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# Natascha Kampusch gives message of hope to Madeleine McCann's parents as she reveals how she stayed strong during eight-year abduction

She was snatched on her way home from school but escaped after eight years as a sex slave

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BY NICK HARDING, KYLE O'SULLIVAN 11:01, 26 APR 2017 | UPDATED 11:23, 26 APR 2017

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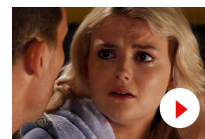
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**Natascha Kampusch** has given a message of hope to the parents of Madeleine McCann as she spoke 10 years after escaping her captor.

She endured eight years as a sex slave after being **snatched** on her way home from school at the age of 10, but managed to escape the Austrian cellar that became her prison.

As the 10 year anniversary of Madeleine's disappearance approaches, Natascha has urged Kate and Gerry to "stay strong" and use her own miraculous escape as inspiration.

She fled through an unlocked gate in August 2006 while her captor and abuser, Wolfgang Přiklopil, was on the phone, then he killed himself before police could arrest him.

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▶ Natascha Kampusch: I still visit the house of horrors where I was kept as a sex slave for 8 years



Natascha was abducted as she walked home from school (Photo: Rex Features)



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 Natascha was snatched at 10-years-old on way to school

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She spoke ten years after gaining her freedom (Photo: ITV)

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Speaking on Good Morning Britain a decade on from her escape, she said: "I saw that option and I thought I have to do it now because it's a chance and maybe it works.

"And after then I was so excited about my escape and my freedom and then I was a little bit shocked about the new experiences and about the new opportunities."

The house of horrors where she was imprisoned has remained untouched apart from the infilling of the cellar where Natascha was locked away.

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The house of horrors is now owned by Natascha (Photo: EPA)

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**The room where she was held prisoner** (Photo: Reuters)

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**She returned to the garage of the house that became her prison** (Photo: Supplied by WENN)

The large detached building is an eerie time capsule, but she still visits after being awarded it as compensation for her ordeal because it gives her "control and power".

Speaking about how she kept motivated and her doubts of ever escaping, she said: "Sometimes it was like that, especially the years at the beginning but then I had hope because I had so many plans for my life.

"I didn't want to give up these plans and so it was so important to survive and be strong and look forward to some options and possibilities to escape."

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**Natascha had a message of hope for the McCanns** (Photo: Supplied by WENN)

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**She was just 10-years-old when she was kidnapped** (Photo: Getty)

Kate and Gerry McCann posted a statement on the Find Maddie Facebook page, reflecting on the "unwanted milestone" of reaching ten years since she vanished in Portugal's Praia da Luz.

It read: "Ten years- there's no easy way to say it, describe it, accept it. I remember when Madeleine first disappeared I couldn't even begin to consider anything in terms of years.

"Shawn Hornbeck abducted and kept hidden for over four years, Natascha Kampusch for over eight years. I couldn't go there. And now here we are...Madeleine, our Madeleine- ten years."

**[Heartbreaking look at piles of presents for missing Madeleine McCann as her parents hope she will return](#)**

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**Kate and Gerry spoke about Natascha's escape** (Photo: PA)

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**Madeleine McCann has been missing for nearly ten years** (Photo: PA)

Speaking to presenters Piers Morgan and Susanna Reid, Natascha was asked if she had a message for the McCann family.

She said: "Please stay strong and never give up yourself and I hope that Madeleine appears."

Natascha wants to have a garden, swimming pool and sheep in the future, perhaps one day having a husband and children.

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**Natascha spoke to Piers and Susanna on the GMB sofa** (Photo: Rex Features)

Revealing how she kept positive in her dark days, she said: "Sometimes it was like that, especially the years at the beginning but then I had hope because I had so many plans for my life."

"I didn't want to give up these plans and so it was so important to survive and be strong and look forward to some options and possibilities to escape."

She has written a book about her ordeal, where she admits how difficult it was to reintegrate into society with different influences after her escape.

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**Natascha has written a book about her life** (Photo: Getty)

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**Wolfgang Priklopil killed himself after she escaped his house** (Photo: Reuters)

In the book, Natascha, who learnt English by listening to pop music stations in the cellar, reveals she was starved as a means of control in captivity and this has led to a problems with food.

Speaking about her fears for what her family were going through, Natascha said: "I'll tell you a secret - I was at the beginning, at the very first day, so crying because of my parents - because they didn't know what had happened to me and it was so hard.

"During the whole eight and a half years, the same emotion and I had this kind of [feeling] that it's necessary to survive and to go back to my family and go back to my normal life and my identity."

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**She is now involved with many charity projects** (Photo: Getty)

Natascha has been involved in several charity projects, campaigning for animal rights group PETA and donated money to the family of Josef Fritzl, the Austrian monster who kept his daughter captive in a cellar for 24 years and repeated raped her.

She is also helping to raise awareness of the plight of refugees.



- 10 Years of Freedom by Natascha Kampusch is available from [www.10yearsoffreedom.com](http://www.10yearsoffreedom.com).

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