

Connecting The Dots Of
HUMAN
TRAFFICKING
From Foster Care

with
Rhonda Sciortino & Sandie Morgan

**In This
Edition:**

**Why Some Kids
Go with Traffickers
Willingly**



Rhonda Sciortino, author of Succeed Because of What You've Been Through, Successful Survivors, and Kindness Quotient, serves as a National spokesperson for Safe Families For Children, Royal Family Kids, and as national champion of the Love Is Action Community Initiative. Rhonda used the character traits and abilities developed throughout an abusive childhood to create successful businesses that protected and defended child welfare organizations. She is a passionate speaker, trainer, and advocate.

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Dr. Sandie Morgan, Ph.D., is Director of Vanguard University's Global Center for Women and Justice, overseeing the Women's Studies Minor, as well as teaching Family Violence and Human Trafficking and producing the Ending Human Trafficking Podcast. Sandie's background as a Pediatric Nurse brought her into contact with her first victim of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children. She is committed to equipping our communities to be a safer place for vulnerable youth.

Live2Free.org

This is the second in a series of columns that will attempt to answer some of the questions people commonly ask about child sex trafficking.

In this series, we have addressed why men buy sex with kids. Now we're going to candidly discuss why some kids go willingly with the traffickers and don't try to get away.

Some people say, "Why would kids go willingly with a trafficker? And once they realize the situation they're in, why don't the kids just run away?"

The answer is, at the same time, simple and complicated. The simple answer is that kids (and everyone else) want to feel wanted and loved. If they don't feel wanted and loved at home, they're exceptionally vulnerable to the sweet talking trafficker. The more complicated answer is that traffickers often use fraud and force to lure young people in, and then use coercion to keep them there.

For example, traffickers often lure in young girls by treating them like a girlfriend—buying her things, telling her she's pretty, and making her feel safe and protected. After she begins to believe these things, she learns that she's just one of several girls. She is told that she has to "contribute to the family" by letting friends of the "boyfriend" or "daddy" use her for sex. This is fraud.

Typically, when the young girl rebels, saying she doesn't want to go along with it, she's beaten up and/or drugged to get her to comply. This is force. This is where the addiction begins, and it isn't difficult to imagine that drugs are a much more effective control than handcuffs and deadbolts.

Trafficking victims often don't even attempt to leave because the trafficker has threatened to kill her (or his) mother or abduct her little brother or sister into this life of slavery. Staying in "The Life" and going along, regardless of how brutal the life of rape-for-profit is, is an act of courage and determination to protect the trafficking victim's loved one. This is coercion.

An excellent booklet that explains these things and much more is, *5 Things You Must Know — The QuickStart Guide To Ending Human Trafficking*, by Dr. Sandie Morgan. It is available as a free download at www.stopchildsextrafficking.org.

Another complicating factor is the prevalence of online "transactions" having replaced authentic relationships. In a culture where social networking has reduced relationships to "likes" on posts, with the highest numbers of likes and shares going to the most inappropriate pictures or the most dangerous challenges, many young people willingly cross the nearly nonexistent line between inappropriate online interaction and actual, real-time connection. They believe that these "hook ups" are real relationships, whereas for the other person, the physical interaction is just an acting-out of their online fantasy.

Sadly, the young people who desperately seek those likes and shares are willing to go along with doing just about anything in order to feel liked and accepted. What they rarely



see coming is the train wreck of pain they feel when they realize that they've been used. Or worse, when they find that they've been lured into a rape-for-profit slavery that they feel they cannot escape.

When these young people who have never felt loved and accepted at home are the subject of the attention of others (damaging as it may ultimately be), they don't want to give up whatever inappropriate behavior is garnering for them the attention and affection that they crave.

One step in the direction of an answer to the desperation of young people to feel loved and accepted is for us to find and point out the good in young people to help them to feel valued and accepted.

In the next columns, we will answer the questions, "How can I know what to look for? What do I do if I see something suspicious? When do I call the national hotline, and when is it better to dial 9-1-1?" Finally, we will give prevention tips in our response to the question, "How can I protect the children within my influence?"

If you have a question about the commercial sexual exploitation of children, human trafficking, prostitution, or any of the other related issues, we want to hear from you on our facebook page:

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