

# Compelling reasons that keep Women in Abusive relationships

The following list is a composite of views from women in our groups over the past several years. They invited us into their lives and helped us answer the question: "What keeps women in abusive relationships?"

## **Fears of His Reaction:**

- He said he will: "Hunt me down and kill me."
- He will kidnap the children and disappear.
- He will spread horrible rumors about me.
- I will never be safe. I might as well live with him.

## **Effects of Abuse:**

- Depression.
- Feelings of immobility.
- Can't face making decisions.
- "I am so used to my life being this way."
- "I have no real options or choices."

## **Roles Culture Forces Upon Women:**

### *Guilt*

- I will ruin his life if I leave.
- She will lose her job if I report this.
- He will start drinking again.
- I will disappoint my family.
- I have to take care of him.

### *Economic Dependence*

- He has all the money.
- I have never had a good job. How will I care for kids alone?
- Better to be beaten up at home than to be on the street.
- I would rather die than be on welfare.

### *Dependency*

- I am afraid to be on my own. Who will protect me?
- I fear that I will never be in a relationship again.
- He gives me a sense of security.
- I don't want to be a divorced woman.

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## *The Children*

- My children will blame me and resent me.
- The kids need a father.
- Children need a "real family."
- Unwilling to give up on the "House with a white picket fence, 2.2 perfect children" dream.
- He will steal the children.
- He will use the children against me.
- Sons need male role models.
- She is the biological mother; I have no legal rights.

## *Isolation*

- He doesn't let me out of the house; I don't even have any friends to call for help.
- If I ever tell anyone about this, he'll kill me.
- My sister said I couldn't stay with her, anymore, after the last time....
- He said he'd teach Helen a lesson if I went over there again.

## *Personal History*

- My father beat my mom—it just goes with being in a relationship.
- Getting hit isn't the worst thing that can happen in a family—I know of worse things...