Healing the wounded child within

By Kathleen (Kay) Carter Licensed Certified Social Worker

therapy is expressing dissatisfaction with a life of difficult choices.

These choices began in early childhood, usually in an environment of abuse physical, mental, emotional, or a combination of these.

The child who was forced to become the child's reality. such behavior, the pain and make these choices, and who The child forgets having the realization that life is not adopted creative survival made decisions to cope with working may propel the adult skills to cope with a chaotic this reality and the choices to seek the help of a profesenvironment still guides the continue to shape his behavior sional counselor or therapist. life of the hurting adult.

world around:

"I can't trust anyone."

"No one cares about me, whelming for the adult trying Therefore I won't share.'

"People hurt me, so I won't child. let them close."

place, so to be safe, I must

control everything." "I'll get even, if it's the last

Once these lessons are

and interactions. The child has learned pro- Eventually they become calls for the courage to deal found lessons from these ex-self fulfilling because the with the sense of helplessnes periences, and as an adult adult expects others to behave experienced in asking for adopts behavior which com- hurtfully, she/he manuevers help, and the willingness to municates these lessons to the relationships so that others risk exposing emotions with have no choice but to hurt.

to live out a life based on decisions made by a mistreated

tive or compulsive behaviorsovereating, taking drugs or alcohol - and life become even more unmanageable.

Even though she/he may learned, then acted upon, they not realize the reasons for

This is not an easy move. It another human being.

taining a cycle.

was discounted.

sion, guilt, stress.

hurting adult who is.

that healing can take place.

a working relationship with a to the contradictions of living.

perienced long ago when

needs went unmet and one

Changing these adopted through the task of discoverpatterns takes time, effort ing the true self, she/he and patience. Past patterns begins to see the stranger are often clung to tenaciously behind the mask. - even though they serve no Eventually, she/he begins purpose — because they are to experience living life to its fullest fooling whole fool

Even the thought of break- ing a joy and comfort with ing the entrenched rules as self. "Don't talk," "Don't feel," "Don't trust," can be essence of self - that part

These old rules cannot be energetic, creative and broken overnight. They box fulfilled.

the seeker. With this healthy us in for a while, and then part fully acknowledged in the finally a light comes through. helping process, the adult can The inner, wounded child stay with the process and finds that the therapist allows eventually feel compassion trust, sanction, and talk.

for the child that was and the The safe, caring, consistent, It is this healthy part which ment works and the dam will risk exposing old wounds breaks. With much support, and understanding, forgiving growth and autonomy begin and releasing old wrongs so to develop.

In treatment, we recognize focuses on our finding out that the use of a variety of coping we are lovable and capable. It devices: alcohol, food, addic- teaches us to honor and protive relationships, blame of tect our child-self and one withdrawal, anger, depres-

There is learning on how to These are all ways of trying grieve the past, release it and to avoid dealing with pain ex- move on.

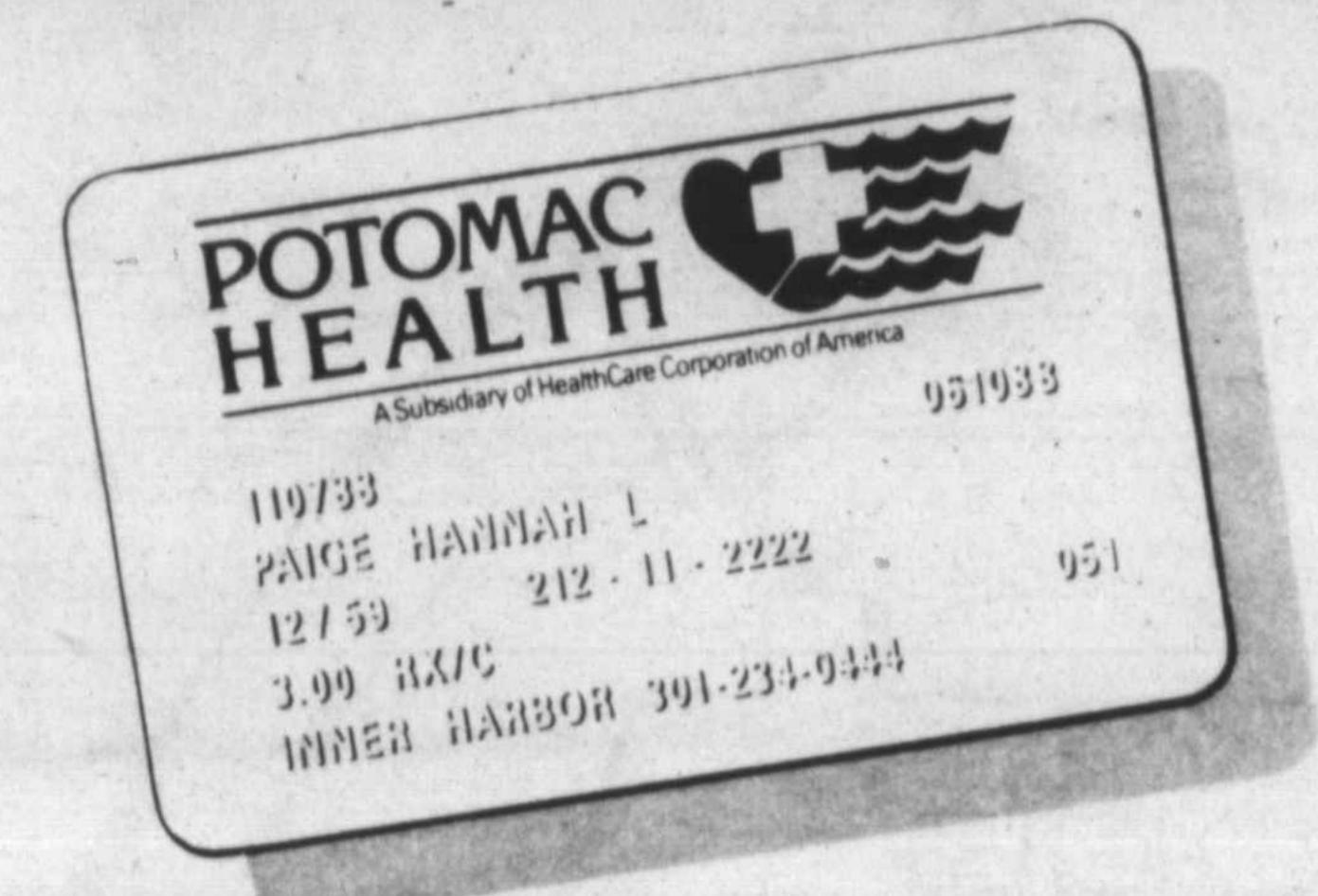
perience, uses the therapeutic

typically pass this pain on to or the roles — all the coping the next generation, main- devices - drop, and the therapist helps the client to This cycle can be broken in explain and honestly face up

skilled professional therapist. As the client struggles

which is ultimately alive,

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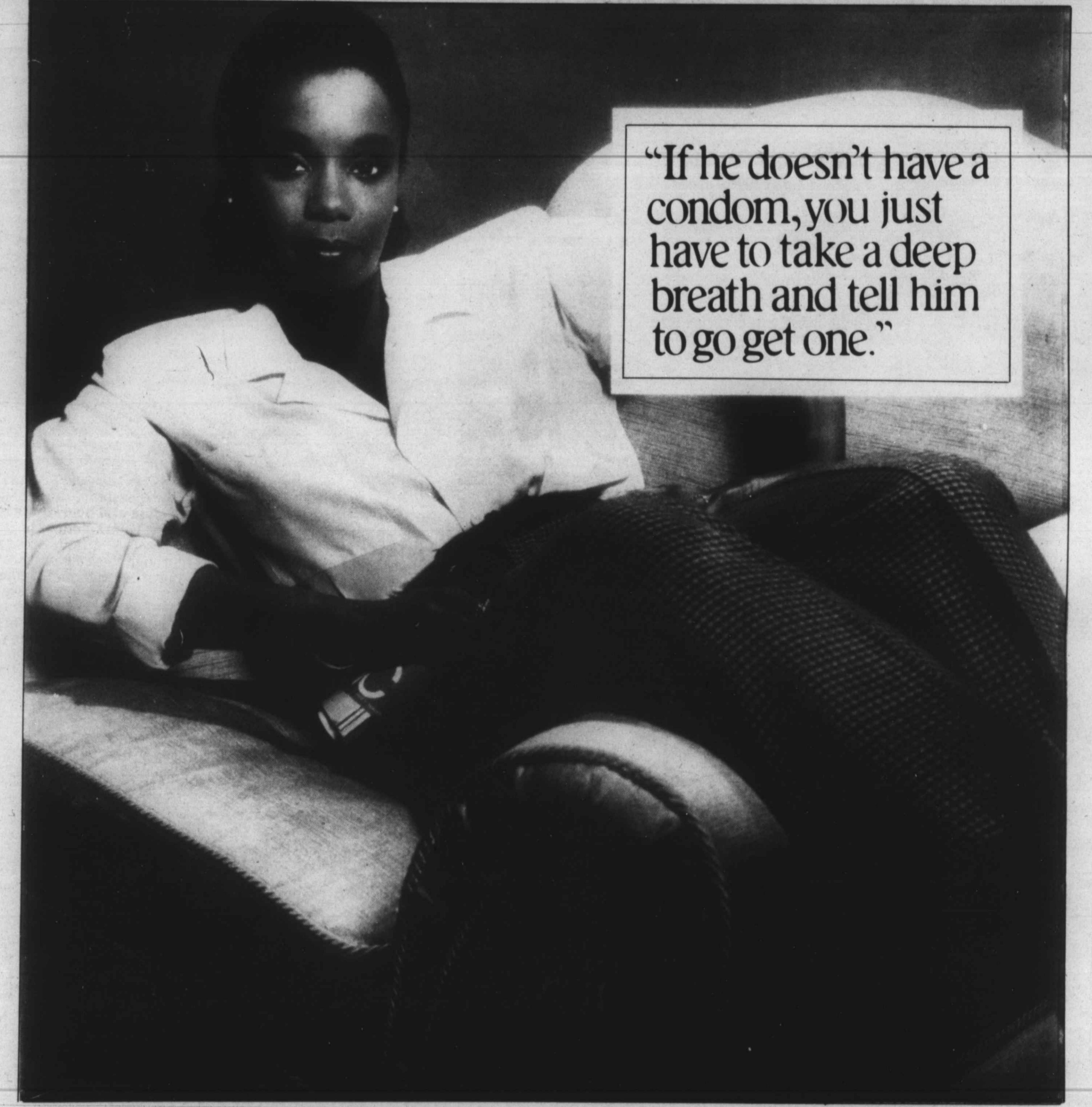
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