



Now officially alone, I was confronted with all these old feelings. Steve's rejection confirmed in the most painful way, what I had always thought deep down about myself. I wasn't worth it.

The next few months were hard, very hard. I tried to come to grips with my merciless and unending questions. What was wrong with me? Why wasn't I worth fighting for? Why am I so easy to just walk away from?

I cried every day. I cried even when I didn't know what I was crying about. There seemed to be an unending supply of sadness that kept welling up inside of me. I felt like my body was trying to expel the sadness with deep sobs. But another sob always followed, more painful than the last.

Sunday nights were especially hard. That was garbage night. Besides everything else I had to deal with, that was the night that I had to take the garbage to the street. I know it sounds simple enough; a routine chore, on my list of never ending chores. But to me, the Sunday night garbage signified the cold slap of reality. The reality being that I was alone, because I was unlovable.

I didn't know what to do. People told me I was falling into a depression, that I should see a therapist. It all seemed so overwhelming. It was all I could do to handle my day to day responsibilities, let alone make any more changes.

Then one day, to my surprise, a very large toad came to visit me...



I woke up to a warm spring morning; the kind of morning that captures each of your senses. Where a bird's conversation wakes you up and a sliver of sunlight shining through your blinds draws you to your window. You open the window and a warm breeze greets your hands first, then your arms, then your face. The breeze carries in the sweet, mixed aroma of earth, plants, and spring time air. It was the kind of morning you wish you could freeze in time, so you could escape into its vitality and promise forever.

Lately, I had been wishing I could escape to somewhere. But it's hard to escape when you're living with your deeply embedded wounds. So I stretched one more time and forced myself out of bed. It seemed I had to do that more and more often, too.

As I stood up, I noticed an unfamiliar shape on my headboard. It was right above where I was just sleeping. I knew that as I was still keeping to my side, not comfortably claiming the entire bed as my own yet. The shape was dark and round, I thought it was a rock. I sighed, rubbed the sleep out of my eyes, and wondered how in the world a rock got on top of my headboard. I reached my hand out to grab it, but stopped short as my eyes finally realized what it was. It wasn't a rock. It was a huge, living, breathing toad, dirty

brown and covered in warts! It sat there unmoving, and stared at me with its dull dark eyes.

I was speechless. The toad was larger than my fist, and definitely too large to have come in on someone's clothes. I stared at it incredulously and then started to freak out a little bit. Okay, I freaked out a lot.

"Megan! Get up! I need your help!" I yelled, abruptly waking her up.

"What?" she yawned, coming out of her bedroom.

"Look at my bed! Get it off for me!" I implored her.

"Oh my God! I'm not touching that!" she responded quickly.

"Please you have to! I can't do it!" I pleaded, feeling vulnerable and overwhelmed once again.

Now I don't know if it's because Megan is such a good kid, or if she knew that I was too emotionally fragile to handle it, but Megan handled it. She had the presence of mind to get a big plastic cup and gently maneuvered the toad into it. She carried it outside and let it go safely in the woods.

*How bizarre.* How in the world did this large fat toad get in the house unnoticed, go up a flight of stairs and down a hall, find my room, and make his way onto my headboard. And how did I not hear it or feel it either? This toad definitely had a message for me!



There are multiple messages when a toad visits you. One is a message about amphibians. Amphibians are very adaptable to their surroundings. They are cold blooded and use their environment as their heat source. Amphibians also go through a process of metamorphosis. Toads change from an egg, to a tadpole, to a toad and periodically shed their skin. If an amphibian is your totem, the message is one of adaptability and significant personal change, a rebirth. You can experience a major shift or transformation. Questions to ask yourself may include: "What is changing in my life?" "How can I adjust to new situations?" "What do I have to shift to embrace the transformation?"

*Perfect,* I thought, disheartened, longing for some peace of mind, here was another message about change and rebirth. Okay, okay. If I was going through a metamorphosis from my old self to a new self then I needed to get a grip and adapt to my changing circumstances.

I had to trust my new self was going to be happier and more pulled together than my current self. One could only hope! I also hoped the change would hurry up, because this was hard! Unfortunately, I couldn't just sleep through it until the change took place. I had to live through each part of it, warts and all.

The messages specifically from a toad are ones of self-examination and good luck. “What is really going on with me?” “What do I fear?” “Is my fear hindering my progress?” These were all questions to ask myself. However, my emotions were still too raw to answer those questions. They would have to wait.

I found some comfort in the message of good luck. I believed it meant the change I was experiencing was a blessing, and that my life would get better. I knew that God would never give me more than I could handle and sending the toad to me was His way of confirming that.