

I welcome this opportunity to share my experiences and make some recommendations. I have been exasperated at the amount of attention that is placed on men being violent towards women. But women commit their fair share of domestic violence.

I have never been married and yet I have experienced extensive domestic violence at the hands of [REDACTED]. One is now [REDACTED] years old and the other [REDACTED]. I am now [REDACTED] years old. The last time one of them abused me I was [REDACTED] years old – this was the first time I called the police. I did not know that the police get involved in domestic violence until my late [REDACTED]'s (late [REDACTED]'s). It just wasn't advertised, but I was sharing with my long term hairdresser what had been happening to me for years and she advised me to call the police next time it happened.

[REDACTED] who is now [REDACTED] years old had absolute control issues from her early [REDACTED]'s. We grew up with a sick mother so she and my Dad ran the household. When I started to grow up - about [REDACTED] years of age, and think for myself, and make my own decisions that is when she started to physically abuse me. She was very good at emotional abuse as well, which I did not identify what it was at the time. Since then I learned that she was emotionally abusing me in addition to physically abusing me.

She would accuse me of doing things that I had not done ([REDACTED]), or she would ask me to do things that I did not want to do (ie "go get me a drink"). When I would insist I had done no such things, or I did not want to do what she wanted me to do, her accusations and / or requests became more insistent. She would not believe me and kept insisting I had done that thing that she was accusing me of. The more I defended myself she would then lunge for me, first slapping me with great force across the face and as I ran to get away from her she would chase after me around the house, trying to cut me off at the doorway if it was a room with 2 doorways. When she got near me I would have my hands up around my head to protect myself there but she would just continue doing any combination of punching, hitting, slapping, on any part of my body. If I was fortunate enough to grab hold of her hands and push them away from me she would just get more enraged. Many times I had a cut lip or some broken skin on m face.

If I managed to run into my bedroom, and lock the door behind me she would be banging and screaming with rage on the other side of the door. When things calmed down and I thought I was safe to get out, she would just resume the chase and resume the violence. In addition to the hitting, punching and slapping, I suffered such things as being grabbed by my hair and she swinging my head around from side to side. One occasion when the violence stopped I combed my hair and hair just kept on coming out. Many occasions the stinging and pain on my body lasted for days. A few times she tried choking me with her bare hands and [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] This continued well into my late [REDACTED]'s.

All of these times either one or both our parents would be in the house and they would try to stop her and they would often get hurt in the commotion; she would be elbowing them and roughly pushing them aside as she would continue with her rage and violence on me. Often they were hurt in the process.

Her rage was everything to be feared. She always would say afterwards [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] She is the quintessential chameleon, she comes across as professional in front of other people, being very charming and polite and speaking as if she comes from [REDACTED], but her personality is nothing like that. What is more disturbing is that she has a [REDACTED] and has worked many years as a [REDACTED] first with the [REDACTED] and now with [REDACTED]

I had so many emotional problems in my teenage years; this relationship affected my ability to study that I could not concentrate on homework, and failed HSC. I left home at [REDACTED] because of her violence. This was a huge sadness to my parents and I later returned at about [REDACTED], only for the violence to resume. Throughout my teenage years and into my [REDACTED]'s (in the [REDACTED]) I had no where to turn. My parents were beside themselves with her anger and violence. In my late 20's I came a bit less naïve and learned that we should be reporting her violence to the police and get a restraining order against her. Dad would always say no we can't air our family's problems to the police and make it 'public'; this would be a major embarrassment to him. In his culture reporting [REDACTED] to the police was as embarrassing as having a [REDACTED] like [REDACTED]. He would also say he could not believe that someone educated in her field behaved in such a way.

Once when I was in my mid [REDACTED]'s ([REDACTED]'s) I was at home from university, studying. It was mid week and the middle of the day and so [REDACTED] made a stop at our home in the middle of her work day. [REDACTED] wrang on the door bell and Dad answered, he let her in and as soon as she came in she started screaming and yelling at him, and from what I could hear she started hitting him, as Dad was yelling back "Why are you hitting me". I could hear Dad being pushed around and he yelling at her to stop. She was in such a rage that I was too scared to open my bedroom door. (My bedroom door was adjacent to the front door). To this day I regret my cowardice.

In [REDACTED], I was living in [REDACTED] and Dad called me on the phone he was just crying uncontrollably, he told me how [REDACTED] came home and started punching him across the face and hitting him. I was beside myself with grief for my dad – he was [REDACTED] at the time. From [REDACTED] – [REDACTED] Dad went overseas for the last time to visit his country. [REDACTED] was outraged that she had to stay with Mum in their home, just to keep an eye on her in the evenings and the weekends. [REDACTED] continued to work during this time.

In recent years some of my dad's friends ([REDACTED]) told me how one Sunday (in the [REDACTED]'s) they were visiting my mum and dad; [REDACTED] happened to be there (even though she had/has her own home). The husband and wife were guests and in conversation [REDACTED] was accusing Dad of something and Dad insisted he had not done what she was accusing him of. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] has also financially abused my father. I have always thought for many years now and to this day I still think [REDACTED] has some sort of mental illness.

[REDACTED] has also physically abused me many times in similar fashion that [REDACTED] has over many years.

Both [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] have always been [REDACTED]. I had boys/men interested in me and had dates and they didn't. I worked and could afford nice clothes, [REDACTED] rarely worked and could not afford what I could. Sibling jealousy is a dreadful thing.

One late evening [REDACTED] was visiting our parents, from [REDACTED] where she lived. Mum and Dad were in bed and I asked her to [REDACTED] [REDACTED] she started bashing me up just as she did many times before. For the first time I called the police. They arrived and the police interviewed [REDACTED], and did not interview me. I don't know



what she told them but they came out saying that I should not have provoked her, I was flabbergasted that they believed whatever [REDACTED] told them.

I just thought enough was enough (after approximately [REDACTED] years of experiencing [REDACTED] violence) so the next day I proceeded to take out an intervention order against both [REDACTED]. Neither lived in the family home and yet I was still getting bashed up as I still lived there with our parents.

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED] He called me in for an interview in his office at the [REDACTED] and within 10 minutes of meeting with me told me the sin was on my head if I did not forgive them, and I was to withdraw the intervention order. I said I had to take action to protect myself and I would not withdraw it. He kept on asking to meet with me and me being obliging and a heck of a lot more naïve then compared to now, met with him. He kept on insisting we meet and he kept on talking to me about me being the sinner if I did not withdraw the Intervention Order. He also accused me of provoking [REDACTED] to be violent and so he believed whatever lies [REDACTED] told him; and took her side also. He talked me out of my decision to proceed with the Intervention Order.

From that day [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] have not hit me, but they have done many things such as they have lied about me to others, they are mean, and vicious, they took Dad to a lawyer when he was well into his Alzheimers and without getting him checked if he had capacity to write a Will, got a Will written up; and [REDACTED] who looks after our mother does not give me access to my mother so we can meet as mother and daughter. They are like 2 peas in a pod and I am with satisfaction estranged from them. Their abuse has not stopped; it's just a different type of abuse.

#### **Recommendations:**

1. When I was working at [REDACTED] all staff had to do an extensive Occupational Health and Safety Assessment of their homes. Along this line of thinking, for people who work in such areas of human services, the hiring organisation should survey / ask family members about the character and behaviours of the employee at home. A worker in such an area should be a great example or role model in character, behaviour and relationships. I have noticed that some people attracted to Social Work as a profession are some of the most 'damaged' people and one has to wonder whether they are well enough to work in such a field. This is akin to making sure priests are ethical and don't molest children, bankers are ethical and don't funnel customer funds into their own pockets and doctors don't turn to alcoholism and /or drug abuse. There is a certain standard expected from each profession particular only to that profession.
2. When support services visit the elderly or when the elderly is at a Doctor's appointment, or a Specialist's appointment or an Accountant's appointment (with an interpreter if required and with NO family member or friend present) these professions should be bold in asking questions such as:
 

"Do you feel safe in your home?"

"Does anyone that comes in your home or you meet outside your home, ever hit you or physically abuse you in any way?"

“Have you ever felt forced to do something that you don’t want to do ie, hand over money to a family member or friend, or sign a document that you did not understand fully or did not want to sign?”

3. Throughout the school system there should be educators that come in to give presentations to classes on bullying, harassment, emotional and physical abuse in the home. Certain teachers should be designated as the ‘go to’ teachers, and advertised throughout the school, so that children and teenagers know who to go to in the event they are experiencing violence at home, or witnessing violence at home. If only I had someone to talk to at a younger age, during those years I felt so inadequate because of what was happening to me at home.
4. Religious leaders should not interfere with legal decisions that their congregational members make. It is not up to the priest, bishop, reverend, father, pastor, rabbi of any religion to take any sides and try to change anybody’s mind about any police/legal action that their congregational members have commenced. They should not interfere in a jurisdiction that they have no expertise on.
5. Police called to a home because of domestic violence should not take sides and assume that the accused perpetrator has told them the truth.
6. Advertising on SBS Channels and language print media to explain to people from different countries that violence in the home is not acceptable, no matter who the perpetrator is; that it should not be an embarrassment to report family members and / or friends, instead it is an obligation to all family members and a right to live in a violence free home. They would be doing themselves and everyone in the family a great service for now and the future if they reported the violence today.
7. A group of Anger Management specialists to be developed and advertised. Angry violent people are like Alcoholics – they don’t want to admit that they are angry and violent - they live in denial about what they really are like behind closed doors, and put on a false public face. Advertisements are needed inviting violent people to attend Anger Management classes, in the hope that they will realise this and attend of their own volition.

To this day I have known that [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] need Anger Management but how would I get them to agree to it? Somehow there needs to be a professional pathway to Anger Management.