

When condoning evil,

silence becomes a crime.

–Anonymous

The Dynamics of

Domestic Violence

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WHAT IS DOMESTIC VIOLENCE?

Domestic violence—also known as domestic abuse, spousal abuse, battering, family violence, dating abuse, and intimate partner violence—is a pattern of behavior that involves abuse by one partner against another in an intimate relationship such as marriage, cohabitation, dating, or within a family. It is experienced by women, men, and children. Its purpose is for one individual to maintain power and control over the other(s).

THE PROBLEM

"I believe that there is a devil, and here's Satan's agenda. First, he doesn't want anyone having kids. Secondly, if they do conceive, he wants them killed. If they're not killed through abortion, he wants them neglected or abused physically, emotionally, sexually . . . One way or another, the legions of hell want to destroy children because children become the future adults and leaders. If they can warp or wound a child, he or she becomes a warped or wounded adult who passes on this affliction to the next generation" (Terry Randall in *TIME Magazine*, October 21, 1991).

"The problem of wife abuse is not one of feminism, secular humanism, or a lack of headship in the home. It is the problem of evil—unseen and unopposed" (James and Phyllis Alsdurf, *Battered Into Submission*, Illinois: Varsity Press, 1986, p. 61).

"People with strong religious beliefs stay longer in abusive relationships because it gets mixed up with their faith beliefs" (Dr. Nancy Nason-Clark, *When Terror Strikes the Christian Home*. Keynote Address of The Awakening Conference, 2008, Ft. Lauderdale, FL).

"The reign of violence within many homes is evidence most basically of Satan's kingdom at work destroying order, love and happiness in human relationships. And until we enter the arena of domestic violence willing to battle evil, our efforts to see violence stopped and families transformed will be ineffective at best. We cannot dismiss evil as some vague spiritual force that presides outside of human behavior. Evil is rooted in a superhuman personality: Satan. And when people are violent, hostile, argumentative, deceiving, accumulating, as it were, a treasure of evil goods within the economy of Satan, they gradually permit Satan to restructure their character and own them. Whether using psychological or theological language, the truth remains that acts of evil are acts of sin. They are assaults on God's moral laws. They separate the evildoer from God and from fellow human beings . . ." (James and Phyllis Alsdurf, *Battered Into Submission*, Illinois: Varsity Press, 1986, p. 62).

“We further speculate that most often the violence that is brought against women in the Christian world is not physical. From what we have learned, the emotional abuse and manipulation of Christian women is far more frequent than physical abuse. In fact, men who perceive their position before God as superior to that of women generally will not need to resort to physical violence. When a man can psychologically overpower his wife and justify his actions through a misapplication of Scripture, physical violence is less necessary. There are many ways to inflict violence, to violate what God has created” (*Ibid*, p. 150).

THE FACTS

On average, 24 people per minute are victims of rape, physical violence, or stalking by an intimate partner in the United States—more than 12 million women and men over the course of a year (<http://www.cdc.gov/ViolencePrevention/index.html>).

Nearly three in ten women (29 percent) and one in ten men (10 percent) in the U.S. have experienced rape, physical violence, and/or stalking by a partner and report a related impact on their functioning (<http://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/intimatepartnerviolence/index.html>).

Forty to 60 percent of children living in homes where adult abuse occurs also experience direct abuse themselves. All experience indirect abuse (Wright R.J.; Wright R.O.; Isaac N.E.;1997, *Response to battered mothers in the pediatric emergency department: A call for an approach to family violence*, Pediatrics 1997, vol. 99, no.2. pp.186-192).

Religion is NOT a deterrent . . . there is just as much abuse (spousal, child, and sexual abuse) in Christian homes as in non-Christian homes (Lee Bowker, “Religious Victims and Their Religious Leaders: Services Delivered to One Thousand Battered Women by the Clergy,” *Abuse and Religion* 230-31).

CHARACTERISTICS OF ABUSERS AND VICTIMS

Where do abusers come from? Does abusive behavior lie dormant until abusers connect with someone whom they can overpower and victimize? Are they abusive to everyone or just a few people? Does abusive behavior come on slowly over the course of life, or does it suddenly happen because of some precipitating circumstance? These are all questions we wonder when we hear about the terrible injuries and shocking deaths that are caused by people who abuse their spouses or partners. Let’s look a bit closer at abusers and see what we can learn from them.

NOTE: For clarity, “he” is used to indicate an abuser, and “she” is used to indicate a victim. But ANYONE can be an abuser or a victim.

The Abuser

1. Quick Involvement

An abusive individual sometimes seeks commitment from a partner within a few weeks or days of meeting. He comes on strong and gives the impression that she is the only one who can help him, that he needs her, that without her he is nothing. Because of her need to be needed and her desire to take care of someone, she finds his overtures appealing and makes the commitment, even against her better judgment and counsel from others. She might have experienced abuse in her past and now feels valued because here is someone who seems to really love her and wants her. **His intent is to get her in his grasp before she is able to really get to know him.**

2. Isolation

As the relationship progresses he takes up much of her time. He tells her that he wants to spend every spare moment with her because he can’t stop thinking about her and misses her. He convinces her that she does not need to be with other people because his love is enough. Slowly her support network diminishes, for he is always there, dominating her time, energy, and activities. Very soon she loses contact with her relatives and friends and becomes emotionally dependent on him. He tells her that she needs only him in her life and that other people do not understand how much she means to him. She believes him because she needs to for her own feeling of self-worth. **His intent is to keep others from influencing her against having a relationship with him.**

3. Manipulation and Control

At the beginning of the relationship, the abuser shows some signs of control and possessiveness. Initially this is interpreted by her as his being “jealous” of others because he loves her so much. As the relationship deepens, she tries to make him feel secure by assuring him that he is the only man in her life. He begins to control where she goes, what she does, whom she sees, what she wears, her make-up, hairstyle, friends, etc. He sometimes gets angry if she is late for an appointment with him. He accuses her of flirting, being unfaithful, or having affairs. He begins to make it difficult for her to continue regular activities such as going to school, church, parties, etc. He drops by her job unexpectedly or calls her frequently to make sure that she is where she said she would be. He does not value her point of view. His opinions, attitudes, beliefs and value system must always prevail. **His intent is to control and manipulate her thinking, opinions, time, and space so that her worldview will be the same as his.**

4. Manipulation and Control of Others

He is charming and convinces everyone outside the family that he is a

good person. He appears to be the ideal husband, father, or partner to most people. In many situations, the victim is seen as the problem in the relationship and others sympathize with him because of the “kind of woman” she is. Unsuspecting individuals are fooled by the abuser who manipulates them into believing that he is the one who has been victimized. His intent is to convince others that she is crazy so they will focus on her inadequacies rather than on his abuse.

5. Unrealistic Expectations

He wants her to take care of all of his needs. He rationalizes that if she truly loves him, she’ll be able to anticipate his needs and fulfill them. She should always be willing to do what is right for him. He makes her feel guilty if his life does not go the way he thinks it should and blames her whenever anything goes wrong. He expects her to sacrifice everything so that his dreams can come true. He establishes rules and regulations, but changes them to suit his fancy and expects her to abide by them at all times. **His intent is to demean her and make her feel incompetent, inadequate, and inefficient.**

6. Moody

Victims become confused about their abuser’s moodiness. At times he is very loving and compassionate. But at other times he is hateful, vengeful, and critical. Abusers often have wildly fluctuating moods, giving them a Dr. Jekyll/Mr. Hyde personality. Some people may excuse this as mental illness. While it is apparent that the abuser has an emotional problem, he is not mentally ill because he is able to control his environment and others from seeing his abusive nature. Furthermore, the victim is frequently intimidated by her fear that he will fall into a bad mood, so she tries to prevent him from getting angry. **His intent is to keep her close to him by giving her what she most desires—his love and attention—when he decides she is worthy of it.**

7. Blaming and Shaming

He blames her and everyone else for his problems, if he admits that he has them. If confronted with this behavior, he gets angry and retaliates and justifies his hurt feelings by lashing out at her and others. If he makes a mistake he says it’s because of her or someone else. He also blames her for his feelings, because if she “did it right” or “said it right” he would not appear to be deficient. He shames her into believing that she is the cause of his mistakes and does not know how to treat a man. **His intent is to make her and others responsible for his behavior; therefore, if he is abusive it’s “their fault.”**

8. Sexually Abusive

He will force himself on his partner and tries to get his sexual needs met at any cost. He shows little or no concern for her satisfaction and

might even resort to raping her. He demands sex when she is tired or sick. He encourages her to look at pornography against her will to “get her in the mood.” **His intent is to make her fearful and to let her know that she is his property.**

9. Rigid Role Expectations

He often has negative feelings toward women. He talks harshly about them and degrades them. Women fit into one role: dependent, submissive, compliant, while men fit into another role: boss, decision-maker, dominant, and tough. **His intent is to keep her stuck into one mold.**

10. Low Self-Esteem

He has a poor self-image and feels intimidated if his partner is more competent or better qualified than him at anything. He resorts to put downs, name calling, and other forms of abuse directed at her. He feels that he is not good enough; therefore, if he is able to place himself above others, this will give him more self-worth and feelings of value. **His intent is to put others down so that he’ll feel better about himself.**

11. Home Life/History of Abuse

He has experienced violence or witnessed abusive situations as a child. He learned that he can get what he wants if he uses control tactics or violence. He may have witnessed his father abusing his mother, or he was abused by parents or siblings, relatives, etc. If he abused someone in the past and was not held accountable, it is likely that he’ll do it again. Because his behavior is not challenged, he believes that it is normal. **His intent is to continue a way of life that appears normal and gives him his desired results, because he is fearful that if he changes he’ll lose power and control.**

12. Cruelty and Destruction of Property

He tends to be cruel to animals and punishes them brutally or is insensitive to their pain and suffering. This cruelty can also be demonstrated when he expects others to be capable of doing things beyond their ability. For example, he might whip a one-year-old child for wetting his diaper. He will destroy property belonging to the victim and gets irritated with her sentimentalism. **His intent is to get rid of anything that will take away attention from his authority.**

13. Hypersensitivity

He gets easily insulted and thinks that everyone is “out to get him.” The slightest setback is seen as a personal attack. He rants and raves about the injustice of things that have happened to him, things that are really just a part of living, such as having to work over time, getting a traffic ticket, having to repeat a task, etc. **His intent is to be seen as perfect or “having it all together” in order to hide the lack of control he has over his own life and emotions.**

14. Intimidation

He exhibits gestures that can lead to physical violence such as hitting walls, throwing objects, name calling. A victim tells the story of how her abuser intimidated her and their children so that they would obey him. She reports that he never hit her, but found out that she was planning to leave him. One day he told her and their three children to stand in front of him. Then he took their pet dog, broke its neck, and told her that if she ever left him that's what he would do to her and the children. She was so intimidated by his behavior that it took her years to get out of the relationship. **His intent is to never lose.**

15. Displaced Aggression

Consciously or unconsciously he finds fault with something that is not related to his present problems. Rather than look at his own needs and issues, he focuses on other things, such as something that happened at work. He begins to rationalize that it was not right what his boss said about him. He begins to build resentment and, rather than confront his boss, he abuses his partner. **His intent is to take out his anger on those in his control, rather than risk getting punished by those he believes have control over him.**

It is important to note once again that women are also abusive in about 25 percent of reported cases. Women who abuse often manifest the same behaviors as male abusers, while male victims may exhibit the characteristics of a female victim. (Anyone can be an abuser or a victim!)

The Victim

The following are characteristics of an abuse victim. Even though previous abuse and low self-esteem may be risk factors for becoming a victim, anyone can fall prey to abuse. Embarrassment, shock, or fear for children's well-being may keep the victim in a relationship with an abuser. Studies also reveal that women who expect God to miraculously deliver them from such relationships without taking decided steps to help themselves are at high risk to remain in an abusive relationship.

1. Quick Involvement

She has probably been hurt in former relationships or does not feel she is good enough to be loved for who she is. She has low self-esteem. She finds it difficult to protect herself. **She feels that if a man pays her intense attention she should give in to his demands because he might be her last or only chance for an intimate relationship or marriage.**

2. Isolated

She feels that she is alone and that no one understands her predicament. She tends to isolate herself from family and friends

out of fear of angering her partner. She often feels uneasy around other people, especially authority figures and individuals with strong, assertive personalities. **Even though she isolates herself, she is fearful of rejection and abandonment.**

3. Judges Self Harshly

She perpetuates negative messages heard from her family of origin (or significant others) and judges herself and others harshly based on those messages without challenging whether the messages are true or accurate. Because she is often isolated from friends and/or family who could give her positive messages about her value, she has only the negative feedback from her abuser. **She feels hopelessly deficient in most ways.**

4. Seeks Approval, Affirmation, Recognition, and Acceptance

Because she is desperate for love, acceptance, affirmation, and approval, she'll do anything to make people like her. Not wanting to hurt others, she remains loyal in situations and relationships even when evidence indicates that the loyalty is undeserved. **She often attracts emotionally unavailable people with addictive personalities.**

5. Blaming

She lives life as a victim, blaming others for her circumstances, and is attracted to controlling people who like to "take charge." She often confuses love with pity and tends to love people she can take care of or rescue. **Because of her intense desire to be needed, she interprets her abuser's dependency on her as love.**

6. Super-responsible or super-irresponsible behavior

She takes responsibility for solving others' problems or expects others to be responsible for solving hers. This is not surprising, since her abuser tells her that what he does is her fault. She might wait for someone else to save her from her relationship, whether it is another person or God. **She avoids being responsible for her own life and choices.**

7. Co-dependent

She has difficulty with intimacy, security, trust, and commitment in her relationships. Because her abuser has made her focus on his needs, wishes, and requirements, she often loses sight of who she is as an individual. **Lacking clearly defined personal limits and boundaries, she becomes enmeshed in her partner's needs and erratic emotions.**

8. Controlling

An abused individual has a strong need to be in control. An abuser keeps her focused on trivial demands such as the time of meals, the

type of clothes she wears, or the rules of the house. She hopes that if she carefully controls these things, she will not be abused. When her abuser harms her and criticizes the way she has complied with his rules, she may feel that she did not do something correctly and becomes more controlling of her surroundings. **She overreacts to change, especially those things over which she has no control. It is one way to survive.**

9. Dependent

She has a dependent personality that is terrified of abandonment, so she stays in situations or relationships that are harmful to her. Her fears and dependency stop her from ending unfulfilling relationships and prevent her from entering into fulfilling ones. Because she feels so unlovable, it is difficult or impossible for her to believe that anyone can really love her for who she is. So she does everything to please others in the hopes of being good enough to merit love from them. **She has difficulty understanding and defining a healthy relationship in which her needs are also considered and attended to.**

10. Denies Feelings

She denies, minimizes, or represses her feelings as a result of her traumatic childhood or the painful relationship in which she finds herself now. She may be unaware of the impact that her inability to identify and express her feelings has had on her adult life. She has a difficult time maintaining intimate relationships. **She often describes herself as feeling numb.**

11. Helplessness and Hopelessness

Denial, isolation, control, shame, and unfounded guilt are legacies from her family of origin. As a result of these symptoms, she feels hopeless and helpless. She thinks of herself in defeating ways, for she has been taught that nothing she does will make a difference. She believes she cannot do anything right, and this is reinforced by her abuser. **She believes that she has little or no power and control over either her own life or external events that can impact her.**

12. Impulsive

An abused woman can sometimes take a decisive position without giving serious consideration to alternative behaviors or possible consequences as a result of her actions. Because she is often not allowed to make her own decisions, there are times when she makes rapid, unwise decisions because she isn't practiced at using her own volition. **At times she becomes confused, self-loathing, and feels victimized by others.**

13. Serious and Burdened

She finds it difficult to have fun, especially if she had an unhealthy childhood. Consider the fear a person would experience if they felt that they had to daily answer for their behavior, whereabouts, decisions, and behaviors. **Constant criticism and disappointed hopes for a happy relationship often drain the joy from her life experience.**

THE BATTERING OR ABUSE CYCLE

Phase 1: Tension Building

1. During this phase, minor battering incidents occur. The victim often attempts to calm the abuser, trying to meet his every whim. The victim becomes compliant or stays out of his way. Not only does she stay in the environment, she also believes she can stop his anger.
2. The victim is not interested in reality, but wishes to stop the abuse. She denies her own anger and rationalizes the situation. She tries to control events and other people in the environment around the abuser, trying to avoid all incidents that might provoke an attack.
3. Tension may be with the family (finances, health problems, children, etc.) or from the environment (employment or unemployment, family members, isolation, etc.). Even activities that appear to be positive, like a new baby, promotion at work, etc., cause added stress.
4. She may postpone the violence, but she can't prevent it. If there are no outlets for frustration or ways to cope with built-up anger, tension will build to explosion by the abuser.

Phase 2: Acute Battering Incident

1. In the tension-building phase, there is a point where the victim can no longer control the environment. The process ceases to respond to controls and predictability. Both abuser and victim realize the attack and release of tension, which has been building, is inevitable.
2. The abuser usually accepts the fact that his rage is out of control. He starts by being able to justify his behavior for himself and, in the actual incident, doesn't understand what has happened.
3. This phase is usually set off by an external event or inherent state of the abuser.
4. The victim sometimes provokes a Phase 2 incident to get it over with, not because she enjoys the beating, but because the tension becomes unbearable. When this happens, they could have been together long enough to recognize some sort of cycle to the battering. The victim knows what will follow Phase 2.

5. This phase is briefer than the first and third phases and usually occurs in private. Lack of control or predictability characterizes this phase.
6. The attacks are of a serious nature. Reasoning with the abuser or silence may anger him more. He often cannot stop the attack, even when the victim is seriously injured. This is commonly the phase in which police are called and/or death occurs. ***This is the time for intervention!***
7. After the attack, the cycle moves into Phase 3.

Phase 3: Honeymoon

1. The tension built up in Phase 1 and released in Phase 2 is gone. This is a period of calm that is welcomed by both victim and abuser.
2. The abuser exhibits charming, loving, kind, and contrite behavior (Jekyll/Hyde). He believes that he will never again hurt his victim because he has taught her a lesson. He convinces everyone he is sincere. He often begs for forgiveness. He is so charming, the victim easily believes she is seeing the real or new him. The victim is most vulnerable now and has a false sense of hope because she wants to believe him. She often feels lonely.
3. If the victim leaves: In response to her escape, the abuser intensifies his attempts to contact her. He begs for forgiveness and makes several promises. The abuser seeks help (counseling, religion), thinking it will enable him to get her back and often enlists friends, relatives, anyone (including pastors) to help him hold on to the victim. Because they believe his sincerity, they often work to get the couple back together and make the victim feel guilty for leaving. If the victim returns home too soon, the abuser ends counseling, stops going to church, etc., and the battering continues as the relationship renews itself.
4. When the victim stays through this phase, lovemaking is intense and bonds them together.
5. When this phase is complete, the couple moves back into Phase 1 and repeats the cycle.

TIME VARIES IN EACH PHASE; VIOLENCE ESCALATES; SELF-ESTEEM FOR ALL INVOLVED DECREASES

FORMS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Domestic violence comprises a wide range of types of abuse. Incidents are not generally a one-time event, but can be seen as forming part of a coercive pattern of controlling behavior. Not all behaviors would necessarily fall within the criminal law. Since statistics indicate that the greater percentage of abusers are male, abusers will be referred to as he/him and the victim as she/her. However, ***anyone can be abusive or abused.***

Physical

- Slapping
- Pushing/shoving
- Pushing downstairs
- Kicking/hitting
- Hitting with objects
- Restraining/holding down
- Banging head against wall or floor
- Blacking eyes
- Biting
- Breaking bones
- Burning
- Scalding
- Shaking
- Suffocating or choking
- Tying hands and/or feet
- Throwing objects
- Using a weapon
- Stabbing
- Stripping of clothing
- Forcing her to drink alcohol or take drugs
- Withholding medication
- Withholding care for disabled
- Holding her head underwater

Sexual

- Raping her
- Insisting on sex anytime/ anywhere
- Refusing to have sex
- Having affairs to humiliate her
- Having sex with others in front of her
- Denying or criticizing her sexuality
- Expecting her to have sex after being abused

- Forcing sexual acts she does not like
- Forcing her to watch pornography
- Forcing sadomasochistic activity
- Forcing her to perform sex acts with or in front of other people
- Refusing her access to contraception
- Forcing abortion
- Sexually abusing her children

Intimidation

- Making her afraid with looks, actions, gestures
- Breaking objects/valued possessions
- Driving dangerously
- Being violent to others to teach her a lesson
- Hurting her children or pet
- Telling stories about how he has hurt others
- Keeping her locked in a room
- Taking away her possessions/ clothing
- Intimidating others so they do not intervene
- Harassing her after separation

Threats

- Writing threatening letters or making threatening phone calls
- Preventing her use of the phone
- Mocking or humiliating her
- Threatening physical and/or sexual violence

- Threatening with weapons or objects
- Threatening to kill her
- Threatening to take her children
- Threatening to harm a loved one or pet
- Threatening self-harm or suicide
- Threatening to deport her
- Threatening to exclude her from her family or community
- Threatening to make her lose her job
- Exposing things she is ashamed of to others

Isolation

- Restricting her movement
- Preventing her from keeping appointments
- Timing her movements
- Accompanying her/following her everywhere
- Making decisions for her
- Making her work long hours
- Preventing her from working
- Isolating her from friends and family
- Making her friends and family afraid to contact her
- Turning her family and friends against her
- Isolating her from her community
- Telling her no one cares about her
- Taking away her documents/papers/passport
- Telling her children lies about her
- Having her children taken away
- Being obsessively possessive/jealous
- Allowing her no privacy
- Preventing her from leaving/escaping

Mental/Psychological

- Making her put things back in an

- exact order
- Finding endless trivial tasks for her to do
- Making her redo tasks after finding fault with what she has done
- Enforcing a routine only to change it at any time
- Preventing her from sleeping/eating/using the restroom
- Withdrawing affection
- Ignoring her
- Repeatedly interrogating her
- Behaving unpredictably
- Continually breaking promises
- Making her do things she doesn't want to in order to prove her love

Economic

- Preventing her from getting or keeping a job
- Preventing her from studying
- Destroying her work
- Taking her money
- Refusing to allow her to have money
- Demanding receipts for all spending
- Making her ask or beg for money
- Keeping her misinformed about her entitlements
- Incurring debts and expecting her to pay them
- Forcing her to commit fraud
- Making her give him money
- Not having her name on bank accounts/loans
- Preventing her from writing checks

Verbal

- Shouting/screaming
- Insulting
- Undermining
- Telling her what to wear
- Criticizing her abilities

- Telling her she is mad, ugly, stupid, worthless, bad mother, etc.
- Making her accept that his behavior is normal
- Telling her no one would believe her
- Telling her he abuses her because he loves her

Minimization/Denial

- Minimizing the harm he has caused

- Denying that any abuse has taken place
- Telling her it is her fault

Spiritual/Religious

- Making her feel it is her Christian duty to stay
- Using Scripture to justify abuse
- Using Scripture to defend men's superiority
- Lack of respect for female leadership in the church
- Portraying God as vindictive/cruel

SCRIPTURES TWISTED TO JUSTIFY DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Victims who are Christians often stay in abusive relationships because Scriptures misquoted and misinterpreted from the pulpit do not seem to give them any other option.

"For the husband is the head of the wife" (Ephesians 5:23).

"What God has joined together, let no man put asunder" (Matthew 19:6).

"Turn the other cheek" (Matthew 5:38, 39).

"Do good to them that hate you. Pray for them that despitefully use you" (Matthew 5:24).

"Let your women learn to keep silent in the churches" (1 Corinthians 14:34).

"Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in everything" (Ephesians 5:24).

"Likewise, ye wives, be in subjection to your own husbands" (1 Peter 3:1).

"Forgive and you shall be forgiven" (Luke 6:37).

"And let the wife see that she respects her husband" (Ephesians 5:33).

"Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands" (Ephesians 5:22).

"The wife hath not power of her own body, but the husband" (1 Corinthians 7:4).

SCRIPTURES FOR ABUSE-FREE RELATIONSHIPS

Physical Abuse

"So husbands ought to love their own wives as their own bodies; he who loves his wife loves himself. For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as the Lord does the church" (Ephesians 5:28, 29).

“Beloved, I pray that you may prosper in all things and be in health, just as your soul prospers” (3 John 1:2).

Emotional Abuse

“Husbands, in the same way be considerate as you live with your wives, and treat them with respect as the weaker partner and as heirs with you of the gracious gift of life, so that nothing will hinder your prayers” (1 Peter 3:7).

Economic Abuse

“If anyone does not provide for his relatives, and especially for his immediate family, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever” (1 Timothy 5:8).

Sexual Abuse

“Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ” (Ephesians 5:21).

Using Children

“And you, fathers, do not provoke your children to wrath, but bring them up in the training and admonition of the Lord” (Ephesians 6:4).

Threats

“Finally, all of you, live in harmony with one another; be sympathetic, live as brothers, be compassionate and humble. Do not repay evil with evil or insult with insult” (Ephesians 5:8, 9).

Using Male Privilege

“Husbands ought to love their wives as their own bodies” (Ephesians 5:28).

Intimidation

“He must turn from evil and do good; he must seek peace and pursue it. For the eyes of the Lord are on the righteous and His ears are attentive to their prayer, but the face of the Lord is against those who do evil” (1 Peter 3:11, 12).

LIBERATING SCRIPTURES FOR VICTIMS

“For God has not given any of His children a spirit of fear, but a spirit of power, of love and of a sound mind” (2 Timothy 1:7).

“For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the Lord, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future” (Jeremiah 29:11).

“Though the mountains be shaken and the hills be removed, yet my unfailing love for you will not be shaken nor my covenant of peace be removed,” says the Lord, who has compassion on you (Isaiah 54:10).

“You will be secure, because there is hope; you will look about you and take your rest in safety. You will lie down, with no one to make you afraid . . .” (Job 11:18, 19).

“Peace I leave with you. My peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid . . .” (John 14:27).

“I have loved you with an everlasting love, therefore with loving kindness I will draw you” (Jeremiah 31:3).

“Cause me to hear your lovingkindness in the morning, for in you do I trust. Cause me to know the way in which I should walk, for I lift up my soul to you” (Psalm 143:8-11).

“But you, O Lord, are a shield around me, my glory, and the one who lifts my head high” (Psalm 3:3).

“Those who look to God for help will be radiant with joy; no shadow of shame will darken their faces” (Psalm 34:5).

“Fear not; for thou shalt not be ashamed, neither be thou confounded; for thou shalt not be put to shame: for thou shalt forget the shame of thy youth and not remember the reproach of thy widowhood anymore” (Isaiah 54:4).

“No weapon turned against you will succeed. And everyone who tells lies in court will be brought to justice. These benefits are enjoyed by the servants of the Lord; their vindication will come from Me” (Isaiah 54:17).

LIBERATING SCRIPTURES FOR ABUSERS

“And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God in Christ forgave you” (Ephesians 4:32).

“Be kindly affectionate one to another with brotherly love; in honor preferring one another” (Romans 12:10).

“Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering. Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye” (Colossians 3:12, 13).

“And to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity”
(2 Peter 1:7).

“My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed
and in truth” (1 John 3:18).

“Should you not also have had compassion on your fellow servant, just as I
had pity on you?” (Matthew 18:33).

“If it is possible, as much as depends on you, live peaceably with all men
(Romans 12:18).

“Let us therefore follow after the things which make for peace, and things
wherewith one may edify another” (Romans 14:19).

“But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and
easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and
without hypocrisy” (James 3:17).

“And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works”
(Hebrews 10:24).

“Be ye all of one mind, having compassion one of another, love as brethren,
be pitiful, be courteous” (1 Peter 3:8).

“Finally, brethren, farewell. Be perfect, be of good comfort, be of one mind,
live in peace; and the God of love and peace shall be with you”
(2 Corinthians 13:11).

HOW WE CONDONE DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

When we turn a deaf ear to the cries of people who are hurting as a result
of domestic violence, we are condoning it.

When we put our heads in the sand and pretend that it does not exist in “my
church or home,” we are perpetuating its continuance.

When we do not take personal responsibility for our unresolved anger as a
result of our personal hurts and pain, or refuse to get professional help and
lash out at others, we perpetuate domestic violence.

When older women stay in abusive relationships, they give younger women
the message that it is all right to take the abuse for the sake of the children,
marriage, or church.

When older men show little or no respect for women and offer derogatory
remarks about their roles, bodies, or skills, disregard for the female gender
is fostered in younger men.

When parents victimize each other and do not model healthy behaviors in
the home or create safe environments in which their children can grow and
thrive, they contribute to the inter-generational cycle of abuse.

When pastors do not allow the disciplinary process to occur for abusive
church officers, or if they abuse their congregation and maintain power
and control in the church, they perpetuate an abusive and unsafe religious
experience and environment for church members.

When church administrators and leaders fail to hold an abuser accountable
for his/her actions by permitting him/her to transfer from one district to
another without getting professional help to deal with his/her problems, or
they do not provide or support educational programs to address the issue,
they perpetuate abusive systems of worship and church government.

When teachers and educators disrespect their students and devalue their
opinions, thoughts, and expressions, a controlling and abusive system of
education is remembered by the students.

When church leaders and members do not financially (or otherwise)
support programs, services, or facilities that provide safety, healing, and
resources for victims and abusers, they contribute to the prevalence of
domestic violence.

When individuals are ostracized, criticized, condemned, marginalized,
disfellowshipped, and demoralized when they leave an abusive relationship
or consider divorce because of domestic violence, we inadvertently
encourage them to stay in the relationship or leave the church.



When we are silent

“Silence means consent.” –Author unknown

“When condoning evil, silence becomes a crime.”
–Author unknown

“In the end, we will remember not the words of our enemies,
but the silence of our friends.” –Martin Luther King, Jr.

“The most profound statements are often said in silence.”
–Lynn Johnston

“Saying nothing . . . sometimes says the most.”
–Emily Dickinson

EFFECTS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

On Women

- Isolation from others
- Depression
- Increased alcohol and drug use
- Lost work time, decreased productivity
- Emotional problems
- Low self-esteem/self-respect
- Illness
- Suppression of anger
- Pain and injuries
- Permanent physical damage
- Helplessness
- Poverty
- Martyr-like attitude
- Death
- Eating/physical disorders

On Children

- Developmental delays
- Emotional problems
- Low self-esteem/self-respect
- Illness
- Increased fear/anger
- Repeated abusive behavior
- Pseudo maturity
- Truancy
- Poor communication skills
- Poor grades
- Confusion with identity role
- Lack of respect for authority
- Health problems
- Promiscuity

On Men

- Increased belief that power and control are legitimately achieved by violence
- Increase in violent behavior
- Increased contact with law enforcement
- Emotional problems
- Decreased self-esteem/self-respect

On the Community

- Increase in crime
- Increase in legal, police, medical, and counseling costs
- Cost of prison
- Lost work time
- Perpetuation of generational cycle of violence
- Decrease in general quality of life
- Breakdown of the structure and function of a family

On the Church

- Loss of members because of failure to believe and protect victims
- Belief that God does not care for victims
- Belief that God is a respecter of powerful persons
- Misrepresentation of God's love for His children
- Misrepresentation of Bible texts that perpetuate wrong concepts of headship, submission, rules, and roles
- Lawsuits
- Disillusionment with church and its practice of doctrines
- Spirit of criticism, perfectionism, and judgmental attitudes
- Lack of trust in leadership
- Lack of respect for leadership
- Worldliness
- Lack of faith in the brotherhood/sisterhood of Christ
- Church viewed as being more concerned about rules and traditions than about principles
- Church viewed as valuing people/members for what they do (or can do) for the church rather than who they are (or can be) in the Lord

INDIVIDUAL AND COMMUNITY RESPONSE TO DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

"Treatment of families experiencing violence and abuse requires integrating the needs of the whole person. Thus, the importance of developing a shared understanding and cooperation between secular and religious helpers to deal with family violence cannot be emphasized too strongly" (Marie M. Fortune, "A Workshop Manual for Clergy and Other Service Providers," published by the Center for the Prevention of Sexual and Domestic Violence).

- Educate yourself and become aware of the dynamics of domestic violence: read books, watch videos, attend workshops, seminars, etc.
- Be proactive in contacting and assisting programs in your area that provide safety, advocacy, support and other needed services for victims and perpetrators.
- Promote a victim-centered response to violence and access to community resources.
- Hold offenders accountable.
- Ensure all communities, including underserved populations, affected by domestic violence have a voice and access to culturally appropriate responses and resources.
- Promote a collective position on awareness of domestic violence as a community problem and a community responsibility to prevent it and an intervention protocol when it occurs.
- Establish a coordinated community response to domestic violence to include representatives from law enforcement, the school system, mental health professionals, district attorneys, child protection services, clergy, healthcare professionals, victim advocates, programs for offenders, elder abuse, politicians, and probation officers.
- Contact your local representative to ensure laws are instituted and upheld that will help to prevent domestic violence, provide safety and services for victims, and accountability of abusers.

SAFETY PLAN FOR VICTIMS WITH A PROTECTION ORDER

- Go to court house (clerk's office) and file for a Personal Protection Order (PPO).
- If possible, have witnesses other than family members go to court with you, as the court may assume that family members will lie for you.
- Keep a journal and document every violation by the abuser.
- Call the police EVERY time the abuser violates the PPO.

- Make contact with the outside world. For example: neighbors, church members, school faculty, work associates. Give pictures and copies of PPO to your employer, children's school, etc. Do not allow your children to leave school unless the person picking them up has the correct password.
- Set up a system that will help you if the abuser should come to your home.
- Change your daily routines, your phone number, and your locks.
- Set up a code with your children so they will call 911 or go to a neighbor's house if there is an emergency.

SAFETY PLAN FOR VICTIMS WHO LEAVE AN ABUSIVE RELATIONSHIP

- Gather all important papers including: birth certificates, prescriptions, marriage certificate, Medicaid card, Social Security card, income tax return, spouse's pay stub, credit card records.
- Find a safe place to go.
- Make an extra set of keys and/or leave keys and important papers with a friend or family member who you can trust.
- Save money and hide it or give it to a friend or family member to hold for you.
- Secure transportation.
- Create a signal system with a designated friend to let them know when "it's time" or to call the police.
- Leave when the abuser is not at home.
- Do not let the abuser know that you plan on leaving.

SAFETY PLAN FOR VICTIMS WHO STAY IN AN ABUSIVE RELATIONSHIP

- Develop a safety plan for the future in the event that you need to leave the abusive situation.
- As a part of the safety plan, secure money, clothing, identification, legal papers, etc., and hide them in a safe place.
- Attend a support group for victims.
- As much as possible, do not isolate yourself.
- Remember that unless there is some form of intervention, the cycle of violence will most likely continue.



NATIONAL RESOURCES

National Coalition Against Domestic Violence
www.ncadv.org/need-support/what-is-domestic-violence

National Clearing House on Child Abuse and Neglect
 800-394-3366

National Committee to Prevent Child Abuse
 800-55-NCPA [800-556-2722]

National Council on Child Abuse and Family Violence Helpline
 800-222-2000

National Domestic Violence Hotline
www.thehotline.org
 800-799-7233, 800-787-3224

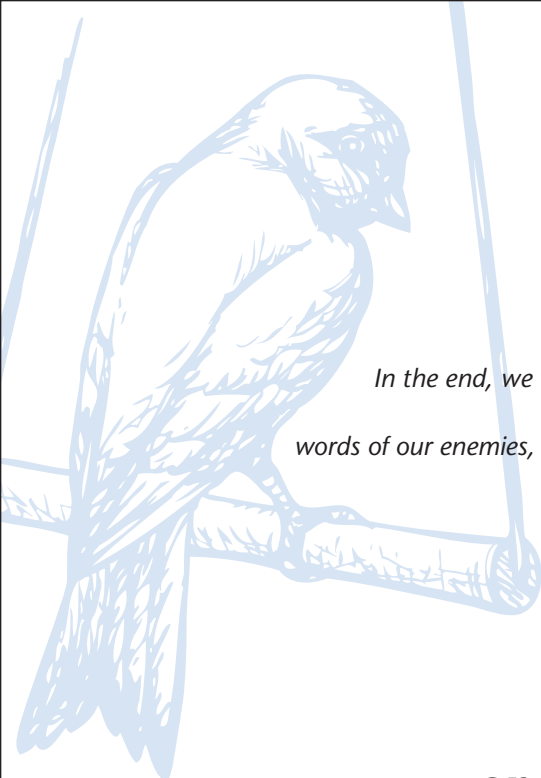
National Victims Center
 800-FYI-CALL [800-394-2255]

National Sexual Violence Resource Center
www.nsvrc.org
 877-739-3895

American Bar Association, National Legal Resource Center
 of Child Advocacy and Protection
 202-662-1720

Faith Trust Institute
www.faithtrustinstitute.org
 206-634-1903

Mable C. Dunbar is the founder and president of Women's Healing and Empowerment Network, a non-profit organization that provides a Christian response to domestic violence. She has a Ph.D. in family mediation and is a licensed professional counselor, certified cognitive/behavioral therapist, certified domestic violence counselor, and a crisis intervention specialist. For more information about the W.H.E. Network, contact Mable Dunbar at 509-323-2123, send an email to info@whennetwork.com or visit www.whennetwork.com.



*In the end, we will remember not the
words of our enemies, but the silence of our friends.*

—Martin Luther King, Jr.

enditnow[®]
Break the Silence About Abuse

www.EndItNowNorthAmerica.org

National Domestic Violence Hotlines

USA: 800-799-SAFE [7233] Canada: 800-363-9010



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