

## **It Is Still Abuse If..**

Today's podcast is called "It's Still Abuse If.."

Many victims of abuse are quick to deny that they are actually being abused or have been abused. After being beaten by her husband, a woman may claim she deserved it because she didn't do something he wanted her to do, or he had too much to drink before he hit her. A man is even more likely to deny being abused, thanks to the ridiculous attitude society has that women can't abuse men. Many men would rather convince themselves it wasn't abuse than to deal with the disrespect they will receive if they admit it was.

Unfortunately such denials are normal for many victims of abuse. I did it myself. Growing up, I told myself my mother was simply overprotective of me, & my father needed me to take care of him rather than him take care of me. I was in my late teens when I realized my mother wasn't simply overprotective, & about thirty years old when I realized my father was abusive.

I thought today it would be a good idea to spell out some facts about abuse that are commonly ignored, minimized or denied to help people to face the truth about abuse in their life. I know this is a painful thing to face, but it truly is better to face it! Once you face it, you can start to heal. The pain you feel at facing the truth is absolutely going to be worth it when you can heal.

**It's still abuse if it wasn't physical.** Abuse comes in many forms. Someone can abuse you even if he or she never hit you. Harsh words, criticisms, intimidation, invalidation, mind games, forcing you to perform sexual acts in spite of you not wanting to, isolating you from friends & family, controlling your money, & twisting Scripture to claim God is angry with you are all examples of abusive behavior that is not physical.

**It's still abuse if your abuser apologized.** Abusers often apologize, claiming they won't do what they did ever again. For a while, they don't. Things are good. Suddenly though, once they believe that you are comfortable again, they go back into old patterns. An apology without genuine efforts to change bad behavior long term is still abuse.

**It's still abuse if your abuser told you they love you.** Abusers claim to love their victim. Maybe some do on some level, but that doesn't mean that abusing you is acceptable just because you think this person may love you.

**It's still abuse if your abuser was abused as a child.** The phrase, "hurting people hurt people" is often a lie said by abusers & their enablers as a way to excuse abusive behavior. Countless children have been abused, yet grew up to become kind, compassionate people who would rather do anything but hurt another person.

**It's still abuse if your abuser has a mental illness.** There are relatively few people with a mental illness who truly don't know right from wrong. Unless your abuser is one of those few people, he or she is using mental illness as an excuse to abuse.

**It's still abuse if there were good times in your relationship with your abuser.** No relationship is completely abusive. If so, abusers would be much easier to identify. Good times are natural in a relationship with an abuser, but they don't nullify the abusive behavior.

**It's still abuse if your abuser is your elderly parent.** People often are under the delusion that all older folks are sweet & kind, especially to their own family. Nothing could be further from the truth! There are plenty of lovely older folks, but not all of them are. Many of them are as cruel to their adult children as they were when they were younger, they just changed their tactics a bit to adjust with their age.

**It's still abuse if your abuser is a relative.** Many people put family on a pedestal, as if it's impossible for family members to abuse other. I can tell you that this is a complete lie, because I have been abused by several of my family members. In fact, family members can be the worst abusers of all.

If you recognize some of these behaviors in someone that you are in a bad relationship with, then the relationship is abusive. You have the right to protect yourself from this behavior. Exercise that right! Do what you have to in order to protect yourself from this person, even if it means ending the relationship. If you don't know what to do, pray. Ask God to help you. Learn all you can about toxic relationships. Contact the National Domestic Violence Hotline, join online forums, read books. Do whatever you have to do to learn about your toxic situation so you can formulate a plan on how to deal with the situation.

Thank you for listening to my podcast!