

“You Should Just Leave”

Today’s podcast is called “You Should Just Leave.”

Being in a relationship with an abusive person is incredibly hard. The routine changes daily, so what was good yesterday is suddenly bad today. There is also constant belittling, invalidating, crazy-making, & so much more. Seeing someone suffering like this, many people’s first thought is, “you should just leave.” When someone doesn’t “just leave” in a timely manner or doesn’t want to leave at all, people often become disgusted with this person. They either lose patience with the person & end the relationship or they think this is a sign the abuse isn’t so bad. They may even doubt the person really is being abused at all, since they won’t leave.

What these people fail to realize is that there are many very valid reasons a person stays in an abusive relationship for too long. Today we are going to discuss some of them.

Victims are often terrified of their abusers & for good reasons. Their abuser may be physically violent, or has threatened violence. Or, he or she may not have threatened violence specifically, but instead has done things like punch walls, break things or hurt the victim’s pets. Such behaviors show that this person is capable of violence, & no threats need to be spoken to instill fear in someone witnessing these behaviors.

Abusers annihilate their victims’ self esteem, which convinces them they need their abuser. A person with no self esteem doesn’t believe in themselves in any capacity, which means they don’t know that they don’t need to depend on another person. In fact, the thought of living without their abuser telling them what to do, think & feel often instills blind panic in a victim.

Abusers convince their victims that can change, & this won’t happen again. Everyone has heard a story of a woman whose husband beats her, she leaves, he promises it’ll never happen again & she goes back to him over & over. This is a common scenario. Abusers panic when their victims leave. They shower their victims with love & affection, & they make all kinds of promises to lure their victims back, including the promise to treat them better. Abusers can appear very believable at this point, which is partly why their victims give them another chance.

Victims rarely have any real support to help them leave. Abusers isolate their victims from friends & family so they can abuse their victims without interference. Victims are often completely alone by the time they are ready to leave. Leaving is hard enough with support, but without? It’s so much harder.

Victims also rarely have any money. Abusers take their victims’ paychecks or make sure they can’t work so they are financially dependent on the abuser. It takes money to move out so without it, they are stuck.

Victims stay to protect their children. Many victims will tolerate the abuse as a way to protect their children. Their abuser won't hurt the children as long as he has the victim to hurt. Or, maybe the abuser said if the victim leaves, he or she will hurt or kill the children. Staying seems like the safer alternative.

Victims are shamed & chastised by so called "religious" people. So many people twist Scripture around to make the victim look like the problem for ending an abusive marriage. These people also refuse to acknowledge the seriousness of abuse, help the victim in any way & abandon the victim in their time of need.

The law isn't always on the side of victims, & is no help. If you have proof of physical abuse, your chances of help are pretty good. However, not all abusers abuse physically. Other types of abuse are either illegal or hard to prove. Emotional, sexual, financial & spiritual abuse all fall into those categories.

As you can see, leaving an abusive person isn't easy. If you ever think of saying, "You should just leave" to someone in an abusive relationship, I hope you will consider these reasons why it's not so easy to "just leave." Or, if you are the one in an abusive relationship & someone tells you that you should just leave, I hope you will fill them in on why that is not possible at the moment.

Thank you for listening to my podcast!