

## When People Say Ridiculous Comments To Abuse Victims

Today's podcast is about when people say ridiculous comments to abuse victims.

Admitting you were abused or hearing stories by other people of abuse they endured is very uncomfortable & unpleasant. No one wants to talk about abuse. I sure don't! I'd love to write about more pleasant topics & never think about the abuse I endured ever again. Yet, I know this is impossible. Even if I quit writing about it, the aftermath of abuse never goes away. It's always there to some degree, so talking about it is normal. Most people talk about abuse in their past either slightly, a lot like me or mostly somewhere in between.

Anyone who has decided to open up about abuse has learned that not everyone is a willing, compassionate listener. When you gather your courage to discuss the most painful experiences of your life only to be met with invalidation, it can be incredibly painful. I hope to help you learn some ways to cope with that in this post by sharing some common comments people make to abuse survivors.

**"Why didn't you tell anyone?"** Many people who haven't survived abuse don't understand why a victim wouldn't reach out for help. It's totally acceptable to educate anyone who asks this question. Abusers threaten their victims to keep quiet. They also tell their victims no one will believe them. They even destroy their victim's self esteem to the point the victim believes no one would care anyway, so there isn't a point in telling anyone.

**"You shouldn't talk about this. It's not the Christian thing to do, making him/her look bad."** People who say this are often also survivors of abuse, yet who lack the courage to face their pain. Others facing their pain makes these folks feel badly, so they try to shut down the open person. Often, there is no getting through to these people, so it is best not to discuss abuse with them. It is vital to know though that there is nothing "un-Christian" about discussing your experiences. You aren't making the abuser look bad. The abuser already did that by being abusive.

**"Are you really sure that's what happened?"** This comment is often said by someone who knows both victim & abuser. This is said by someone who really doesn't want to accept that someone they care about is capable of such awful behavior. It also is said by a narcissist's flying monkey who is trying to instill doubt in the victim so they tolerate more abuse from the narcissist. Take this comment as a red flag that the person saying it is NOT safe! Don't discuss your experiences with this person. Doing so only will lead to you being hurt, possibly also being the victim of a smear campaign.

**"Nobody's parents are perfect," "No one gets along perfectly with their parents," or "Everyone has childhood hurts."** When a person says these statements, it hurts. They are lumping vicious abuse in the same category as simple personality differences. So invalidating!! Shock value can make a person realize how foolish

their words are. Saying something like, "So my mother berating me to the point of obliterating my self esteem while I was a child is the same as another mother disagreeing with her child over what their favorite movie is? That's what it sounds like you're saying, & I disagree with you."

**"Stop thinking about it" or "Stop dwelling in the past!"** Wouldn't it be nice if it was that easy?! Again, it's acceptable to educate whoever asks this question. Tell them that C-PTSD & PTSD are common after abuse, & are brought on by experiencing such horrific trauma, it literally broke a person's brain. A quality these disorders share is constantly reliving the trauma through flashbacks, nightmares & intrusive thoughts. Not thinking about things is impossible when your brain won't let you.

**Another ridiculous & often said comment is, "Why would you talk about this now, all this time later?"** When in the midst of suffering abuse, the victim is busy trying to survive. Talking about it at the time rarely seems important. Once the victim is safe, survival mode ends & this person can think clearer. They often try to process what they just escaped by talking about it. Or, they are triggered by something... a sound, smell, someone that reminds them of their abuser in some way. Not a lot of people are aware of this, & that may be the case with the person who says this to you. Tell him or her.

**"You'll get over it," "It could've been so much worse!" or, "Look for the positive in everything!"** Such comments are what I think of as toxic positivity. While it is good to be positive, too positive is unhealthy. It's unrealistic which easily can lead to disappointment. Comments like this also make a victim feel ashamed for still being affected by the trauma or needing to discuss it in order to heal. Don't waste your time talking about past trauma to people like this. You'll only end up hurt by their calloused words.

**"At least he/she didn't hit you!"** A common belief is that the only type of abuse is physical. Anyone subjected to narcissistic abuse knows this is utter nonsense. Emotional, mental, sexual, financial & spiritual abuse are all horrific forms of abuse. They simply don't leave the clearly visible scars that physical abuse does. The uneducated need to be aware of this, including the person who says this to you.. You can also tell them that PTSD & C-PTSD are physical damage done to the brain by exposure to abuse & trauma.

**"What did you do to make him/her treat you that way?"** This invalidating & shaming statement is so common! It makes victims feel responsible for the terrible things their abuser did to them, & that is utterly wrong! No one can make another person abuse them, period, no matter what they do or don't do. Did Jack the Ripper's victims do anything to make him kill them? What about Ted Bundy's victims? No. These men saw an opportunity & took advantage of it. Their victims did nothing to deserve what these killers did to them. This is a point which you can bring up to the person who says such a disgusting statement.

**"You should be more patient with him/her!"** No. Just no. The more patient you are with an abuser, the more they will abuse you because they see that you will tolerate a lot. It could help to ask this person why should anyone be understanding with someone who repeatedly hurts them & shows no desire to improve their behavior?

**"You should be more careful when picking your romantic partners!"** This statement is nothing but victim blaming. What the heartless person saying this fails to realize yet needs to know is abusers can come across any way they like - very charming, kind, compassionate, romantic, successful. They rarely are abusive monsters 24/7. If they were, no one would get involved with them because it would be clear what they were really like. They lure victims in by appearing to be much better people than they truly are. While this seems like common sense, unfortunately it isn't. The person who says this statement to you needs to be educated! Tell them this!

Unfortunately, there always will be people who don't understand what it's like to survive abuse. There also will be people who want to silence victims, no matter how much or little they discuss their experiences. The more you heal, the less these people will bother you, I'm happy to say. I also hope this podcast has helped you to learn some ways to deal with these people!

Thank you for listening to my podcast.