

# Elizabeth Smart

## Abduction Survivor & Founder of Elizabeth Smart Foundation

Please contact a GDA agent for information.

### Topics

- Inspiration & Achievement
- Overcoming Adversity

### About Elizabeth Smart

The abduction of Elizabeth Smart was one of the most followed child abduction cases of our time. Elizabeth was abducted on June 5, 2002, and her captors controlled her by threatening to kill her and her family if she tried to escape. Fortunately, the police safely returned Elizabeth back to her family on March 12, 2003, after being held prisoner for nine grueling months.

Through this traumatic experience, Elizabeth has become an advocate for change related to child abduction, sexual abuse, human trafficking, recovery programs, and national legislation.

Elizabeth triumphantly testified before her captor and the world about the very private nightmare she suffered during her abduction, which led to conviction. The Founder of the "Elizabeth Smart Foundation," Elizabeth has also helped promote the National AMBER Alert, the Adam Walsh Child Protection & Safety Act, and other safety legislation to help prevent abductions. Elizabeth has chronicled her experiences in the *New York Times* best-selling book, **"My Story."** In addition, she and other abduction survivors worked with the Department of Justice to create a survivor's guide, entitled, *"You're Not Alone: The Journey From Abduction to Empowerment."* This guide is meant to encourage children who have gone through similar experiences not to give up but to know that there is hope for a rewarding life.

In 2018, Elizabeth wrote a powerful and inspiring book, **"Where There's Hope,"** which is both an up-close-and-personal glimpse into her healing process and a heartfelt how-to guide for readers to make peace with the past and embrace the future. Her advocacy reached a massive global audience in **January 2026** with the release of the **top-ten Netflix documentary, *Kidnapped: Elizabeth Smart***. In the film, Elizabeth offers an unsparing and frank look at her ordeal, providing new context and never-before-seen material to empower other survivors to shed the weight of shame.

Her most recent literary work, **"Detours: Hope & Growth After Life's Hardest Turns"** (released in December 2025), is a memoir-meets-guide empowering readers to navigate life's detours, embrace resilience, and find healing and purpose after adversity. In *Detours*, she explores how trauma can derail one's path in life and shares her struggles with captivity, reintegration, and resilience, offering four key "Rest Stops" for navigating difficult turns.

Elizabeth's abduction and recovery continue to motivate parents, law enforcement, and leaders worldwide to focus on children's safety. She emphasizes vigilance by "everyday" people and the belief that hope always exists to find every missing child. Smart attended Brigham Young University, studying music as a harp performance major. She married her husband Matthew in 2012, and they now have three beautiful children. Elizabeth's example is a daily demonstration that there really is life after tragedy.

### Select Keynotes

- **Overcoming Adversity: The Elizabeth Smart Story**

The abduction of Elizabeth Smart was one of the most followed child abduction cases of our time. At the tender age of 14, just before celebrating her middle school graduation, Elizabeth went to sleep in her family home just as she had always done. Awakened hours later to a knife held roughly against her throat, she was taken from her home and family and held captive for nine long months. In this captivating message, Elizabeth shares her incredible story of perseverance in the face of unimaginable adversity. Her speech not only tells her personal story, but also discusses topics such as overcoming extreme adversity, the importance and process of recovery, and not allowing your past to dictate your life's future. Elizabeth knows that there is nothing more important than having hope in a difficult situation. Having lived through an extreme circumstance as a young teenager, Elizabeth gives great insight and hope to all.

### Select Book Titles



- **2018:** Where There's Hope: Healing, Moving Forward, and Never Giving Up
- **2013:** My Story

### Select Articles

- ['I Am Elizabeth Smart': Kidnap Survivor Able To Tell Her Truth In Lifetime Movie – TCA](#)

"It is the best worst movie I've ever seen. It was so well done and accurate. I'm very proud of it."

### Select Testimonials

Elizabeth Smart recently spoke at our Women of Courage event, and she was received warmly, enthusiastically. Her story is inspirational and filled with faith and hope.

– *HOUSTON CHAPTER OF HADASSAH*

It was an absolutely amazing event!!! Thank you, Elizabeth Smart.

– *JUNIOR LEAGUE OF WILLIAMSPORT, PA*

Ms. Smart's voice was an outstanding way to end the event. Our participants, which included many survivors of child sexual abuse, truly appreciate her willingness to be a spokesperson for all who have been victims and may not be ready to speak out.

– *PENN STATE UNIVERSITY*

Elizabeth was amazing and had the audience mesmerized within the first minute of her presentation. Many women commented that they needed tissues before the event was over, but loved her and thought she was a wonderful, sweet and courageous young woman.

– *SILOAM SPRINGS HOSPITAL*

Elizabeth was a wonderful, captivating speaker. We had the largest crowd we've ever had. I appreciate working with Premiere. You are an excellent customer-oriented business. Thanks for all of your help.

– *SOUTHERN ARKANSAS UNIVERSITY TECH*

SHE WAS AMAZING. The gushing from the attendees never ended, there was a standing ovation, and we were all moved to tears. We were incredibly lucky to have her there today to help reinforce the message of our agency.

– *THE NEW YORK SOCIETY FOR THE PREVENTION OF CRUELTY TO CHILDREN*