

Alice #48

My journey started almost more than a decade ago when I met my (now ex) husband. I have said many times over the years that it would have been easier if he had hit me, however this is not said to make light of women who have physically suffered at the hands of their partner.

During my long relationship (including over a decade of marriage) with this man, there were always 'external stresses' of what seemed to be everyone else's doing, and I constantly made the excuses of 'things will be better when..' or 'he will be happy when..'.
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I used to live in a 'trophy' home with all the trimmings, played the happy wife, and we had beautiful, healthy children... The perfect picture, or so it seemed...

I have been yelled and screamed at behind closed doors and in public. I have been ignored for days on end. I have had things thrown at me, and my possessions broken. I have had rooms ransacked because he couldn't find what he was looking for, and then was left to clean up the mess. I have had holes kicked and punched into our walls and doors.

I have been left on the side of the road with no idea where I was or where we were to be staying, and with no money in a foreign country while on holiday.

I was criticised for my parenting, or that the house wasn't 'tidy enough, or if the children or I accidentally 'marked' the timber floor. Dinner could be overcooked or undercooked, not hot enough, not enough flavour, or too spicy- take your pick..it was just 'never right'. I was accused of being lazy when my children were babies because I no longer 'went to work'.

I have had my clothes and belongings thrown out on to our front lawn.

I was 'told' to have an abortion, I was not 'allowed' to cut my hair, and my family were never 'good' enough. I had countless birthdays, Christmases and celebrations with my family spoiled because he would 'make a scene' either before, during or after the event.

I learnt not to get excited about anything, or to admit that I was looking forward to something. I learnt to always have my identification, phone and some money in my pocket, and I learnt to make excuses....to everybody...

It wasn't until after my then husband was sectioned by the Police after he threatened to commit suicide in front of our children that I was even aware that I was in a Domestic violent relationship... after all - he didn't hit me....

It now has been years since my friends intervened and helped me to escape the constant controlling, emotional and psychological bullying and manipulation that my children and I were exposed to. By then, my body had literally started to shut down - my hair was falling out by the handful and I had gone through menopause. I wasn't even forty.

Getting away has not stopped the continuing vengeance and harassment from my ex. I have been reported to and audited by various government agencies. I have been reported to DoCS several times as well as to the Police on many different occasions -but at no time was there found to be any basis to any of the claims my ex had made. He has continued to belittle my parenting, and undermine my relationship with my children. He has fabricated stories of me abusing my children and spread them through my children's school. My vehicle has been deliberately damaged. One weekend I received an inordinate number of voice mail messages when he could not contact me because I was out of phone range for a few days.

However, I am one of the lucky ones. I have a family who have put a roof over mine and my children's heads and I have great friends who continue to support me and pick me up through the hard times. It is not, and has not been easy and I lean on them constantly. I will be forever grateful to them all for this. I have had, and continue to have counseling.

I look forward to being 'normal'.. to not cringing when I hear a raised voice, or having the sick feeling in my stomach, the sweaty palms or pounding heart when I see or hear someone that reminds me of my ex.

I have learnt a lot about me and who I am, and about who I want to be..Even so, I still have good days and bad days.

Today is a good day.

I have chosen to be a survivor - not a victim.
