

Chapter 5:

On The Edge

Just to give my disclaimer: I am not a certified counselor, and have not received any formal training in domestic issues. My knowledge of domestic abuse comes from experiences (mostly of other people), and is merely my opinion based on what I believe to be reasonable judgment.

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See It For What It Is—Then Act!

So many times in the dating process, you find things about a person that doesn't pan out, and sometimes you consciously or subconsciously know you should cut ties immediately. Maybe something just doesn't feel right, or genuine. I'm not saying you should run if the wind blows, but if you practice being aware and even prayerful, then I believe you know when to follow your vibe.

____ Maybe it's something more obvious, like you see they're seriously irresponsible, don't want to work, not respectful to their parents, or have some bad temper, abusive, or obsessive tendencies. If you see these things, ***RUN LIKE A TEN FOOT PIT BULL IS CHASING YOU!!!*** I joke NOT when it comes to serious things like this. You can have an unsuccessful relationship without serious warning signs like these, so why would you jump into something when you see the writing on the wall?

____ I'm going to take a minute to speak on a sensitive subject to me, and that's domestic abuse. I've talked to so many ladies, even very young ladies, who have experienced domestic violence. Violence from the same guy who once charmed

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them, smiled at them, and even kissed them and sometimes said “I love you.” The female often says “He changed.” Did someone talk him into thinking it was a good idea to beat his lover? Did he suddenly read a book or see a film that made a good man go bad? Absolutely not.

As I mention a little later, even a typically non violent man can be provoked to *some* degree in an instantaneous situation. That's not what I'm referring to here. For someone who snaps for little or no reason, or even with cause for frustration and who can't stop the unleashing of his temper, he likely had these tendencies all along but she didn't want to admit that she was not discerning enough to see it. Or maybe she did see it, but felt that either she could change or “save” him, or she was too afraid to be without someone. Sometimes people date psychologically unstable people because that person's attention is flattering and / or boosts their ego or self-confidence. They like the way the attention makes them feel but they don't realize how unhealthy the extent of the unstable person's adoration is. If someone is clinging to you, like the squirrel to the acorn in the animated film *Ice Age*, **you have a problem!** If they act like they're dependant on you to live, be very careful. Sometimes women recognize abusive tendencies after the relationship has taken root but are too afraid to break up with him, having already bought into the fear that he would hurt her or someone close to her. The point here is: In the chase, PLEASE REMEMBER that you *must* be firm about quickly cutting off someone that has abusive tendencies. Like in the case of a relative of mine, and so many others I know and know of, it can lead to battery, broken bones, and *death* if you don't.

It Could Be Anyone

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I used to think, "Men who beat women are cowards and would not fight another 'real' man. They will only try to show their strength to a woman to dominate her, but would get beat down if they fought a real man." These were things I heard people say when I was young, so I believed it. While he isn't what I consider a real man for abusing a woman, it doesn't mean he's a weakling with a complex. He may be a physically strong man who would beat another man also, who may just have a bad temper or attitude and / or other psychological issues. As history has shown, he could be a martial arts or fighting expert, or even a famous entertainer. Expertise or celebrity status doesn't stop him from being violent if that is what he chooses to do.

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The man inclined to domestic violence, or who is "on the edge", could be any of the Plan characters. There's no mathematical formula for predetermining this. Just use common sense, have good judgment, and read the signs. With Sue, Plan A or B could be 'on the edge' and he's sometimes still in the same Plan category.

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Always A Blameless Victim?

It may sound as if I speak about women being abused who are only guilty of not cutting off such a relationship. In reality though, there are some cases in which women create or instigate the violence. Some, while they may not acknowledge it, feel that a man's physical domination over them is the way it's supposed to be. Perhaps it has been all they've known in the relationships they've seen close to them. Others may provoke their man to frustrate and agitate him because they want to get back at him for some reason. Still others may do it in order to make the man hit her, and then get him into legal trouble. In any case, it's just not the way to handle things. This woman who does this needs

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counseling. Some women will challenge a man, insult his manhood, stand in his way when he seeks to leave, and sometimes even attack him first. She may say the most insulting things; things that will cut him deeply. For those women who handle things this way, they should seek professional or psychological help. For a man who is involved with a woman like this, he should consider either helping her to get help to improve the situation, or weigh the option of leaving. If he doesn't, he could either find himself in trouble with the law by his reaction or continue to be a victim himself.

At times violence may happen due to a partner's infidelity. This still does not justify violence, but there are people who may even flaunt having another partner and say hurtful things to the significant other. Before the relationship gets to this point, good judgment is needed and it may help to seek out spiritual advice or a mature mentor if professional advice is not available.

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Chapter 6: Nightmare on Your Street

This chapter is designed to tell you true stories that will show you the seriousness of domestic violence, and the people who perpetrate it. If it takes fear to help women see that this is something to avoid like the plague, then be fearful. Again, I speak about women because they are the largest victimized group, and they need to read the signs as mentioned in the previous chapter. For men who are victims of abuse, the same basic message applies: Watch for the signs early before getting into the relationship. If already involved, seek professional help. If the situation can't be resolved in a sensible way and time frame, then consider exit options.

Enough Is Enough...Too Late

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There was a young lady, who was very beautiful, she had a super figure, and was very smart in school. She got involved with a guy right out of high school, married, and was with him for a number of years. During the relationship he was very abusive, and even stabbed her. This didn't end their relationship. She lived, didn't press charges, and recovered. She took him back. Later, while enduring more abuse, he stabbed her again. She recovered again, didn't press charges, and took him back again. Finally after the abuse continued, she decided to divorce and end it for all. He asked her to meet him to arrange concluding their business matters. When she did, he shot her to death. No doubt she didn't leave in the beginning because she hoped things would improve.

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Still Not Enough

Once, when I was about thirteen or fourteen, two of my brothers and I were at an older associate's house. We'll call him Joe. His girlfriend was there, sitting on the couch trying to look cute for him with her makeup and tight jeans on. She didn't talk much. He playfully hit her with his belt to get a reaction from her, and to show off in front of us. He did it a few more times, harder than the first. She told him to stop, as we did. Then with a sadistic laugh, Joe took the belt, wrapped it around her neck, and started dragging her from one side of the couch to the other. We had never seen this before. We grabbed him to take the pressure off of the belt and wrestled to stop him. When we stopped him, he continued to laugh. She jumped up with tears in her eyes, cursed him, and stormed out of the door. As we scolded him, he said repeatedly, "She'll be back. Watch, she'll be back." Less than thirty minutes later, she walked back in the door and sat on the couch, pouting like a child with her arms folded. We left in shock, as they were about to have sex.

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ER Can't Save

A young lady was in an abusive relationship, and at some point decided to leave. I don't have all of the details, but at some point she and her father found themselves fleeing from him in an automobile. The abuser chased them at a high speed, and they drove to a hospital. They ran into the ER section of the hospital seeking to evade him and get help. The perpetrator ran in after them, and shot them both. Even in the ER itself, the lives of the two could not be saved.

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My Proble: Family Fate

An angry ex decided to do the ultimate hurt to his ex. He shot their children, her mother, and sister. He also shot her. To my understanding, she survived but the family did not.

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This is something that **everyone** who dates must **seriously** consider. Who you are involved with could very easily affect those you love. "No man is an island." Some people say, "It's my life, I date who I choose." While this may be true, remember that people inclined to violence in this way could try to reach out to what hurts you the most. Those family members mentioned above that died weren't dating the perpetrator. They may have been against it from the very beginning, but now, just because of being close to the abused, they also had to suffer. Don't put your loved ones through this. If not for yourself, think of them. Make wise decisions, and stay by them.

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My Doubt, My Grandchild

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One mother was told by her daughter that the stepfather was sexually abusing her. The mother didn't believe her. Eventually the daughter showed the mother a video where the stepfather recorded the abuse and the daughter became pregnant. The mother killed the stepfather in his sleep.

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No Means NO...Right?

One young lady was in a relationship and her boyfriend knew she wanted to remain celibate at this time. He was in agreement with this in the beginning. She saw signs of abusive tendencies in the relationship but downplayed them. Eventually, he raped her. She felt guilt from some part she must have played in this and stayed with him. He eventually raped her a second time.

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Too Far To Quit Now. Hurry Up and Die!

Poor decisions certainly are not limited to the young or a specific social class. One lady (Jane) was afraid of her second husband. She feared that he would kill her and her children and always hid anything sharp in the house.

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After that marriage, her third was also bad. In the beginning he (Joe) would spend time with the kids and give Jane money for them all to buy things. After the marriage, it all stopped. A month after the marriage she knew it was the wrong decision. He was very abusive verbally and mentally and mean spirited even to the children. He had told her he only had one child, yet she later found that was a lie. He was guilty of credit fraud, shady business practices and I.D. theft (even stealing his own son's identity). Jane was married twice before and thought if she left this husband, "What would people think?" She also feared

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leaving him sick with diabetes, leaving her familiar surroundings and being back on her own, and she feared him physically and the fact that he owned a rifle.

She was 33 when they met, 35 when they married. She had a bachelor's degree when they met and she later got her master's degree. She was drawn to him by the idea of being financially stable, her love of the idea of being in love, and not wanting to be promiscuous. Her self esteem was low and so she settled, even after seeing certain signs. She was a nurse's aid and due to her nurturing nature, she wanted to "save" him so to speak.

Her advice to women or potential victims: DON'T IGNORE THE SIGNALS.

Her minister, counselors and others would reason with her to stay. They'd say, "He's really sick, and doesn't have much longer to live anyway." Jane feels he may have sought her out for a connection to her medical insurance. They were married for 12 years, separated four times. At times she would stand in the doorway watching him sleep and wishing he was dead. When she saw him move, she was disappointed. He died a slow and painful death.

[Note: This is expressed from Jane's account of the experience.]

Let's make good decisions that won't put us in these situations.

The following information is taken from the National Domestic Violence Hotline website, www.ndvh.org. They have a great deal of information and resources for victims. Please visit their site for more information, or call 1 (800) 799-SAFE (7233).

National Statistics

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The National Domestic Violence Hotline has received more than 1,000,000 calls for assistance since February 1996. – *National Domestic Violence Hotline, December 2004*

- Nearly one-third of American women (31 percent) report being physically or sexually abused by a husband or boyfriend at some point in their lives. – *Commonwealth Fund survey, 1998*