

Abandoning Abuse

I was at my grandmother's for a visit when she got a phone call which changed the tone of our family fun. A friend needed a safe place to stay after she reported to the police officer that her husband threatened to kill her. She lived with this abuse for twenty years but it had recently escalated. By law the officer had to interview the husband and told the woman beforehand that he knew the husband would deny he'd threatened her and try to act like everything was okay, which is exactly what happened. The husband also repeatedly called his wife demanding to know their bank account number in order to take all their money, which she wisely refused to give him until she could create a new bank account for herself to transfer some money to. She stayed away for three weeks before going back, but he was already talking about divorce.

There are so many sad things about this situation: the abuse, the length of time she put up with it, how the officer knew the husband would deny wrongdoing, the immediately financial impact, and the fact that this woman, in her 60s and already retired, faces starting life all over. She's not a young woman still waiting to experience life to the fullest with plenty of employment opportunities; she's older, in deteriorating health, facing limited income.

But even sadder is her as a young woman, experiencing abuse at the hands of this man who promised to love her for better or for worse, and deciding to stay with him in hopes that things will get better and making excuses for his temper while fearing to lose an intimate companion, fearing starting over on her own. Which happened eventually anyway.

Young or old, ladies, we have a choice: to allow ourselves to be kicked around like dogs or to get some backbone and **not** fear of future of uncertainty, **not** fear leaving an abusive situation to be on our own financially, raising kids as a single parent, or starting over in a new location or social circle. The fear of something seems so great, but when you make the leap into the unknown and are in the thick of things, that fear dissipates. When you face your worst fears, something rises in you and you do what you gotta do. You even reach the point where you can look back over your shoulder and say, "Wow, that wasn't so bad. What was I afraid of?" The thing or person you fear is put into perspective and you see more clearly how things really are instead of seeing them through fear-tinted glasses.

Mothers especially have a duty to their children to get out of bad situations so the kids aren't harmed physically or emotionally – or learn bad behavior from the abuser and repeat it, or become so comfortable with abuse that when they grow up, they seek abusive relationships.

If you're in an abusive relationship, find someone you trust to help you get out of it. **Ignore anyone who says you need to stay in the situation.** It's not easy at first, but trust me, it gets better. It really does. Staying with an abuser will not get better. So abandon the abuse, get counseling or read books on how to stop getting into wrong relationships, and you'll find a new world is waiting for you.

"Don't be reckless with other people's hearts, and don't put up with people that are reckless with yours."

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