

Understanding The Cycle of Abuse: The First Step to Healing (Part 2)

*“The one thing we all have in common
is that our silent crime was giving unconditional love”.*

- Regina Marie -

It is true that love involves making sacrifices; being in any kind of relationship entails the responsibility to understand genuinely, give selflessly, and love unconditionally.

But where do we draw the line when it comes to giving up parts of ourselves to fight for the love that we, sometimes, are so desperately trying to save?

It is never the victim's fault to be in an abusive relationship. However, understanding and practicing the art of healthy relationships is something that we can all do to avoid plunging into or being stuck in the cycle of abuse and/or domestic violence. Yes, it is easier said than done, and it is completely okay to sometimes feel frightened or disheartened. But believe me, it does not happen overnight! It is a long process, and you can start with baby steps like learning how to make compromises, standing up for yourself by saying “No” when you mean it, and setting your boundaries.

This episode – Part 2 of my conversation with Dr. Char Newbold, a domestic violence survivor, advocate, and author – is both an enthralling and enriching experience. After recognizing the stages and cycle of abuse, which we discussed in the last episode, what do we do now? This time, let's dig deeper into some of the reasons why people stay in unhealthy relationships, ideas and responses that enable abusive behaviors, and steps that we can and should do once we decide to finally break free. Plus, be familiar with some helpful resources that you can read or share with others.

As Dr. Newbold mentions in this episode, “When we're looking at the effects of abuse, it's never about just the one person. It is always about the family.” We all want nothing but to protect, nurture, and love our families. But at some point, unconditional love can also mean saving and taking care of yourself so that you can take care of others.

Healing Points of This Episode:

- As much as you want to, you can never be your partner's savior.
- You fall in love with a person first before seeing the “beast” that you didn't know existed. Recognize that you love the person, but do not turn a blind eye to the horrible things he does just to protect and preserve the relationship.
- Identify your own behaviors and responses that enable the abuse.
- Staying in an abusive relationship to “protect” your family can do more harm than good – especially for children.

- While protecting your children, you can be neglecting their needs too. They are affected way more than you know and see.
- The younger the child in an abusive home is, the worse it is for him/her because it's harder for them to process the horrible things that are happening around them.
- You can have an escape plan while trying to save the relationship/marriage.
- In case you decide to finally break free, talk to an advocate or reach out to agencies that may offer help and assistance in carrying out your escape plan. Take note of/ track the patterns of abuse and prepare for your next course of action.
- When somebody opens up about domestic violence, it is important to validate their feelings and experiences and to offer options rather than telling them what to do.
- A lot of helpful resources are available. Educate yourself more about domestic violence so you can be armed with information and wisdom.
- Being resilient has positive and negative sides to it. Know when to draw the line between making sacrifices for your loved ones and self-sabotaging for one person's benefit.

Words of Healing:

- I couldn't be his savior as much as I was trying. I couldn't fix him. Only one can do that, and that's God. I can't fix him. I can't change him. – Dr. Char Newbold
- Every relationship is co-created. That doesn't mean we're responsible for their behaviors or their reactions, but we're responsible for us. And the one thing we all have in common is that our silent crime was giving unconditional love. – Regina Marie
- Letting go of control is really hard for survivors because we have been so conditioned to be in control of so many things that not being in control of it now is just liberating, but scary. – Regina Marie
- When a woman does leave, whether she goes back or not, that is when it is the most dangerous because that's when the escalation happens – if the wooing and promises don't work – then the threats and the violence can escalate. – Dr. Char Newbold
- It's wise to have a safety plan because our number one goal in any kind of advocacy is we want you to be safe. And then beyond that, we want you to be happy and healthy. – Dr. Char Newbold
- The more that you feel like you're in control – because there's a lot that we're out of control with – but the pieces that you are in control of, go ahead and take advantage of those and put your ducks in a row and get your pieces situated to allow your exit plan, to be as streamlined and safe as possible. – Regina Marie
- The truth of the matter is that things escalate, and there is a pattern, and the men generally do not change because the only person that can change a heart is God. – Dr. Char Newbold
- When we're looking at the effects of abuse, it's never about just one person. It is always about the family. – Dr. Char Newbold
- I just want to make sure that people in the faith community don't get trapped in marriages or don't get trapped in situations where the Scripture is being misapplied. I want them to make choices by themselves. – Dr. Char Newbold

- It's difficult to be a family member and watching it happen or a close friend or something. It's hard watching it, but all you can do is just love them and keep listening. – Dr. Char Newbold

Resources Mentioned:

- [The Church's Response to Domestic Violence](#)
- [I'm Not That Woman Anymore: A Journey to Healing from Abuse, Leader Guide](#)
- [Why Does He Do That?: Inside the Minds of Angry and Controlling Men](#)
- [The Batterer as Parent: Addressing the Impact of Domestic Violence on Family Dynamics](#)
- [When Dad Hurts Mom: Helping Your Children Heal the Wounds of Witnessing Abuse](#)
- [The Emotionally Destructive Marriage: How to Find Your Voice and Reclaim Your Hope](#)
- [Exaholics: Breaking Your Addiction to an Ex Love](#)
- [Answer the Call by Shanna Jackman](#)
- [National Domestic Violence Hotline](#)
- [Missouri Coalition Against Domestic and Sexual Violence](#)

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