

About Kim Olver

Kim began her life in a very small town, located in New York state on the Delaware River with 33 kids in her class in the public school system and no people of color in the whole town, except an occasional foster child. The name of the town was Narrowsburg because it's known to be the narrowest and deepest part of the Delaware River.

In 10th grade her parents moved to a much bigger town in Pennsylvania; Kim now had 230 kids in her class. It was only a ten-mile move but it required crossing the river into Pennsylvania. Changing schools might have been devastating but she knew one girl in the high school who just happened to be the most popular girl in her class. If Karen liked her and introduced her around, then Kim easily eased right into her new life.

Kim graduated from Honesdale High School and then went on to study psychology at Indiana University of Pennsylvania. She took advantage of many career opportunities there by becoming a resident advisor, working at the counseling center on campus and volunteering at the Open Door, where they had a suicide prevention hot line.

Kim intended to go right on for her PsyD degree after being accepting at the California School of Professional Psychology in Berkely, CA but she had difficulty living with her parents after college and moved out to get her own place, spending the money she had saved for graduate school. Consequently, she put that dream on hold for a while and got a job at Step-by-Step, a residential program created to help those diagnosed with schizophrenia through the deinstitutionalization process, as well as others with mental health diagnoses who required support to live successfully in the community. She went from a direct service resident counselor to a supervising program counselor during her tenure and enjoyed the work.

After five years of employment and an ongoing conflict with her boss, she looked for another job and found one with a specialized foster care agency, Counseling and Care. This company went through a few name changes, but Kim stayed there 17 years. She began as a case manager and soon became a supervisor, then a regional director, assistant executive director and ended her time after several years as their first Director of Training & Development. It was a job tailor-made for her. It was this job that allowed Kim to study William Glasser's work, get certified in Choice Theory, become a Glasser trainer and finally, get her master's degree in counseling from the University of Scranton in 1996. Kim loved everything about working there, until some internal politics ruined it for her.

Once her children graduated and began their own lives, Kim knew she wanted to live somewhere else. While Honesdale, PA is a great place to raise children, it wasn't a great place for a 43-year-old woman to start dating again. In 2004, the year her

youngest child joined the Army National Guard, Kim packed her things and drove a U-Haul truck, towing her car behind, to the south suburbs of Chicago. Why Chicago? At that time, she was asking, "Why not Chicago?" She knew people there, one of whom was a close friend and colleague. It was the right move to make at the right time for her personal life.

Professionally, it was also challenging. She left the job she loved and began a business in a place where no one knew her. She decided to open a coaching practice. Kim had been counseling people for years, but she wanted to transition to the field of coaching where there are a greater number of individuals more highly motivated to make the changes they seek. She also began doing public speaking, training, and consulting and never looked back.

On the personal side, Kim got married in 1983 to Dave Olver, then they went ahead to have two sons, Dave, Jr. in 1984 and Kyle in 1985. Is it any wonder Kim says the 80s were a blur to her? Those boys truly kept her busy. Her husband became ill in 1994 with leukemia and unfortunately, died on June 22, 1999, after a bone marrow transplant with a mismatched donor.

Kim and her husband had fairly traditional parenting roles at the time, with Dave being the strict disciplinarian and Kim being the pushover mom. She knew she wouldn't make a good single parent to her boys by continuing as the pushover parent, nor did she want to become a strict disciplinarian. After fumbling for a while, she decided to apply what she knew about Choice Theory psychology to her parenting role, with the guidance of Dr. Nancy Buck, her colleague, who had written the book, *Peaceful Parenting*. Kim knows she didn't get it all right, as no parent does, but Choice Theory was the saving grace that helped her raise honest, happy and successful sons. Both of those sons are happily married with four children a piece. Kim very happily gets to spend a lot of time with her grandchildren, whom she adores.

Another crisis occurred for Kim when her youngest son decided he wanted to join the Army to fight in Iraq. Kyle asked her to sign him up one week prior to his 18th birthday, which was an extremely difficult decision for her. Naturally, she wanted him to be happy and follow his own path, but she didn't necessarily want that path to lead him into a war zone! However, she remembered what Choice Theory taught about supporting and encouraging others, so she signed him up. Kyle served two terms in Iraq and Kim is extremely proud of his service. Because of her parenting experiences, Kim wanted to help other parents. She wrote an eBook titled, *Empowerment Parenting* and created a 25-hour parenting curriculum for court-mandated parents with the same name.

Kim experienced another challenge in 2016 when she was in Arizona and decide to go up in a hot air balloon. It was a beautiful experience, until they were forced to make a fast landing and crashed into an ironwood tree. Kim broke both one bone in her right leg and three bones in her left. She was told she'd be in a wheelchair for

four months and never regain full range of motion in her left ankle. She was out of the wheelchair in two months and has full range of motion in both ankles. The doctors say they can't explain it but credit her positive attitude for her rapid healing. Kim credits her application of Choice Theory during her recovery and staying focused on what she could do, not what she couldn't; what she could control, not what she couldn't and what she had, not what she didn't. It was a wonderful lesson.

2022 brought another health challenge. Kim was conducting training in Pennsylvania when she experienced shortness of breath, a sharp pain in the middle of her chest and numbness in her left arm. It was discovered that she had a 98% blockage in her "widow-maker" artery requiring a stent. This is not a major surgery, but the heart surgeon remarked that most people with the blockage she had don't experience symptoms. They simply have a massive heart attack that ends their life. It was determined that this blockage was likely genetic and her other arteries look clear. Kim is so grateful for the way this unfolded and feels a renewed sense of gratitude for every day and the potential joy it holds.