

## Alice #76

I never thought that I would be in a domestic violence relationship, but if I were, that it would be easy to leave. I especially thought this because I had come from a broken home.

However, when I was still a teenager, I got involved in one. Everyone warned me about this guy. They said that he was no good, and they all questioned what I was doing. But it was my first boyfriend and I thought I was in love. I felt loved.

The abuse started happening straight away: his yelling at me, hitting me in the legs and telling me what I could and couldn't do. He even picked the clothes, so I was pretty much dressed in boys' clothes – definitely nothing slutty. I am a very timid girl, so I never spoke back and always did what I thought he wanted me to do. He was frightening when he went off at me and had a big build and was 10 years older.

The crazy thing is I really thought all the things that he was getting angry about were my fault. I also thought he meant 'sorry' when he hit me. One night, for the first time since getting together, we went to a party and he thought I was going to cheat on him with a girl - he punched me straight in the face in front of everyone; then smashed me up all the way home. I told everyone not to help, but why didn't anyone just call the police? He was scared of my dad and brothers - they were crooks.

So he talked me into moving away with him. My face was swollen and bruised like nothing you've seen before. I was hoping a miracle would happen and I wouldn't be going with him...but there was no miracle. We moved to his family's community. I remember being happy, I remember being scared, I remember every single time he hit me. He wouldn't care if there were people around. He would have sex with me whenever he wanted - it was gross, but at least he wasn't hitting me.

I just sat in my bedroom most of the time. I totally became the person he wanted me to be. I lowered myself to be this beat up young girl. I never spoke back or stepped out of line, and I could not understand how he could still get angry. My parents were beside themselves, but I lied to try and make them believe I was alright. But I wasn't alright - he could have killed me. Every time he bashed me I would have blood coming out of my nose, black eyes or have a knife to my throat. He pushed me that bad that I said "do it, kill me". I'm so lucky he didn't because he had stabbed someone else before – he knew how to do it.

I can't even explain the situation I was in. As I was always bruised, it became normal. I couldn't look at anyone, or talk to anyone - not even his friends, so I just kept to myself. Eventually I fell pregnant to him and convinced him that I should get rid of it. The sickening thing is that I thought that it was my only way out of this relationship alive.

Christmas came around and he was going to spend it in my home town with his ex and his daughter and I would go with my family. I was so messed up that I didn't care, I just wanted to go home. Then his ex pulled out so I didn't think he would let me go. But he did and I got on the bus for an eight hour trip home... with no bruises. He was being so nice because he wanted me to come back to him.

I called him a couple days later and told him that I was not coming back - sure enough the threats began, but I felt safe at home. I would check out every car that passed, scared it would be him. I slowly lost contact with him; I'm now in my twenties.

I haven't had help for my experiences, this is the first time I've spoken out about it. I did some drugs but still have my life together. I feel like there are more important things around me that I have to deal with. I suffer in silence, I'm sure many of us do. It's crazy that something so long ago and so unhealthy could creep into my thoughts every day. I recently had another short abusive relationship and couldn't escape quickly enough.

To watch young girls talk about domestic violence like its normal is heart breaking. What has our society come to? It feels like a dream, but it's not. No one understands the impact it has on my life, but I am a survivor.

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