

Domestic Violence

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This essay was written by me. Some have advised me that it would not be wise to post such such personal data on the Internet. But, I do it for a couple of reasons. One reason is that someone must speak out so that others know they are not alone in their struggles. Women must know they are NOT crazy! Other reasons are if one woman is helped by this at anytime then I will consider this a success. If it helps one violent partner to realize the error of his/her ways and reconsider I will consider it a success! There is a light at the end of the tunnel. Please, Keep in mind that this essay is explicit. I would not let my own young children read it, and I'm warning you not to let yours! Thanks for visiting! Come back again!

History

"Don't go back to sleep"

-Rumi

History seems to point to the fact that spouse abuse and rape (indeed, all forms of abuse) has existed from before recorded history. Brownmiller (1986) suggests that perhaps the female of our species traded monogamous relationships for safety of protection. We received the protection we needed as women and children from predatory males from our mates, and this gave our mates exclusive rights to us as property. From there it seems society moved towards what is called the earliest form of permanent, protective, conjugal relationship. The relationship of mating turned into marriage. This was institutionalized from what is seen as a practice where the male forcibly abducts and rapes the female. Having done this he has staked his claim to her body via violence. This was acceptable behavior until the fifteenth century in England and is still practiced today in the rainforests of the Philippines by the people called Tuesdays. In ancient times the Babylonian Code of Hammurabi and Mosaic Laws allowed capture by force of women from outside the tribe. Under the Hammurabi Code women had no independent status. Hebrew laws stated if a wife were raped, the "offending" wife and her attacker were to be stoned to death. In ancient Greece women were the property of men. The Athenian female, though a citizen, could not make debts, contracts, or bring actions of law. At all times she had to have a male guardian, usually her father, brother, husband or son. In the middle ages, men were exhorted from the pulpit to beat their wives, and their wives to kiss the rod that beat them. This was the deliberate teaching of domestic violence. In 18th Century Europe, assault was not considered rape if a woman conceived. In the United States in the days of slavery men could use his slaves as desired. Slave women were considered "breeders" and treated as such. In the 1830's and 40's in the United States temperance groups sprang up because the "drunken spouse could (and did),

spend the family money as he chose. He sold off his and his wives property, apprenticed their children, and assaulted wife and child alike. In 1869, John Mill wrote the Subjugation of Women, decrying the fact that thousands of husbands routinely "indulge in the utmost habitual excesses of the bodily violence towards the unhappy wife." In 1878, Frances Power Cobbe wrote of a place in Liverpool known as the "kicking district" because so many residences kicked their wives faces with hobnailed boots. Our Fairy tales and myths are full of abuses and rapes. They also teach us that it is the woman's job to keep the man happy. Cinderella, Sleeping Beauty, Rapunzel, and Snow White were all beautiful and PASSIVE women who waited in the castle, forest, or ivory tower for the Prince Charming to show up and make them happy. From these we inherited ideas as women that we are to be what is expected of us, and appreciate it. Even in recent years the attitudes of men who lead our society by being lawmakers still rationalize and seemingly commend the actions that make rapes and whatever other actions it takes to gain the power that the perpetrator needs permissible to us all. "Damn it," Senator Jeremiah Denton, a Republican from Alabama told the Senate Judiciary Committee, "when you get married, you kind of expect you're going to get a little sex, one way or another." With friends like these women need no enemies.

Spousal Sexual Abuse: What is It?

It could be called "marital rape". This has been defined by many people. Authors such as Susan Brownmiller state that rape is this: "If a woman chooses not to have intercourse with a specific man and the man chooses to proceed against her will, that is a criminal act of rape." Doctors such as Dorothy Hicks see rapes as a legal definition and not a medical one. She defines it as a "violent crime, not done for sexual reasons." She adds rape is the most traumatic act short of murder. It is done because the attacker needs to overpower, degrade, and humiliate. Violence, not sex, is expressed by the attack. Many psychologists today define rape as other abuses as an intentional act meant to hurt the victim. Some have gone so far as to say that sexual abuse is at the top rung of the abuse ladder. If there is sexual abuse in a relationship, one can then assume that other types of physical and emotional abuse also exist. Legal definitions are still being determined. For the first laws that considered marital rape an assault was not passed in the United States until 1975, the first state being Oregon. Until very recently in most states had rape statutes that included a spousal exception, making rape by a husband legal. The belief by men and the legal system, that the wife and children are the man's "property", that they belong to him and that he essentially can do as he pleases, is slowly changing. In most states now, there need not be a penetration for the crime to be considered rape. The determination of consent is important. Many state laws require the woman to prove she resisted by screaming, fighting back, kicking, or trying to run away. Other states, use analysis of consent based on a woman's character which puts the woman on trial instead of the man. But, for the wife, it is more complicated because of social attitudes, if a wife is a man's property, and the wife lives in a state that still has the marital exception laws in place, then she has no recourse. As the wheels of time pass on and on, America has its states who are moving up. Some states consider that even a man who penetrates his wife while she is sleeping and unable to give consent is in violation of their rape statutes. Combining all that I have learned about sexual abuse in any form, "spousal sexual abuse" seems to be "any sexual act, physical or emotional, perpetrated against another in order to gain control over that

person." Although, laws may not agree with me! *There's NO excuse for Domestic Violence.*

Signatures of the Cycle of Abuse

Domestic violence in all forms, including the ultimate abuse rape, builds from a relationship that has a clear and characteristic pattern. The woman is effectively brainwashed through a series of steps. The spouse (sometimes called a batterer, I call them rapists because they not only rape the body but the mind and soul as well) degrades her into believing that she is incompetent and incapable of managing the simplest tasks of daily life or personal interaction. When she expresses dissatisfaction or unhappiness, he convinces her she is to blame. He makes her believe that if she would only change, their life together would be better. (I did this route, it is really ugly, and sometimes I still think I am the one who is nuts!) The spouse will create most, if not all of the following circumstances:

- * Separation
- * Surveillance
- * Exhaustion and Hunger
- * Hostility and paranoia
- * Chemical Dependence
- * Financial Dependence
- * Financial Deprivation
- * Discredit
- * Insecurity
- * Battering
- * A cycle of violence
- * Sexual Abuse
- * Guilt and Denial

Once the relationship is established, the batterer will do everything possible to separate his victim from her support system of friends and family. This is separation. Surveillance includes expecting "HIS" woman (?) to keep her informed of where she is, telephoning her, picking her up from work an hour early that is if she hasn't already been pressured to quit. My husband, for example, didn't even let me lock the door to the bathroom, and I couldn't visit a neighbor for even 10 minutes before he was coming over to bring me home. There are many aspects to this characteristic, more than I can describe in this paper. Exhaustion and Hunger is a stage where the abusive spouse after separating the wife from her support group actually deprives her of sleep or food. He may involve her in a project, or give her activities that take long hours and lots of work. He may just keep her up all hours of the night. My husband had a habit of keeping me up until 4 or 5 in the morning to talk until I "came around" to agreeing with what it was he wanted. I often times told friends toward the end of the marriage that it felt like a military torture technique. Chemical Dependence is where the spouse actually encourages his beloved to become dependent on alcohol or drugs. Some are so sick that if she should refuse he will put it in her food or drink. Financial Dependence and Deprivation: She is talked into quitting her job or to hand over her money. I did the first. My husband always made sure that as soon as I cleaned up our bills that he went quickly and deeply back into debt. I had no job, because I quit to be what he wanted. Therefore, there was no way for me to have the things I needed or wanted because we were always in debt. The Discredit stage is where the abusing spouse will do something to disgrace his wife to make her more dependent on him. Sometimes he will steal checks from her or force her to write hot checks or even write them himself. The eventual outcome is to make her feel like she's in so much hot water she can't make it without him. The insecurity phase is one where as she loses who she is and wonders if she was ever smart or had a mind at all, he continues to undermine her self-confidence. He will convince her that she is stupid, ugly, incompetent to deal with even the simplest things. (Oh, do I remember this one well!) Once she is totally separated from her friends, and family, and all support, she is in a new world and totally his because she really believes that she is NO good, then the physical violence starts. There can be pushing, hitting, slapping. It can grow to include hitting with heavy objects, using or threatening to use guns, knives, or other weapons, also there is now choking, stabbing, and other life threatening acts. While in this stage the woman still thinks she can use reason or logic to make him stop!! Now comes the phase that this paper is all about. Sexual abuse comes next and it doesn't have anything to do with love and affection. It has everything to do with dominance and subjugation. There is sex on demand, rape, and brutal, violent, or degrading sexual acts. He may insist on dressing her up in clothes, he may mutilate her. As I write this paper, many times I could cry. I have lived in hell and still will look you straight in the eye and say none of it was violent. According to my references all of this is a kind of violence. My husband, for example, had me dress up in revealing ways without underwear (and yes, I did object) and paraded me up and down the streets of Cincinnati so he could see and hear the guys make remarks. I felt very demeaned. I have been raped and asked to sleep with family members. I have had objects inserted, and forced to do things that I didn't want to do. It is hard to admit still to myself... yes, I was sexually abused by the man I thought loved me. Guilt and denial is the stage where the woman has been abused is ashamed of what has become of her life and relationship. Because we are trained to be homemakers and mediators of domestic tranquillity we feel we are failures. Because of this shame and guilt she keeps the violence secret, and begins to assume and accept the responsibility for what is happening in the relationship and for his problems. The worst part of

this stage is that while she is in denial to others who may see the signs she is also denying herself. This keeps the cycles going. All these stages teach the woman something that psychologists call "learned helplessness". She has learned to be a victim. She knows how to be helpless. This is very sad.

Other Facts We Should Know

Psychologists have never been able to isolate a common denominator among abused wives. Victims can cut across all ethnic and socio-economic groups. Any woman can become a victim to such behaviors. The abusive spouse come from all levels of society. One can not look at a man and know he is an abuser. Psychologists do say that most of these men may have been abused as a child or grew up in a violent home. There is new research conducted by the University of Massachusetts Medical Center's Domestic-Violence Research and Treatment Center which found that 61% of men involved in marital violence have signs of severe head trauma. "The typical injuries involve the frontal lobe," says Al Rosenbaum (director of the center). The areas suspected injured are those involved in impulse control, and reduce an individual's ability to control aggressive impulses." (Okay ladies, this doesn't mean ya have to feel sorry for them!) Most of these men do not believe they have a problem and will not acknowledge physical violence as an issue in the marriage. Spouse abuse of all forms is still often a crime in our society. Few women will admit that their husbands hurt them. (how do they overcome the shame, when the husband makes them think they did something wrong?)

Can Men Be Abused, Too???

Lest I be accused of making this report politically incorrect by not at least dealing with the OTHER gender I will confront the issue that spousal abuse of all types can work both ways. A 1985 study done by the National Institute of Mental Health found women to be as physically abusive as men. But this finding was in relationship to pushing and shoving. "Severe aggression likely to land someone in the hospital is much more characteristic of men." Yes, Men can be raped. The experience is just as traumatic for men who are usually raped by other men. Women can and do rape men. It is used by women as an attempt to punish or control. The after effects for men are very similar to those that women suffer after such a traumatic experience. With this much said I shall rest. It happens. I've addressed it. My report was designed as therapy for myself, a woman survivor. ON WE GO!

Leaving?

I have learned through my research that it is very difficult for women to leave these situations. It is because she is emotionally drained. I remember saying over and over again. I just want it to stop, I just want peace. Even when a woman does leave this situation these men sometimes take the separation, or divorce as a kind of death sentence to themselves, and continue to try to regain power over their (sometimes ex) spouse and rein them back in. It usually takes quite a bit of therapy and quite a bit of support for this victim to become strong enough to leave the surroundings. What can she expect when she is on her own? She can expect blame: she has "destroyed" the family. She can expect lot's of attention: constant phone calls, degrading judgments about her lifestyle, and a man who still thinks he can tell her what to do. IF he

comes to see the kids try to have someone around, because what he will do is try to ignore the kids and convince you it is time to go back to where you belong. This all happened to me. In fact, it is still happening to me. It was something else to read about it. I wish I had done this before I left him so that I wouldn't have been so shocked by his behavior. It is a common tactic for the man to even use his children to try and get control. My ex-husband does that now, right in front of a naïve new wife. It has gotten bad enough that I do not exchange the children on my own, not even after being separated for over a year and a half. He still threatens me if I don't become "compliant", and he still says I am being "uncivil". He is still using his tricks. For every day that goes by I see him for what he really is, and wonder how did I ever love someone who treated me so badly. This paper has helped me to see. I told the court I was a "battered wife" and had really no clue what it meant in its totality. I wanted to do a term paper on Spousal Sexual Abuse and in researching I found that what I was doing was a report on Domestic Violence. IT is all part of the same vicious cycle. So, now I have a broader view and can tell people what happened without hanging my head. I think that as painful as this has been for me.... Feelings so strong as to nauseate me, itching on my legs, self-mutilation is one of my stress releases that I had almost quit again. But, in the end... I feel better, and know what to expect. More than likely, he will try for quite sometime to regain his control. He will continue to use his kids who will hopefully see him for what he really is: an animal. And I will continue to educate myself so as to not react, and not reenter that sick circle of Domestic Violence.

Healing?

In 1992 the American Medical Association reported that as many as one in three women will be assaulted by a domestic partner in her lifetime. This is roughly four million women per year. Research has shown also that a man who batters his wife is likely to rape her. The consequences of what society has come to call wife battering and marital rape (including sex on demand) are bad for the wife and marriage. The wife who has been sexually abused have more than physical bruises to deal with. Some women do not even have physical bruises to "prove" their case, instead the bruises are inside. Psychological "bruises" can be more devastating than physical ones. There are many after-effects of these behaviors: depression, anger, thoughts of suicide, social withdrawal, loss of self-esteem, anxiety, and denial. Being raped and abused by someone that a woman knows and trusted can magnify the problems and make them more likely to appear. Wives living in terror of their husbands and the abuses they inflict often have nightmares are almost always depressed. A post-rape syndrome has been described by several investigators. My research has shown me that the same syndrome affects wives who are sexually abused. The victims go through three stages of recovery: The Acute Stage, The Outward Adjustment Stage, and the Integration Stage. Assuming that the wife can get the help she needs this could still take years for her to work through. My personal experience, though, if it is a mirror to most of these types of relationships, tells me that most women are beaten and raped for years without help. In theory some spouses may never get through the stages to recovery. The Acute Stage is when a woman experiences shock, anger, fear, hostility, disbelief that it could happen to her, and often denial that it did happen. In this stage physical complaints can last for weeks. These are headaches, inability to sleep, nightmares, abdominal pains, loss of appetite, and even nausea. In the Outward Adjustment Stage the woman resumes her life, and seems to be adjusting with the trauma received during

the rape. It is often in this stage that she tries to suppress her feelings and may become depressed. In the Integration Stage the woman faces her problem. This is a period during which resolution of the rape experience takes place, and it can be several months or even years before this phase is completed.

Comments from the Author:

It is April 11, 1996, having made several attempts at beginning the term paper for class here I sit at my table surrounded by references, most won't even end up in my bibliography. I was supposed to be done by now. My goal was to not save this until the end of the semester and then have to cram to get it done. The problem is that I can not seem to separate myself from the subject I have chosen. I doubt the ability of myself to carry this through. I picked this topic because I know my marriage was "yukky", because counselors have affirmed for me over and over again that I was abused, Domestic Violence. My son's counselor says that few women escape from the kind of marriage I had. Most of the abuse was denied, minimized, or turned into something else. Usually they were not blatant abuses, crazymaking and gaslighting were my ex-husbands forte. Beatings were something playful. The ritual always went like this: We playfully wrestled until I was in tears. I would begin to tearfully fight back. I would ask if he felt bigger in any way. It would continue until I was too exhausted to fight back. I always had bruises on my arms, maybe other places too.

I dissociate, this is caused by childhood trauma. Conveniently he never understood what I was talking about when I wanted to stop. He was just playing, what was the matter with ME? That particular era of my marriage finally ended, but only after I spit out a piece of broken tooth for him to see..... my heart was broken even then. How could you do this to me? No, I could not report it. I was young, didn't you know it abnormal... my father beat my mother. I just didn't know. All I knew was that I hurt. My husband wanted someone like his mother. It took three years for that to settle in. After his many requests to be more like his mother. And after many times hearing him say he wanted his wife to be dependant on him I finally quit my jobs, and gave up my dreams to be a journalist. I became the mommy and housewife that was prescribed by husband and society. His mother to this day thinks she needs valium to "survive" her nerves. She takes verbal assaults and disrespectful put-downs from her husband and children alike. In January her daughter was arrested for beating her up. (two assaults 3/08/98) I started losing myself, to become what he wanted, his mother. I lived without running water from 1983 until 1988. This was acceptable to him. I was called unsociable because I wouldn't go out with him and his drinking, drug-using croonies. He and his sister, and brother-in-law made daily trips into town to socialize. He left me totally alone, and lonely. Early in my marriage, I was told by someone that he was lying to me all the time, and that he didn't deserve someone as nice as me. I didn't listen. I was married, and marriage was a lifetime commitment, I would endure. I was never perfect enough. Among other things I was ridiculed for wearing socks to bed even though my feet were cold (We are talking Ohio winters here... easily below the freezing level). I was not allowed to put top sheets on the bed. He even picked on me for not keeping my shirts pulled down! According to him I was a hypochondriac. This even though, I had real ear infections that caused hearing impairment, and impacted teeth that caused headaches and fever. Stress caused high blood pressure which I have battled since age 21. Last but not

least if I ever got fat, he would divorce me! That was my god's first commandment, and also his families. I got fat. I got fat because he touched me. When I was asleep I would awake to hands all over my body. Mostly though they were playing with my genital area. Most often I awoke to the feeling and realization that I was already being penetrated. This happened nightly. He gave NO respect to what I wanted or that I even needed sleep. He was my husband, and I a good little wife... I never protested, didn't really know that I could. I lay there and hated almost every moment of it, and continued to pretend I was asleep so that he would just get done and over with it. In preparing for this report I found out that a man in Ohio who penetrates a wife unable to give consent due to being asleep or even in a coma is legally a rapist. I got fat, because I didn't want him to touch me. It almost always hurt. He liked objects. So in the name of sexual exploration and that he had the right to do as my husband (I grew up very protected, and Victorian) I allowed penetration by coke bottles, batons (police night-sticks), a fist, cucumbers, carrots, even a handmade silicon dildo that he had fashioned from a hose "borrowed" from one of his jobs. The hose should have been used on a diesel truck engines (a big rig). He asked me if it hurt more than once, and though my tears I would answer, no. I look back and wonder how could any man who loves this woman be so callous? Cunnilingus? I enjoy it now, but the first few times were pure hell. I said NO. He said YES, that I should try to get used to it, I'd enjoy it, and he enjoyed it. I tried to close my legs, and he forced them open. I resigned myself to wifely duty, remembering how angry my father was when my mother was unable to perform hers. It took me years to learn to enjoy. To show his awareness of my pain only a year ago my ex-husband let me know that his then girlfriend of only 22 "doesn't let him eat her pussy". I believe this statement, even in the aftermath of divorce shows that the responsibility was mine in his mind. I just should not have let him, no matter what he did to me. But, I should have known it would come because after 12 years of marriage, I began to use the spark that never completely died to his abuses. I began to say NO. But, he still pressed me to "make love", letting me know that he was too turned on by me to stop. He could not help himself, it was my fault. He made me the responsibility for him not being able to respect my wishes...my fault. I got fat because I didn't enjoy his touch. I couldn't divorce him because marriage is forever. I lay in bed a woman in her early 20's, waiting to hear the crunch of his automobile tires on the gravel of our driveway. I would pray that he'd get into a crash, preferably head on, and die. Pretending to be asleep when he came in so would not touch me, I was overridden with my guilt. I didn't understand how I could feel or even imagine such thoughts. Then I wanted to die. Depression became a vicious cycle still yet to be broken. When he could no longer hit me, and we weren't sleeping in the same room again, then he used scary faces and implied threats to get what he wanted. To this day, off the top of my head, I'll tell a person "he only hit me two-three times" even though I probably couldn't count the amount of times I was hit in "PLAY". And to this day, he doesn't understand what he did wrong. In fact, he denies it and says that I am trying to ruin his reputation. The very last time I saw him, I confronted him in front of another person about him asking me to sleep with his sister and his cousin. He denied it verbally. But, his eyes stared at the ground. I was pressured for years on and off to sleep with those two family members, and to swing with others. After a 13 1/2 year marriage that officially ended in 1995 I question my own sanity. Because I heard many times that I was an "empty headed play thing", "dingy", "clumsy", etc.... My goodness it must be so, my man told me it was!! I have been

denied the reality of my pains and truths if they did not serve his interests. When I divorced him, all he could see was that I was a whore, and that I was leaving him for my own selfishness. I am now treated like an enemy of war. I am still to be controlled, hurt or even better yet, psychologically killed. A 34 year old man uses his 22 year old wife, and two beautiful children to do these things. In their youth, they do not see, the same as I did not many years ago. After being separated for a year and eight months, I find that I still have great pains. For throughout the cycle of pain of abuses I loved and cared for him. And yet, I live in terror that I will hurt others the way he hurt me, and when I see a behavior that I know I learned from him, I cringe... I hate me... I met him when I was 16. I married straight out of high school when I was 18. I was with him and him only for more than half my life, and all of my adult life. The experiences are who I am... I still do not know if I can separate my term paper from me. But, I know I can try. Thank You, Peggy A. Miller. Update: The marriage officially ended March 21, 1995. August 12, 1998: My daughter believes the 'brainwashing' stories he is telling. She went to live with him in August 1996. I have not been allowed to see her since. He continues to move about avoiding the District Attorney (in regards to child support). He has moved about 15 times in the past 3 years. 5/9/2011 - Sixteen years later. One more child, one more failed relationship (not a marriage). I am six years into an abuse free marriage, and about as content as I can be. My ex, that I wrote about above, got an education and has a great job, and is currently on this third marriage, with two step daughters. I feel for them. He was married to wife #2 for about six years. She eventually called to tell me that she did what the kids claimed she did and apologized. Told me my ex was a rapist. I knew this. I tried to tell her. Wife #3, made it perfectly clear that "HIS" children were not part of the deal. Hence three months after my oldest turned 18, he dropped her on my doorstep for a 'visit'. Several days later he called to be sure, "she was staying" He'd kept her from me for a total of six years. Regardless, I was happy to see my baby. He continued to fail to take responsibility for his son in order to have control of our daughter. For all intents and purposes he abandoned our son, and in fact, he called when our son was around 16 yrs. old to ask my current husband to adopt him. My son said no at that time. My son is now 20, and has asked to be adopted and was. But he still seeks the love and approval of his biological father. It hurts to see my kids in so much pain. He doesn't bother me much anymore. But, I don't advertise where I am. I don't want him in my life. I am scared to death of him. The education doing this "essay" gave me made me more scared of him than living with him did, because I became aware of what I was living with. And he got far worse during the child custody battle that went on and on and on. I wish him well, so long as he stays away from me and the "kids" who are not "his" anymore.

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