

Alice #67

Abuse ... Not a pretty word, not a nice subject, absolutely awful to endure. It's hard enough to be someone's punching /verbal abuse bag without the people who should love you turning their backs because they think you are an idiot to put up with it. To see the scorn and scepticism they view you with as they have absolutely no clue as to how it feels and what abuse does to your mind. So here's a snippet of my truth, a small particle of my suffering and why I put up with it, maybe it can help you to be a rock for someone else who needs it.

Firstly, I was a pretty f**** up teen to be blunt. To say I went off the rails does not even begin to scrape the surface of the situations and life I chose for myself. I have my reasons but they are incredibly personal and painful to put to anyone, even myself ... Let's just say shit went down when I was young and we will leave it at that. I loathed myself, my life and anything good I came in contact with. From the age of 15 to 18, I was mostly drunk, stoned, pilled out or generally wasted on something. I treated my body with more abuse than it should have handled, I was lucky to drag myself out alive, let alone sane.

Finally I got my life on a better track and was working towards a good future in 1991 when two huge things happened. First thing was meeting my partner, the guy who I thought was my sun and stars. Turns out he was more like shit in a septic tank but it took me almost 6 years to figure that out. The second thing was my darling mummy dying; there are no words for the feelings I have for that, just emotion, pain and tears. Now that's enough of a background story, here is the story of why I stayed.

When I first met my partner it was all romance and wonder; long walks together, enjoying sunsets, picnics, incredible sex etc. Mostly stoned, but hey pot is not the issue here, it never was the problem, drugs don't make thugs, thugs chose to behave a certain way and then conveniently blame drugs for it. All my faults and issues lie at my feet, I never will cop out by saying it was the drugs / alcohol, they were symptoms, not the disease itself!

Anyway, as I said, it was all lovey dovey and beautiful, I felt worthwhile and wanted, loved; blissful would be a grand way to describe the start of our relationship. After being together just over 3 months, when we had both declared the 'I love you' we had a few drinks with some pals. On the walk home he got angry with me for the attention someone else gave me and wham, punched me on the arm.

Freaked me out, as my parents were not violent and I had anger issues from the afore mentioned shit going down when I was real young. Straight away he was all apologetic, telling me how it was the drink and his jealousy because he loves me so much. I was shaken but I believed him, thinking hey, I can understand jealousy and all that so I forgave him.

He ruined my brother's wedding for me, I got a supreme beating there, was made to sleep on the floor naked and to get a blanket had to give him sexual pleasure. All because I was dancing with my brothers and their friends, guys who had been like older brothers to me when I was little. To him, my dancing with them meant that I must have been f***** them apparently...sick bastard.

Then he started ramping up the violence and changed the way he acted afterwards. I remember the first time he told me it was my fault, he had laid into me with a broom handle and I had the worst purple welts over my breasts and back. Afterward he turned to me and said it must be ME that makes him act that way, that I was deserving of the beatings. No more making things up to me from here on in, just bash and smash then blame me for it. I accepted the blame, as it seemed legit, I believed that I had no worth except to be a receptacle for his anger and spite and rage. Next two years spent like this, incredibly mean hidings then cruel indifference to my pain.

There was more to this than the hidings by now, he had forbidden me to be anywhere but with him, with my dad or at my work. He threatened all of my nieces and my nephew that I told my brothers about what he was doing. If he found out I was seeing any of my friends or other family, damn, did I get a beating for it. I did not take that though, I kept up friendships hoping he would not ask me what I had done that day as I have great trouble lying...lies go to pieces in my head and it stands out clearly that I am being untruthful.

Again we would break up and get back together with irregularity, I was his thing to do as he wished mostly, I kept my defiance quiet but it was there as was my best friend. She was the one constant who kept saying things weren't right and I had to leave. Thank you babe, if it wasn't for you I don't think I would have made it that far. She was the only one acknowledging what was occurring, I told her things were not cool but I was handling it. Over and over and over again I repeated this lie.

Then he went crazy, or rather crazier. I spent the next year or so surviving viscous and brutal madness, such as the day he steel-cap booted me down one side of my body, I still have the haematoma on my kidney from that, peed blood for a month. To cover it I pushed my scooter off a bank and told everyone I scooted into the bridge then fell down the bank beside it. Good cover story eh, it was believed by most, think that's when dad started to see what was happening. Then there was the time he smashed a glass ashtray on the ground, I had to lick up the splinters and butts as it was my fault he did that ... so lucky that it didn't have many shards of glass, mainly cracked in two, but I did it (far better I did what I was told than spending an hour hunched in a ball being kicked and pummelled).

Mind you, by now I could go off in my head to a place where he couldn't touch me, I would stay there until the rage subsided then leg it for a few hours until he would calm down. I lost count of the nights I spent out hiding under trees in my nightie, giggling insanely to myself praying he would not come looking. Cigarette burns were often on my arms, legs and boobs, those scars fill me with sadness when I look on them. I would get a hiding for laughing at the wrong time, not laughing at something he thought was funny, smiling when I should be frowning, so many rules my head spins round and round trying to keep it all together and failing. Too many other cruelties and sadisms, it was a descent into utter madness, will keep the rest to myself, they hurt to think of.

Meanwhile I had a new area manager at the place I was working and he knew what I was going through the moment he met me. This kind man offered me a way out every time I saw him, I turned him down over and over again but he persisted for a year, another angel not judging me, holding out their hand.

The final straw for me was the morning my partner stabbed me in the knee, smacked me over the back with a chair, pulled out about five handfuls of my hair and smashed my head into the patio. But it wasn't the violence that was the limit, it was his mother asking me what I did this time to get beaten. Seriously, his parents were also saying it was my fault, that's when the little voice of reason clicked on inside my head. I left his place, telling his mother I would never return, went home, told dad everything that had been happening and rang my manager, asking if his offer was still open. I got away and never went back.

Sounds like madness now, was madness then but I thought it was true love. That's how he kept me all that time. He slowly had made me believe I was worthless and only deserved to be treated like a nothing. He made me believe that he was the best thing that would happen to me and only he could give me any worth. He made me push so many people away and retreat inside myself to a place that I still try to bolt to. He made me suspicious of everyone. He gave me nightmares that I still carry to this day. He is the one reason I do not visit several towns near my home. Dad's funeral was terrifying for me, I was so certain I would see him. The worst thing is, I let this complete and utter gobshite do all this, all of this. I think that's the truth that hurts the most.

Don't pity me or anyone else in this, be angry with me for all the f***** out there who abuse anyone or anything.

I look at my babies and hope that they will never be hurt by anyone, but especially by someone who professes love for them.