

## My story as Alice #14

My ex husband is a pathological liar who hid secrets by using others to hide them. I wonder when his world of lies will come crashing down?!?!

During the marriage we went to councillors for years - that down played the violence, and even though I hate this man, I blame the people who helped hide the truth for him. He was supposed to look after me, yet he was calculated and purposeful in his attacks and who he let into our world.

I was a young bride and the ways of a pathological liar and narcissist were contrary to my own values and that of my family. On the other hand, had the women of previous generations in my family made known tools on how to look out for these type of people; had talked about their violent backgrounds themselves, maybe my family and I would have been wiser.

From very early on, in his justifications for his bad behaviour (even before we were engaged), there were signs and I did not act on those signs. I was naive and fuelled with a passion to love and be loved. On occasions I had doubts and I did not ask myself why I felt this way; I did not act on those feelings. I spoke to girlfriends that had been abused in their childhood and their advice came out of their own feelings of insecurity in their own life. I understand that they needed someone to love them too; with me in his life, I believed everything would be okay.

He said he could not stand anyone telling him what to do and those that tried were made to know about it with a vengeance. He said he was rejected by his own father at a very young age and had no role model to help him; he wanted me to feel his pain. He said he wanted me to help him but all he truly wanted was to abuse me. His deliberate plan was to take his pain out on me physically, emotionally, sexually and psychologically.

I believed the lies so early on! He had made promises before we were married to never hit me. After the first time, he said it was my fault; that I *should* not have protected myself, that I *should* have not made fun of him. He said he would not do it again, but that was a lie.

I still cringe when I hear the word *should*.....

After many years in appointments after appointments with a psychologist and other councillors, I finally left my husband for the last time, and I went back to this psychologist. I didn't dance around the subject of how I could be a better wife; become better at conflict resolution; how I could be happy; or how I could help my husband not get angry. Instead I told her details of the abuse and she admitted that even though there were all the tell tale signs, for her to ask me directly, was not allowed. I was to figure it out on my own. That was her deliberate rationale of condoning domestic violence instead of helping me to see a way out. I ask myself still about the injustice and conditioning she believed in her own life and in her line of work.

One councillor said I should just say 'sorry', whilst he was in front of me at the time: the perpetrator! You say, "Alice, get real; are you delusional?" Well yes I was, I believed the lies he told me, I believed most of the lies the people I went to for help had told me. Maybe in facing the truth, I was incapable of believing the truth. Maybe it was better to keep it in a place like imagination. That's where he wanted me to keep it.

On many occasions I confronted him with the truth and I knew what would happen. Yet I still had the strength to do it anyway. It took me more than 12 years but I made the bravest decision of all; I had the courage to face the biggest lie of all; I could divorce him and have a life without him. He was becoming unpredictable, leaving for days on end. He had disappeared again telling me he was going to take a drive. I took my opportunity, I

changed the locks, placed another ADVO and filed for divorce. When he came back weeks later, he had nowhere to live, no money and no family!!!

I have thought about why I feel uncomfortable talking about my feelings especially in a kitchen. Do you know the saying: "the wife's place is in the kitchen?" I knew that to be a lie, but I did not believe it as the trauma from his abuse conditioned me to feel pushed down (literally) and imprisoned and I felt this mostly in the kitchen. I knew I was a beautiful person, but I did not believe that my worth was of value and that I could be who I set out to be. I even imagined that he would one day say: "you are the best thing that ever happened to me". I was waiting in false hope and then one day I started on a journey to live outside of the four walls he had so 'lovingly' built for me!!

An epiphany: he is a LIAR!!

All lies.....I get asked what my life was like before, were there any happy memories.....well to be honest the happy feeling of my daughters are even tainted. I love them more than anything in the whole wide world and they are far from a disappointment, but the guilt that I carry follows me. My beautiful daughters were born in to that environment. WAIT! Get a grip Alice, I, me, of value and worth, would never had allowed myself to be in that environment had I known and believed the truth. He was the one that used violence to scare me into submission and scare my children. One day I did something about it and did not allow it again.

All along, from the beginning, all I needed to do was to ask myself: "is that a lie or is that the truth?" I teach my children to ask themselves if it is a lie or the truth, in case they are in similar situations. In looking back I can see that I didn't have the knowledge and experience to act on those stomach/gut feelings that I felt, however, I did keep asking for help until I had the strength to take control back. Today that is my safety net - to never be treated that way again, or even to confuse the old lies with the present.

Believing the truth is such a powerful tool to becoming aware of the lies.