



## **“Surviving Your Story”** **Transcript**

### ***A resource for trauma survivors thinking of telling their story publicly***

#### **Intro:**

Hey there, my name is Kel and the first thing I want to say to you is Bravo! Bravo for the courage you have already shown in your life and Bravo for having even more courage to tell your story.

If you are listening to this resource then you are considering talking publicly about your story of abuse and that is no small thing. In fact it is everything and will be to many people just like you, trying to find their courage too. BUT it is also no small thing for you personally to revisit this story and this is why we have recorded this resource to help guide and protect you through this process.

That protection of your heart and soul, as you show even more courage by exposing your truth to help others, is vitally important. I know this first hand as a survivor of domestic violence myself. I spent 2 year with a man who beat me, locked me in rooms, threw things at me, put me on tranquillisers and even threw me out of a moving car. He was not a nice man and it was the hardest period of my life.

As we all know though, it is not the physical scars that cause the deepest wounds it's the psychological and emotional. My physical wounds healed fast. My psychological and emotional wounds sent me down a path of self destruction for many years and those wounds took well over a decade to turn into scar tissue. Which is why I feel so honoured to be the one to provide you with this resource today. And it is also why I know the incredible courage and strength it has taken you to not only survive but to speak out about it as well. So BRAVO! To you.

This guide is here to help you understand and prepare for the process of telling and releasing your story publicly before, during and after it has been recorded. The things you might want to consider, the boundaries you may need to set, the elements that could be too painful for you and how to protect, nurture and support yourself throughout it all, especially when it goes out into the world. The last thing anyone wants is for you to be retraumatized and it is important that you know you come first and your emotional wellbeing matters most.

Accompanying this audio guide is a handout with the key points and questions summarised for you and extra links and resources that may be useful. I hope you find this guide helpful and it gives you the confidence to know that you will be cared for and looked after as you tell your story.

Lets get into it...

## BEFORE THE RECORD....

Podcasting is an amazing storytelling medium. It is my preferred medium because it is so intimate and free of restrictions and that intimacy means you are accessing the deepest level of people's minds and hearts when they hear your words direct to their ears. This can be exciting and exhilarating but when you record a podcast it can also feel like you are speaking into a vacuum. That no one is really there. Which can provide a false sense of security. People will be there at some point and that is important for you to remember when revealing yourself.

### Questions you may want to ask yourself before you record are:

- 1) ***Why do you want to tell your story? and Are you ready to tell your story?*** This process should be a positive thing for you and others and that can only happen if you are truly ready. Be ready and if you are not then be honest about that. You may discover this half way through and that is ok too. If at any point you realise you are not ready and there is a risk of retraumatizing then please talk to a Producer. They are there to help and listen. Your wellbeing comes first.
- 2) That actually leads to the next question you should ask. ***Will telling your story help yourself and others or will it cause further pain?*** It's important this process does you and others good, not cause more trauma. If you think this will retraumatise you then you may want to leave it for now and try again another time. Only do something like this when you are really ready for it.
- 3) ***Are there any parts of your story that you are not comfortable with the whole world hearing (because the whole world will eventually be able to access it)?*** If so make a list of them and speak to the podcast producer's about it ahead of time. We care more about you than the story and they will guide you through the moments that are too difficult or see if those moments can be avoided or framed in a more comfortable way. It's all about your comfort.
- 4) ***Are there parts of your story that you would be concerned for certain people in your life to hear?*** For example children, other family members, work colleagues, parents or parents in law. Anyone that triggers anxiety at the idea of them hearing your story, put down on a list and breakdown what it is that makes you so uncomfortable about them hearing it. Then talk to the podcast producers about any concerns before you go into the record. They will help you navigate around them. Remember it's about your comfort and well being which includes looking after your relationships as well as yourself.
- 5) ***Are there legal considerations to telling your story?*** Is it yours to tell or could other people claim a legal right to how it is told or a legal right to reply? Are there court cases pending that may place restrictions on how the story is told and when it or how it is released? If you think there could be any legal implications for you in telling your story please seek advice first.
- 6) ***Do you have a support system in place to help guide you through as you tell your story and when it is released?*** Make sure that you rally your person or people around you.
- 7) ***Do you have a Counsellor?*** If so it might be an idea to speak to them at all the key stages of this process. Before you record, after you record and when the podcast is released.
- 8) ***Are there kids involved?*** How do you want to handle the kids in the way the story is told and when it is released? Do you have Counsellors for the kids? If so, just like for yourself, it may be an idea to have them check in with that support throughout the process and get advice from them on how to handle it with the kids.
- 9) ***Do you have particular trauma triggers that the Producers should know about?*** Please list them down and talk to the Producers about them so that they can be avoided or lessened as much as possible.

10) ***Are there things that you do that calm you and bring you peace in times of stress?*** Like exercise, walk, yoga, meditate, read, write, listen to music, drive, watch TV, gardening, spending time in nature. It might be an idea to consciously do the things that bring you joy and peace more regularly as you go through this process. Create a trigger plan, if you don't already have one. Use guided breathing and mantras to focus the mind. And make sure you get as much rest as you can. Be kind to yourself. You are putting yourself out there as a way to help others, that is no small thing and it may have a bigger impact on you than you expect so be prepared to care for yourself as you would your own child. You deserve it! You are amazing just for getting this far!

## RECORDING.

If after answering all of those questions you STILL want to tell your story via podcast then you are ready. You are emotionally ready to go down this path and Bravo to you one more time.

Now it is time to record your podcast. What does that even mean?

On the surface it doesn't seem like much but sitting in a quiet room with someone, telling your story and answering questions as they record it all. No big deal right? And for some it is no big deal but for others it is the biggest deal of their life and often they won't know it until they are knee deep in the middle of it and that's what we want to prepare you for. The moment's you may not expect because emotions can be unpredictable.

**So here are some tips for navigating through the actual telling of your story:**

- 1) ***Have someone you trust with you if possible.*** They don't need to be in the room with you as you tell your story but just having them close by for moments that are tough might help ease any underlying anxiety and make it easier. This way you have someone to turn to and lean on who is there just for you and knows what you have been through and what it means for you. If you can't have someone with you or don't want someone with you, then consider having someone lined up on the phone ready to support you. Someone who knows what you are dealing with.
- 2) If you think you might be triggered by talking it could be a good idea to ***arrange to have your counsellor lined up ready to take calls*** from your throughout the day and provide support. It is highly recommended to have a session with your counsellor after doing something like this just to check in and make sure everything stays on track.
- 3) If you have answered the questions above then you have already ***worked out the parts of your story that might trigger an emotional response or be hard for you to get through.*** List them down, give a copy to the producer / interviewer and approach each of these points with care being conscious of your reactions and emotions as you do so.
- 4) **ALWAYS REMEMBER -**
  - **The producers are your friends.** They are there for you. They want you to make this as easy for you as possible and make you sound the best you can. Their core objective is to get your story out the way you want it. So please treat them as your allies and supporters and advocates because that's exactly what they are and talk to them throughout the process about all of the things we have discussed so they can make this experience as positive for you as possible.
  - **You can stop and pause at any time.** If ever things are getting too overwhelming just say stop and your wishes will always be respected. This is not about hurting you. It should be more of a healing process if possible. So please speak up if ever things get too much. Never be afraid to say how you are feeling. You have a voice and it is important and respected.
  - **You can decide to NOT talk about any part of your story at any time.** It is your story to tell and it is up to you how much of it you tell and in what way. YOU direct and control your story. This applies to later as well. If you realise later that there is something you said that you really don't want included in the podcast, please please contact the producers immediately and let them know.
  - **Use whatever legal methods you need to get through.** If you need to meditate or go for a walk every now and then, if you need to have a coffee or a drink of water, if you need to dance outrageously to loud music for a bit or scream at the top of your lungs -

Whatever you need to do to get through go for it. Just tell the producers first or they may not know what's happening and think you are having a melt down and we don't want that.

- **Make sure you have tissues and don't wear make up on the day you record** - This can be an emotional day so avoid too much make up because it will just become another thing you worry about. It's audio so no one will see you anyway. Not that it matters but we are all beautiful with or without make up.

- **Have a glass of water within reach**

- 5) If you think you might be a bit fragile after the record maybe **have someone pick you up or meet you later** for a bit of TLC and support.
- 6) **It is a great idea to do something special for yourself** after a day of digging deep like this. It could be as simple as having a bath or sitting in a park reading OR you can go as far as to book yourself in for a massage or buy yourself an expensive lunch. Whatever works for you as long as it is just for you. A little something to say thank you to yourself for having the courage to let it all out again because loving yourself is vital to healing.
- 7) If you feel you need to and you can (because let's face it, not many of us survivors are in a position to just ditch a day of work, especially if we have kids) **take a day or 2 off around the recording date to give yourself a break**. Get a relative or friend to handle the kids and allow you some time to decompress. This is something that some people will need and others won't. Others would rather get lost in work and stay as busy as possible which is a perfectly valid coping strategy that I have used it many times myself. The point is try to be conscious of how you may feel the days before and after the record and try to accommodate that, nurture those feelings and let them have a place in you so they can run their course through you. Be kind to yourself. Be proud of yourself. You just did something heroic. Sit with that as much as anything else.

## RELEASE DAY.

You have done the work, you have recorded the story and now the day has come for it to be released into the world. Woot Woot! Yay!

BUT as much as this can be an exhilarating and exciting moment for some it can be kind of scary too. That is a perfectly natural reaction to having something intensely private and personal exposed for all to see and it is one that you might want to prepare yourself for.

It is one thing to tell a story to an individual in a one on one situation, it is an entirely different thing to have that story released into the world for all to hear and for people to be able to have an opinion on it. It can be an incredibly overwhelming and confronting period the release period and we want to prepare you for that and give you some tips on how to get through it.

### How to make the release of your story a positive experience for you and your loved ones:

- 1) On the day of release and even the week following **avoid looking at the comments and social media around the release of your podcast episode**. Unfortunately anything trauma related tends to be a contentious topic that can attract trolls. You can't control what other people are going to say and how they are going to react to your story. So ignore the lot. Don't look at it. Don't follow it. Don't get notified about it. Just block it for as long as you can so you don't have to absorb the negativity of it, if it does occur.
- 2) HAVING SAID THAT it is just as important to **celebrate the release of your episode in some way. Either on your own or with loved ones**. Some people may want to have a get together and share the episode or have a listening party. Some people may want to listen to it quietly on their own and recognise the moment alone, others still may not want to hear it ever again and that is just as valid. Whatever you do on that day, take a moment somewhere to recognise that something huge is happening and congratulate yourself. However you want to do that is up to you.
- 3) Another trick is to **get someone you trust to check the messages, emails and comments that come through on social media and filter through the positive ones for you ONLY**. Getting rid of the negative ones that you don't need to see. That way you can still be a part of the positive impact your story is having on others.
- 4) I have to say this point but I want you to know it is highly unlikely in that you will need to use it. BUT **if you do get any kind of threatening communications** like comments, messages or emails then please make sure you screen shot them, print them and file them AND contact the police. Report them if they are reportable otherwise keep track of them and definitely make sure the Producers know and have copies of everything too.
- 5) **Remember that the Producers are there for you the whole way** including throughout the release of the podcast. If you are uneasy about anything, want to talk about anything, have questions or concerns around the release, then feel free to get in touch and talk it out. That's exactly what they are there for and everyone just wants you to be as comfortable as possible.
- 6) Much like with recording, **on the day of release and the days surrounding it pull in your support systems and people** and keep yourself immersed in activities that bring you great joy. Be kind to yourself and nurture yourself as much and possible.
- 7) As always it is recommended to **check in with your counsellor during this time**. Talk it out whenever the overwhelm starts to hit or the world becomes scary.
- 8) If it is at all possible (and it won't be for a lot of people so I am sorry to bring it up) **get away for a few days** around the time of the release. I don't mean jump a plane and go to the

Pacific. I mean go camping, get an air bnb somewhere, go stay with friends or family, whatever you can do in your situation.

And I think that is it. That is everything you may want to think about, ask yourself, research and do in preparation for telling your story. I hope this resource helps and gives you a sense of security about the process you are about to undertake. It is an incredibly bold path and you are so brave for walking it. I salute you. I really do. And you should salute you too.

**Good Luck and Just Be You!  
You are more than enough.**

*This audio resource was produced, written and narrated by Kel Butler from Listen Up Podcasting.*

*In the accompanying handout to this audio you will find all of the key points and questions summarised.*

**IF THIS RESOURCE HAS TRIGGERED ANYTHING FOR YOU  
PLEASE CONTACT  
1800RESPECT (1800 737 732 )  
OR  
GO TO  
[WWW.1800RESPECT.ORG.AU](http://WWW.1800RESPECT.ORG.AU)**