

A WOMAN'S EXPERIENCE

A Woman's Experience

November 2009

West Lancashire Women's Refuge



Design and Print
By
Susan M Higgins
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Foreword

All of the women who were involved in the compilation of this book have experienced domestic violence and have received Support/floating support with the West Lancs Women's Refuge.

We gathered together to attend a creative writing programme where we wrote down our thoughts, feelings and experiences.

We respected the views of each other and supported each other when times were emotional.

All of us can relate to the experiences as we have all suffered in the same way, feeling that it was easy to talk and open up in a friendly, safe environment.

Read this book with an open mind and you can form your own opinion of our experiences.

With best wishes from:

CJ, Laura, Leanne, Mel, Sandra, Marie, Terri and Tracie.

BRAND NEW



The sky is so pretty, nice, bright and blue
A new day's beginning, I can smell the dew

Happy as ever I am with you
Never sad, or feeling blue

My mind's eye sees your smiling face
I feel so alive now that I've met you

So this day I start, right by your side
Brand New

By
CJ

STAND AND FACE THE SHINING SUN

Stand and face
The shining sun
Look ahead
Life's just begun



Don't look back
It's all in the past
The dark shadows have gone
All so fast

I have left the past
And now I feel
My life has just begun
At last

By
Melanie

IN THE STILL OF THE NIGHT

The night is so still
No sounds I hear
Then I hear the key in the door
Now, he's here



My heart beating fast
My body is sweating
He's at the bedroom door
Already a threatening

He turns on the light
I'm sat up in bed
He stomps over to me
And punches my head

I beg him to stop
I start to really cry
But what is the use?
Oh! God, I just want to die

By
Leanne

A WOMAN'S EXPERIENCE

I'M PEACEFUL

All is quiet
Not a sound is heard
All is peaceful
No more stress
No more winging



All so sweet
Life for me
Is a breeze
And now
I'm ever so pleased

**By
Melanie**

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A YOUNG CHILD'S PAIN

I don't want to go to school today
I want to stay at home
He's looking at me with pleading eyes
Saying "Mum, make some excuse on the phone

Tell them I'm sick, I've been up all night
Tell them I need the dentist, Go on, they'll be alright
Tell them I fell over and my leg got hurt
Tell them I dropped my cereal down the front of my shirt

I looked at my son with a smile in my heart
And with a stern voice, I said "Son, please don't start
In a softer voice, I asked him "What's wrong?"
He looked away from me, his sigh was so long

"I miss you Mum, when you're not there
I know I can be naughty, but I do really care"
I hugged my son with a tear in my eye
He's seen so much pain, it makes me want to cry

"It's all right little man, it'll all be okay
We have a new life now
A fresh start
It's a brand new day"

A WOMAN'S EXPERIENCE



"I'm going nowhere
I'll be here always for you
No one will hurt us again
I promise, it's true"

So after a moment he nodded his head
Threw back his duvet and got out of bed
"It's okay Mum" he said with a big bright smile
"But just so you know, it may take me a while"

I knew what he meant
As I hugged him with pride
But I'll always blame myself for the hurt
Pain and confusion, he holds deep inside

By
Laura

FEAR

It's horrible being afraid
Living your life on eggshells
Wondering what's
Coming next

You always feel scared and alone
You feel like no one is there for you
It's horrible not feeling safe
In your own home

West Lancashire Women's Refuge

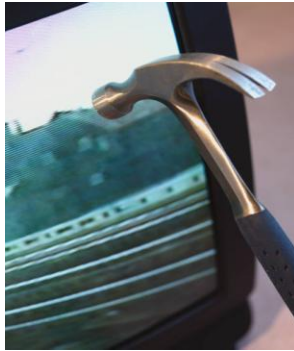


So where else is there to be
If you don't feel safe at home
What can you do?
Go to the Women's Refuge

By
Marie

SAFE

Now that he's gone
And I've been with the refuge
I feel safe and much happier
Because he isn't hitting me
Or smashing things
Or making me scared



I can do what I want to
And not worry
I am much happier
And safer
Now that he has gone

By
Marie

THINGS WILL NEVER BE THE SAME

Here we are so sad and alone
Feeling very scared and confused
What's happened to my son and I
Nowhere to turn to, feeling bemused

Sitting here wondering what's coming next
Moving home, again and again
Trying to cope with what's happening to us
Trying to cope with so much pain



Trying to protect my little boy
Trying to hide my own pain
Trying not to let anything hurt us
Over and over again

One day hoping we will be free
Wondering whatever will be
Feeling guilt and shame
Hopefully one day, we'll be free from pain
And things will never be the same

By
Sandra

SPLITTING UP

There comes a time in one's life
Where one has to say enough is enough
We tried and failed as one
We were no good together
We were not strong enough
To forgive and forget the bad times

Just remember the good times
It's time to move on
And live separate lives
My heart is just not in it
We both know it's for the best
It's over with, that's it for us

The end of the road, mate



By
Melanie

THE WOMEN'S REFUGE

It was on a Friday that I moved into the Women's Refuge. The children were in school so I had to go on my own.

I was scared out of my wits but I did it. The staff were great. They made me feel safe and welcome. The other ladies made me feel welcome as well.

The support I got was brilliant. The staff helped me with forms and gave me stuff for the children.

Then they told me the RULES which were that the doors get locked at 11pm—we had to be in by 11pm and no later.

I didn't like it at first because I felt like I was in prison but deep down I knew that it was for our own safety.

We were allowed to stay out one night a week and I stayed at my mate's house in Southport.

I now have my own home in Tanhouse. It's a two bedroom house and I have floating support from the Women's Refuge.

My support worker and the rest of the staff are brilliant and they have helped me a lot. I would like to thank them all from the bottom of my heart.

My support worker has got me some counselling which is helping me.

I do loads of stuff, like creative writing, a first aid course, arts and crafts. All this has built up my confidence again

Thank you, Women's Refuge.

By Terry

DADDY SAID

Leave him now Again and again
Is all my Daddy Would shout down the phone

You are a stronger woman on your own
He'd tell me over and over again

"This is the last time "I'd say to myself
"But I'll be back in the morning" he cried on the phone

I'd forgive him again, as I always did

Again he'd start even worse killing my spirit and controlling my soul
How could this man be so beastly and wrong

This time it's gone well too far two black eyes and a broken rib
Blue flashing lights, the ambulance came "She walked into the door",
he told them once more



Off to jail
He finally went
I'm packing my bags
And walking out the garden gate

By home is broken
But my spirit is free
"I'm so proud of you"
My Daddy did shout, with glee

**By
CJ**

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OUR NEW DAY

It was a cold January night when we stepped off the train
Cold, alone, scared and full of pain
Trying to be safe, we ran away
God, it was such an awful day

My son and I
Feeling so frightened and small
Having to leave everything behind
We had nothing at all

A bus ride later, we were in our new place
Being welcomed in by a friendly face
"You're safe now, you're here
He can't touch you, you've nothing to fear"

West Lancashire Women's Refuge



They showed us around and then to our room
Warm and cosy—no sense of impending doom
Friendly faces, all been though the same
Finally I knew I was not to blame

The Refuge helped us a lot, so very much
And now I don't feel stupid or out of touch
To any other woman suffering violence, I would say
Go to the Refuge and you'll have your day!

By
Laura

AT WHAT COST?

Here I am
Full of fear and dread
Lying awake
In my bed

As time goes by
I wonder why
Each time it happens
I sit and cry



I sit and think
Of what I have lost
I could have stayed
But, at what cost?

Each time he had a beer
I sat and shook with so much fear
My little boy said, with a big sigh
"Please mummy, don't sit and cry"

My life is full
Of guilt and shame
"Don't cry mummy"
"You are not to blame"

**By
Sandra**

A PUNCHING BAG

When I was eighteen I met my ex-partner. I was very happy at first. Everything always is at the beginning. Then two weeks into the relationship, I experienced the first slap across my face.

I remember that day like it was yesterday.
Over time the smack became punches, then beatings.

Five years had passed and I had completely lost my self esteem, my confidence and even my family and friends.

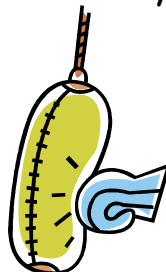
I believed him when he used to say to me "You made me like this. I never used to hit anyone else before I met you".

For nine years I put up with the abuse, mentally and physically.

When we parted, it was only then that I told myself that it wasn't me who had made him like that. I didn't deserve how he had treated me.

During the bad times I never went to a refuge for help. I didn't ask anybody for help. Looking back now I wish I had done because my life could have been so different, not only for me but for my child too.

Life is too short to let people control you and, as for violence, definitely not.



We weren't put on this earth to be used as a punching bag.
By Leanne

CONFUSED

I sit here now contemplating my fate
Filled with sadness, filled with hate
Do I blame mankind for turning away?
Closing their eyes to my pain, having nothing to say

Do I act bitter, twisted, hurt and sad?
Or do I get my revenge and act all mad?
Do I turn away? It's all in the past
What do I do? It's all happened so fast



So for now
I'll sit here and think about things
Waiting to see
What each new day brings

By
Laura

BEING FREE

Hush, can you hear that?
No, nor can I
The sound of silence, no rows
No pain, to make me cry



The silence
Sometimes it deafens me
It's peace, It's safe
I'm finally free

The hurt and fear
For so many years
It's finally over
I'll cry no more tears

By
Laura

HURT ME

It's important to know that
You're not on your own
When things are bad
And you have to leave home

It's a struggle I know
Sad, scared and alone
In a place where
You don't know a soul

People in a women's refuge
Have all gone through the same
So it helps in a way
To heal the shame

The badness has gone
But the memories remain
This silence is torture
On my mind's brain

To start again after all the bad times
Trying to build a home again
All alone
Trying to get rid of the pain

The staff at the refuge , lending a helping hand
I was not on my own
A friendly face, open arms too
Thank you all for the support you've shown

A WOMAN'S EXPERIENCE

I stand on my own
As tall as a tree
My branches are strong
And still growing you see



I've now got a flat
That I can call my own
And I'm finally free
From that monster's rotten home

Hurt me
You'll never be able to again
I'm an amazing person
Who stands tall on my own

By
CJ

**Thank you to all of the staff who gave me support, a friendly face
and a helping hand.
I really appreciate it.**

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UNHAPPY

I feel unhappy
And it's because of some men
Some men make you unhappy
For what they do to you

They hit, shout and hurt you
As they have done to me
I feel unhappy for
What I've put my daughter through



I should have looked after her more
I should have protected her more
I should have put her safety first
I should have left my past behind
I should have done more for her
I should have put her life before mine

I shouldn't have been so selfish
I shouldn't have been so afraid

I realise now what went wrong

Now I'm moving on

By Tracie

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