do something different. Instead of running she sits down. Elle is confused and continues to send out warnings "get out before it's too late" but instead the woman opens her arms and gathers Elle up. She pulls her in close and hugs her tightly. She whispers "I know you're scared, so am I, but we need to feel this to heal this". So they sit together. They feel together. And they heal together. Warm tears fill Elle's eyes as she begins to succumb to the embrace. She feels safe, heard, understood and loved.

Elle still warns me of emotional danger. She's the part of me that holds the memories of hurt, pain and trauma but she also represents healing, restoration and perseverance.  I never learned how to be emotionally safe with others until I needed to be emotionally dependent on Jesus. He healed and restored deep soul wounds caused by emotional neglect. Elle still sits in the watchtower of my brain and warns me of emotional unrest but I'm able to  remember that her lens is that of a wounded child. I see through the eyes of Christ and He has deemed me His wounded warrior.

**BIO** – Michelle wears an array of hats on any given day but her favorite is Daughter of the King. She lives in the beautiful mountains of North Carolina where she works as a Child and Family Therapist. She has been a single mother for 18 years and loves to watch God take your most difficult struggles and transform them in to passionate purpose. Today Michelle has joyfully embraced her passion to speak truth into the lives of others and assist them in finding and living out their true identity in Christ. She believes that in order to do that we need to uncover the lies and labels, identity the root and replace it with God’s truth.