

# *I stand now as a free woman!*



*"I stand now as a free woman, free from hell and importantly free from him. I thank God for allowing me to still be able to breathe the fresh air I once thought I'd never breathe again. This is a second chance for me and I'm not looking back anymore. No more time to be wasted".*

I thought I was being more careful this time as I was once divorced. I met my second husband, the most charming man in the world two years ago. Everything was so perfect about him. I even made it a point to get blessings from my family this time. Because we met online, we didn't date the way other couples usually do. We had a long distance relationship, but whenever he came to visit me, our time together was perfect. I would wait for him to arrive and when he did, my heart would yell "Yes, yes, yes! I have finally found my soul mate!" I felt so confident about our relationship that we finally tied the knot in 2010. Then the violence began until one day, I could no longer tolerate the abuses anymore and landed in hospital. This was my first time stepping in a hospital and I was very scared.

"Madam, you are badly beaten and your nose is bleeding. You have a serious internal head injury. Can I ask you something?" the young doctor said to me when I arrived that night.

"Please doctor, my husband is outside, I'm afraid of him. Please, no police, doctor, no police", I begged him.

"You need help. You need serious help. We are here for you, Madam." uttered the doctor.

In the hospital, I vividly recalled his strong fist punching me left and right continuously in the car earlier that evening. I recalled how I thought I was going to faint. I wonder now how he had so much strength and energy to hit me non-stop the way he did. I did not fight back that night - I gave in and allowed him to punch me all over. The young doctor actually saved my life. Even though I had told him I didn't want any help, he arranged for me to be reunited with my family members and children in an undisclosed location.

Before the night at the hospital, I didn't dare to tell anyone about my husband's wrongdoings, including my own children from my previous marriage. I used to think that domestic violence is a private matter. My husband would always apologise and tell me he did this because he loves me very very much. But is it true my husband loves me? He said this to me all the time. Although my heart told me that beating is not right, I refused to listen to my inner voice because I still loved him dearly. I thought he will change like he said he would.

I did try leaving the house one time after a heated argument. It took a month before he even started looking for me. I was happily working till one day I was "kidnapped" by his friends. I was on my way to work and was forced to follow them to see my husband in an undisclosed location. I was verbally and emotionally tortured by him. His friends just sat there and watched. He took me back. Nothing changed and the torturing got worse.

"Look mummy, you have to do something. I am not letting that beast hurt you again. Wake up mom, get out from that hell!" screamed my eldest child one day, when she finally found out what was happening. She has grown up to be the best child a mother could ask for. It took me so long to tell her that something was not right with her new father.

It was not easy for me to live with an abusive partner who was totally in control of me. Sometimes, I do not understand how I managed to survive the ordeal. But one thing I know for sure is we need to tell others if we are in danger. Do not keep it to yourself as sometimes others can help to guide us to go through tough times. And now it's all over. No words can describe how happy I am being single and free again.