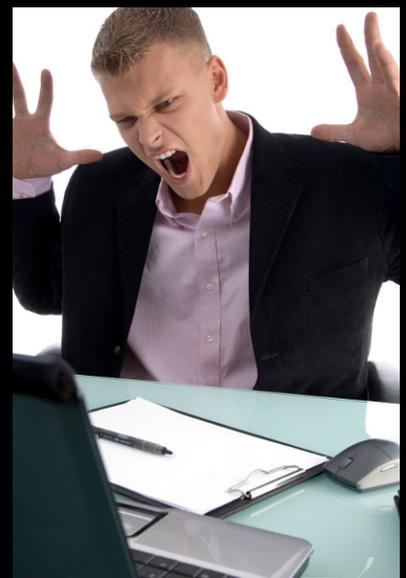
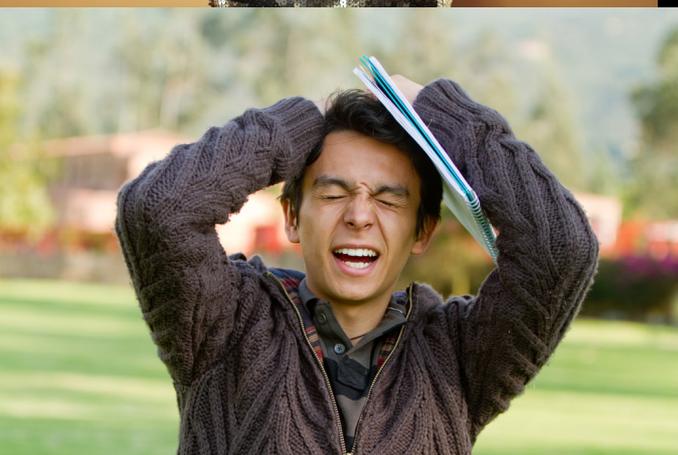


THE MISEDUCATION OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

DISPELLING THE MYTHS IN
ORDER TO PROMOTE THE
TRUTH.



BY: NICOLE C. LOFTON

Dear Readers,

I decided to write "*The Miseducation of Domestic Violence*" because I feel that this is exactly what it has come to when the subject of domestic violence comes up. There are many misconceptions and misunderstandings, which lead to the victims and survivors of domestic violence being misunderstood. It seems that the ones who feel that they are strongly educated on domestic violence are the ones that have never experienced it or THINK that they have never experienced it. I hope with this small book that I can dispel the myths of domestic violence and bring some insight and awareness to the subject and issue at hand. I appreciate you taking out your time to read. If you feel that it is beneficial please share it with your family and friends.

God Bless,

Nicole Lofton

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MYTH #1: DOMESTIC VIOLENCE IS ONLY PHYSICAL

One of the biggest myths of domestic violence is that it is only physical. This myth leads to millions of women and men not knowing that they are in an abusive relationship. Just because someone is not being physically abused does not mean that they are not being abused.

There are many forms of abuse such as emotional, psychological, financial, and spiritual. There are some people who will never experience physical abuse, but may experience emotional abuse. On the other hand it is highly likely that if someone has experienced physical abuse, he or she has also experienced emotional or some other form of abuse.

Domestic violence usually does not start out with physical abuse, it usually starts out with emotional, verbal, or psychological abuse. The abuser takes time to get to know what matters to their spouse so that they can use it against them. In order for a person to get to you emotionally or psychologically he or she has to study you to know your weaknesses. This is how it all starts, once they get to know you, they began to find ways to take control. Domestic violence is all about intimidation and control.

Most survivors will tell you that emotional abuse hurts more than physical abuse because the effects last longer. Physical abuse surely does hurt, but for most part, survivors feel like the scars either go away or eventually fade. When it comes to emotional abuse, those emotional scars could last a lifetime if a person does not heal.

Imagine someone constantly belittling you, calling you out your name, harassing you, threatening you, and watching you all the time, while at the same time telling you how much they love you, How would you feel?

MYTH #2: DOMESTIC VIOLENCE ONLY HAPPENS TO WOMEN.

This one is a biggie for me! I know that a lot of people like to focus on this one, but this is honestly one that tears me apart. As an advocate, I never like to focus on what gender domestic violence happens to the most because to me, it creates division. Why do we care so much about which gender it happens to the most, when it happens to both genders?

The fact that domestic violence happens at all should concern us and should have us outraged. I believe that we spend too much time focusing on which gender it happens to the most and not enough time trying to prevent and raise awareness for domestic violence. It's hard enough to get women to speak out and share their stories, but it is definitely even harder to get men to share them.

We have to open our eyes to the bigger picture and while I am not a statistics person and you won't see many statistics through this book, I will this one with you here.

Nearly 3 in 10 women (29%) and 1 in 10 men (10%) in the US have experienced rape, physical violence and/or stalking by a partner.

MYTH #3-DOMESTIC VIOLENCE IS AN ISSUE THAT SHOULD BE KEPT TO ONESELF.

It is common to keep certain matters private. Society has taught us that when something happens especially if it's in a marriage, that you keep that between you and your partner.

The thing about domestic violence is that you just have to know who you can talk to. You have to know that the person you decide to talk to is one who is trustworthy because not everyone understands domestic violence and the impact that it has.

I feel that it is definitely important to tell someone simply because domestic violence is very serious and can lead to death. It is definitely not an issue that a person should keep as a secret. The fact that it is kept a secret is why it is so hard to discuss publicly now.

MYTH #4: IT IS EASY TO GET OUT OF AN ABUSIVE RELATIONSHIP.

This is also a big myth. Often times I hear and read people say "well why doesn't he or she just leave?" It is a common misconception that it is easy for someone in an abusive relationship to just leave. After all, that seems like the solution right? If someone isn't treating you right, then you just leave right? Well in this case, WRONG.

Many people involved in these situations do not leave because they fear for their lives, they are trying to protect their family/friends, they do not have the finances to leave, they haven't told anybody what is going on, so they have a fear of being judged. Believe it or not, many people get seriously hurt or even killed trying to leave abusive relationships. It is not okay to just advise someone to "just leave". I have to keep placing emphasis on the fact that people can die and have died due to domestic violence, this is a very serious subject.

A good thing to do is to help them come up with a plan to leave or encourage them to talk to a counselor. If he or she is not ready to leave then do not force the issue, try to understand where he or she is coming from.

MYTH #5-ABUSE IS THE VICTIMS

FAULT.

The mindset behind this myth is that the person who is being abused must have done something to deserve it. I am sure that you have heard someone say this before or even maybe you have thought this before. In my honest opinion though, this thinking is absurd.

The most important thing to understand about domestic violence is that is simply about POWER AND CONTROL. So the abuser will use physical or emotional abuse to gain power and control over his or her partner.

Majority of the time the person being abused has done nothing to deserve it. It could be anything that the abuser does not like to set him or her off. It could be what his partner wears, who she hangs out with, what kind of job she has, what she likes to eat. It can be ANYTHING.

Just because someone is being abused DOES not mean that they did something! NO ONE deserves to be abused.

MYTH #6: IF YOU'RE MARRIED, IT IS NOT CONSIDERED DOMESTIC VIOLENCE.

This myth is of course one of my absolute favorites right here! There is a misconception in general that because you are married you just give yourself completely no matter what the circumstances are and this is one that I absolutely disagree with! Sex is a big thing when it comes to marriage and believe it or not, a lot of women, but it does happen to men to get raped by their husbands and/or wives. You may or may not be aware of this because it is usually not associated with "domestic violence", but it is usually associated with "Intimate Partner Violence".

Another common thing that happens in marriage is financial abuse..financial abuse? No way right? They are married! Well yep, financial abuse simply one person controlling what their spouse/partner does with their money.

Yes, it does happen and you know what also happens? Husbands/Wives steal their spouses money and put into a secret account. Yes, it does happen in marriage, especially in marriage. They also try to make their spouse financially UNSTABLE, so that they won't have any money to leave!

Yes physical and emotional abuse occurs too, but in marriage it is sometimes considered normal right? We have discussed that one already!

If you are married please know that is not an excuse for abuse! A marriage is a partnership, you take vows to treat each other right and to be there for each other. You take vows to LOVE one another and take care of one another, NOT destroy one another.

MYTH #7: IT IS NORMAL TO FIGHT WITH YOUR PARTNER.

It is definitely NOT normal to fight with your partner. Now, will you and your partner have disagreements? Sure you will, but is it normal for you and partner to physically and verbally attack each other? Absolutely not! Please don't believe that this is normal behavior, it is very unhealthy for a relationship.

MYTH #8: ABUSERS ABUSE BECAUSE THEY LOVE HARD.

The truth is abusers abuse because of several reasons one of them is not knowing how to love or show love. It also could be that abusers abuse because it is behavior that they have learned or because they were victims of abuse themselves. Those reasons still do not excuse abuse.

Abusers do not abuse because they love hard. People who love hard won't hurt you intentionally. People who love hard will respect you and show you that they respect you. People who love hard, know your worth.

Sometimes the people who experience abuse actually believe that they amount of force or disrespect that they are given or treated with amounts to the amount of love that their abuser has for them. The mindset is that the abuser gets angry or becomes abusive because they love their partner so much and that is totally not the case. That is why it is very important to dispel this myth.

MYTH #9-AN RESTRAINING ORDER SOLVES EVERYTHING

Here is another one of my favorite myths! The good ole restraining order myth! "Go get a restraining order" is what they say right? "Oh if you would just go get a restraining order, then you will not have to deal with him or her" and this is SO not true! "If you get a restraining order, you will be protected" again this is so NOT true.

Now, do not get me wrong, I am not against restraining orders at all, I believe people should get one to at least have documentation of what is going on, but people should also know and realize that in this day and age, restraining orders do not nearly as much power as society thinks that they do.

Here are a couple of reasons why, well first because restraining orders anger the abuser worst, it's like a challenge to them. Secondly, if a person is crazy, a restraining order is not going to mean anything to them. Again remember that domestic violence is about power and control. So by you getting a restraining order, the abuser feels like you are trying to gain power or trying to over power them by getting the police involved.

lastly, there is a lot that goes into a restraining orders and some people do not end of following through with the restraining order. When you have a restraining order you and the person that the order is against of course cannot have contract with each other, if you or the other person makes contract then the restraining order really no longer means anything. The person that filed the restraining order has contract the police EACH AND EVERY time the abuser makes contact with them.

When you go to file the restraining order you must have proof that you are being abused or harassed, yes, I know it sounds weird because sometimes with domestic violence you don't have any proof especially if its something like emotional abuse.

Many people who have had restraining orders have still died due to domestic violence. I just want to urge you to make sure if you are going to file a restraining order that you are ready to follow through with it and that you understand that it is not a life saver, but it can be an important piece in saving your life.

MYTH #10-DO NOT CALL THAT HOTLINE!

I love this one and honestly this is one that leaves me perplexed! Now, don't get me wrong, I totally understand why people say to not call hotlines. It is because sometimes the phone is not safe, depending on if the abuser has the phone tapped, if he/she is checking the phone bill, if he/she has control over when you use the phone, etc. I definitely get it!

However, I would not tell someone to not call a hotline because hotlines actually have played a part in helping victims of domestic violence become survivors! I do believe that hotlines work, people tend to shame hotlines as if they are not beneficial.

Yes, you do have to be smart about it, you have to be careful. You may have to use someone else's phone, you may have to use a pay phone, you may have to get a free phone or ask someone to buy you a phone and you may have to hide that phone. Yes, you have to outsmart your abuser, that is something that I definitely advocate for. Your abuser is not smarter than you, he or she just has learned how to gain power and control, but you too, can take that back.

So, maybe a hotline will help you in your situation or maybe it will help someone else, if so, here is the number to the National Domestic Violence Hotline-1-800-799-7233 | 1-800-787-3224 (TTY)

THANK YOU FOR TAKING OUT
THE TIME TO READ
"THE MISEDUCATION OF
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