

## Alice #8

I met and married my abuser and thinking back....I believe I did so with my eyes open.

In the beginning he was charming and attracted to me for my strength and talents. His line to me was that he wanted to 'look after me' that I needed 'looking after.' I actually didn't, I was fine before I met him but in time I fell to those charms, I mean who wouldn't want to be looked after right?

Trouble started six months into our relationship with him having aggressive outbursts - which remained verbally abusive and didn't become physical...that was to come later. He would always apologise, blame it on the alcohol and with the promise that he would improve, we continued on.

By this stage I felt I did love him and he me...(as he told me constantly) and we married. A few weeks back from our honeymoon things turned physically violent - I was 'his wife' by that stage and felt trapped...and that all he did was 'out of love'....right? That is what he told me.

By this stage the drug problem that he had been hiding had come out which only made matters worse. Friday nights were really bad as he would unwind from work with alcohol and drugs and I would cop it. As well as the physical, he would constantly swear at me and call me stupid.

He pushed me around, threw me against walls and his favourite was to choke me. You may not believe it, but I didn't think I was being abused by him as he had never 'hit me with his fist.'

He began to isolate me from my friends and family over time and I knew that if he succeeded I would never get away. It was just after our wedding anniversary....yes I hung in there....it was my second marriage and I was too embarrassed to fail again.

This particular night things had got pretty bad; I remember bolting myself in the bedroom and sitting on the end of the bed in a trance. A voice....I believed was my inner voice, my soul, was saying over and over: "get out ...get out....get out!" I ignored the voice and just sat there until the words turned into: "Okay....push your weight onto your feet....get up....put one foot in front of the other and get out!" I didn't move as I felt frozen with fear.

The next morning I awoke to him looking at me and saying "What the F&\*k happened to you?" (To this day I don't know if he was a very good liar or if he truly didn't remember what he did.) He would say this after each episode.

That day was different however. That voice didn't go away and after three days of 'why didn't you leave?' going through my head, I grabbed a note pad and pen and loudly proclaimed to whoever it was that was in my head, that these are the reasons I didn't leave:

- 1) I'm too fat and frumpy, no one will want me
- 2) I have no job
- 3) I have no money
- 4) I have no prospects
- 5) I have lost contact with many of my friends
- 6) Both our names are on the rental lease and he will get into arrears if I leave, making me responsible
- 7) I'm embarrassed I got into this

After reading my list I felt quite calm and realised that I couldn't lose 20 kilos overnight, but I could change the lease. So I called the real estate agent saying that my financial situation had changed and to take my name off the lease (issuing a new one) and as soon as this happened I felt some power come back into my life.

With this tiny bit of power I turned my life around. I found a book in the library called 'The Verbally Abusive Relationship' by Patricia Evans and I found 'him' and me on every page. This book taught me to take my power back and was the catalyst for me finally leaving. I would highly recommend it.

Also I called an Abusive hotline and said that I wasn't sure if I was being abused or not, however, once I told the person what I experienced, she was able to confirm that yes I was (being abused) and encouraged me to get out.

So over the next few weeks this happened:

I started secretly training online in an area which always interested me but I can't say here as it will reveal too much of who I am. I did this with borrowed money from friends and I qualified all without his knowing. This lead me to running my own business and I started to build up money in my own account.

I reconnected with my friends and told them the truth and their support was incredible. So one night I called my oldest and dearest friend whilst I was barricaded in my bedroom in our flat. My husband came through the door and smashed my phone but not before my friends were on their way.

To this day I don't know how to thank her.....she entered a very volatile situation, grabbed me and gently walked me out whilst he threatened to kill her. She got us out by saying to him "I will bring her back when you calm down. I never went back and I have never looked back."

I now run my own successful business and am in a relationship with the most amazing man and shed those unwanted kilos in good time.

I have come to a place where I have forgiven him but I will never forget.

I went against my 'true self' and I will never do that again. My advice to anyone in a domestic violence situation is to never lose complete contact with your friends and family and if you have none then find some online. Your abuser wants to control you and if you are alone it is so much easier to do. On the flip side of my leaving was the most incredible life that was out there for me once I had the strength to leave.

I'm not going to say it was easy. I had no home for a while and couch surfed at people's houses until I found my way - but it was worth it.

I heard on the grape vine that he is doing this again to his new girl. I can only pray that she gets out.....

So, that is my story. I don't know if it reads well and will be appropriate, but I would like to help and empower others. Thank you for the opportunity.

Kind regards,  
Alice #8