



Johnnetta McSwain, BS. MSW, Ph.D. Candidate

CEO and Founder of
Breaking the Cycle, Beating the Odds
And
DreamWright Publications, LLC.

EMMY Award winning documentarian, Author, International
Empowerment Speaker, Life Development Coach, Mentor and
Workshop creator and presenter

Biography

Johnnetta McSwain, MSW, from the mean streets of Birmingham, Alabama to the halls of academia, and from GED to Ph.D., Johnnetta McSwain, EMMY Award Winning documentarian, author, Life Development Coach and empowerment speaker extraordinaire tells it like it is with charm wit, and wisdom to empower and inspire individuals to move from hopelessness to hope by becoming of aware of their cycles that impede their life and taking action to reach their fullest potential in their life.

Johnnetta McSwain, the author of *Rising Above the Scars*, has many roles in life and in the community at large. In addition to being a sought after empowerment and inspirational speaker, she is also a philanthropist, facilitator, mother, life development coach, workshop/conference presenter, and mentor.

Born to an alcoholic mother and an absent father, the odds were unceremoniously stacked against her even as she drew her first breath. By the innocent age of five, she was viciously raped and incessantly battered by her three uncles while in the custody of her grandparents.

The all too real horror of Johnnetta's formative years was not just her reality. Her slightly older sister and male cousin were also made to bear ruthless physical, sexual, and psychological abuse. As young, vulnerable children, they were bound, beaten, choked, threatened and forced to perform horrific sex acts by their uncles. At the tender age of eight, when most little girls can enjoy carefree security within the sanctuary of their homes, Johnnetta had contracted syphilis in hers.

The constant ravaging of Johnnetta's body and mind served as a daily reminder that she was not wanted and not loved. Never allowed the liberty to make the missteps that often characterize adolescence, she was forced to sit outside stripped bare in the cold elements of the winter night. This was Johnnetta's punishment for wetting the bed and resulted in a severe case of pneumonia.

As she entered her teen years, her victimization continued, now perpetrated against her by the men her mother brought home. In the absence of the love and guidance that every child has the right to enjoy, Johnnetta began shoplifting at twelve years old and eventually dropped out of high school at seventeen. By nineteen years old, she had given birth to her first son, applied for housing assistance, food stamps and welfare; continuing in the warped tradition of her family. In the harsh world of the streets, she was introduced to drug dealers and started dealing drugs. Hanging out in clubs and dope houses, she traded her values and church girl reputation, for a

gun, bad girl reputation and self-destruction. At twenty-six, she bore her second son. Seven months later, she was caught stealing in the mall and left her 7-month-old baby in the parking lot while running from the police.

Fast forward four years to an early misty morning when Johnnetta took a long introverted look in the mirror at the woman she had become. In that moment, she knew it was time to change her life and stop letting life change her. She urgently relocated to Georgia with a GED and a dream to be the first Ph.D. in her family. She started college and, in just three years, she graduated with her Bachelor's degree from Kennesaw State University.

Two years later, she earned a Master's in Social Work (MSW) at Clark Atlanta University. While completing her studies in graduate school, she created a copyrighted 12-step Self-Awareness Model (SAM) with the help of her mentor, Dr. Susan N. Kossak, and presented it for the National Association of Social Workers (NASW). In January 2008, she met with Pamela Roberts (Executive Producer/Georgia Public Broadcasting), who began taping a documentary, "The Road Beyond Abuse," narrated by Jane Fonda, which imparts the details of the abysmal beginning and ensuing victories that continue to shape Johnnetta's life. The Emmy® Award-winning documentary aired April 15, 2009 on Georgia Public Broadcasting.

Johnnetta has since founded the organizations, Breaking the Cycle: Beating the Odds, an organization that help women to become self aware of their negative, self-destructive behavioral cycles that cripple their ability to reach for their fullest potential in life. She also founded, Dreamwright Publications, LLC to publish her new autobiography, Rising Above the Scars, was released November 19, 2010. It is a factual and striking account of real-life events intended for women of all ages. Its objective is to help those who have been victims of child abuse to begin the healing process, in order to transition from victim to victor.

Johnnetta is an author, mentor, international empowerment speaker, philanthropist, entrepreneur, life development coach, workshop creator and facilitator. She creates and facilitates her very own seminars, panels, workshops, work books and training programs. She works in all settings (community, church, juvenile, schools, shelters, addiction). She is a domestic violence and sexual abuse survivor and advocate.

Johnnetta is resides in Georgia and is ardently pursuing her Ph.D. in Social Work, Policy and Administration.

1. What is one thing you hope people will learn from your presentation?

I want attendees to walk with up and close personal and academic knowledge that Childhood Sexual Abuse (CSA) is prevalent and can cause severe, mental, emotional and traumatization in victims in later adulthood. Although, beating the odds are not likely, I am living proof that the odds can be beaten and you can live a happy, productive, successful life after childhood sexual and physical abuse and neglect.

2. What is one thing you would like to happen as a result of this conference?

I want to bond with other advocates, stake holders, and allies to help ameliorat ethe many causes of social ills in our communities global.