

16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence

25th November to 10th December 2020



It was physical, moral and intellectual abuse.

Looking back, what were the 'red flags' (concerning behaviour) that you couldn't see at the time?

I trusted the person who abused me because of my illiteracy and marriage at a young age. I didn't have neither confidence nor strength to prevent me from surrendering to someone who was tormenting me psychologically and emotionally. The most disturbing thing for me was fear. He always threatened to kill me. I had a phone, but I couldn't use it nor know numbers to contact for help. I was careful and tried to be a way from such abuser. I didn't know that I could take photos of physical abuse or record the time of that abuse.

What was the turning point for you?

Strength, independence, patience, responsibility, knowledge of cultures, societies, nationalities, human rights and duties, surroundings, my rights, my children's rights, and the importance of thinking before taking every step or action that may destroy my life, my future and my children's future. In addition, knowing that, I am, as Manal, a human being who has rights and value in life, can perform all my duties and responsibilities, including educating, taking care of my children, learning, developing myself, raising my children well and providing them with the best education. So that I can take pride of them and they can be proud of themselves. I believe that my greatest achievement in life is that I have succeeded in educating myself and developing my abilities to raise my children, take care of them without any help from others and take them away from problems.

What helped?

Feeling safe, giving my heart, body, and mind ease, increasing my self-esteem, as well as unleashing my power and patience.

What advice would you give to somebody else experiencing abuse?

Never surrender to anyone who does not appreciate you, and never underestimate yourself as a female, since no one will live or stay with you forever.

Not all violence is physical or visible; control and manipulation is abuse too.

#notallviolenceisphysicalorvisible



Consult a specialized person without fear and intimidation, because they are the main factors for surrendering to the abuse and the poor living situation. Do not be afraid and do not give up. Get rid of fear by consulting specialists to regain your strength. Take care of yourself, as your happiness and health are the most important things. You should strive for safety, security and health. We, as human beings, will live once, so we should have a normal life, where there are happiness, care, strength and support, but not abuse, torture and persecution.

After getting rid of fear, regain your strength and yourself and be patient, strong and persistent in the future.

1. Define yourself: Who are you? What do you need? Moreover, what is your destination?

Although these questions are simple, their honest and clear answers may take weeks and months until you reach them. Do not deceive yourself by false answers. You should be fully convinced of these answers, as they lighten up your path and guide you through your life.

2. Love yourself despite all your flaws and mistakes:

We all make mistakes. No one is infallible nor perfect. However, women always tend to focus on their flaws and see their mistakes as unforgivable. It is good to evaluate your actions and criticize them, but don't make such technique a self-destructive behaviour! You can still love yourself despite your flaws, forgive your past mistakes and try not to repeat them.

Love yourself in spite of everything, as if you were your own child or your little sister. Despite her mischief and problems, you still love her truly. So love yourself and let your actions be the best proof of self-love. Self-love will always drive you to achieve more. Love is a strong motivation in this life. It is a trigger for happiness, achievement and success. Therefore, love yourself and be the trigger for yourself.

3. Pinpoint your abilities and strengths:

Know yourself well; what distinguishes you from others, what do you master, and what are the unique traits in your personality. Focus on these traits, show and recognize them, and do not underestimate your abilities. Be confident in yourself and your abilities and always strive to become better.

4. Do not expect care and appreciation from anyone but yourself:

We all need care and appreciation from people around us. This demand is at the highest level of Maslow's hierarchy of human needs. It is important and healthy to meet it. Lacking this demand may devastate those who make their only source of care and appreciation confined to people's opinions and reactions.

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It is like an artist who is waiting for people to affirm that her drawing is beautiful, an engineer who is waiting for people to affirm that her project is important, or even a woman who is waiting for people to affirm that her cooking is delicious. The value of what you do lies in what you believe in. If people do not express the expected appreciation, give it to yourself. Do not let others frustrate you.

5. Enjoy being with yourself:

Remember that people around you contribute partially to your happiness and joyfulness; however, they are not the only source. Many females cannot sit alone without other people, a phone, nor external distraction, which I think is a problem.

Be your own best friend, enjoy being with yourself, and get used to individual activities that you can do alone. These activities include walking in the morning, watching a movie in the cinema, or taking up a hobby, which you are the only person who is interested in it. If there is no one to share this hobby with you, it does not mean to lose interest in it.

Buy yourself a bouquet or a gift. Believe me, you will not seem like a crazy; I have tried it and it positively affected my surroundings and me. I hope it will help you the same way.

6. You are pretty; stop the inner war:

We live at a time where the concept of beauty has been distorted and defined by certain criteria and measures. It is an age where beauty is limited to the beautiful and flawless models and commercial models. They have perfect skins, wide colored eyes, wavy hairs, slim bodies and they are tall. Many Photoshop software have been used to get that impeccable photos, which are displayed at large billboards on the street, mall or TV.

7. Take time for yourself, and take care of your health and appearance:

Set aside a daily or weekly time to read a book you love, or do regular exercises; they improve your health, boost your mood, and make you feel happy and active.

8. Surround yourself with positive people:

Choose your social circle carefully. It should consist of good people who are wishing you the best, supporting, encouraging, and trusting you. Choose positive people among whom you feel better and have some positive energy.

9. Provide support to any woman you know:

The most decent woman is the one who supports and empowers another honest and sincere woman of her surroundings.

10. Don't compare your life to others:

Satisfaction and aspiration are blessings. Thus, try to strike a balance between them, accept your life and wish the best for yourself and for others.

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11. What matters most is what you want and not what others want:

Don't pay attention to what people care; let them say what they want. Always remember that it's your say; it's your life. There is no contenting some people.

12. Look for something you love to do, and share it with the world around you:

Find your talent; it can be experience, or knowledge that you want to share with the world, love and care that you want to give to your family, or volunteer service that you provide to your neighbourhood and community.

Always bear in mind that we have been created for a purpose; find it. Know your passion, small or large, and make it your legacy.

Greetings to every strong mother who is fighting for her children, herself, and her future.



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