

Alice #62

I was with my abusive partner for five years and it took me almost all five to realise how bad it really was. Living in fear of everything became so normal I managed to convince myself it was not abusive and her violent responses to everyday things were totally justifiable and reasonable. Being in a lesbian relationship a lot of people assume it does not happen, and if it does, then it is not as severe as heterosexual couples. But it does and it is.

The first time she hit me was the worst, not because it hurt the most physically but because at that point I knew what it was (abuse) and that knowledge emotionally destroyed me. However, I quickly learned not to cry or respond at all as that only made her rage worse. I think the guilt of her actions confused her further and rather than responding with compassion she responded with even more violence.

The day I knew I had to escape was one I'll never forget. The day started as any, normal enough, but that night we went out to a pub, we were both in seemingly good spirits. The pub was closing and I went to go find her so we could beat the crowd, but when I found her she was in the arms of someone else. This was not unusual and I gave no reaction because I knew I would pay for it if I did. But SHE reacted, once out of the pub, she began to shove me, mock me and she let me know what was going to happen once I got home. (She was much worse with a few drinks in her). The ride home was no better: slapping me and threatening me more.

I reached an epiphany moment in my head, being that I was almost completely isolated. I had nowhere to turn, nowhere to go and no one to talk to. I had always been too afraid to fight back or walk away. But I was at breaking point, and I knew either I go down afraid or I go down fighting. So I chose to fight.

When we got home I was just about to call the police and was have her arrested and a VRO placed on her so she couldn't come back. She figured out what was going on and took my phone and smashed it, knocked me to the ground and started to choke me. I had blood in my eyes from the punch that cut my brow open and I was unable to breathe or speak, I passed out listening to her taunts and threats.

Next thing I remember was waking up in bed with her next to me taking my pants off. Her absurd apology (in her mind) for what she had just done...was to have sex with me.

She left for work the next day and I have been free ever since. She no longer had a key thanks to my sticky fingers and I found the courage to speak to friends and select members of my family who ensured she didn't come back. I sought help from councilors and anonymous forums. I am getting better every day and despite everything, I harbor no resentment. What she did is her burden, not mine. I am valuable. I am worthy of something better.

Guilt free and liberated, I am stronger than ever and now able to help others. Ten months on, my only regret is not speaking out sooner.

Do not be afraid. You aren't as alone as you feel.
