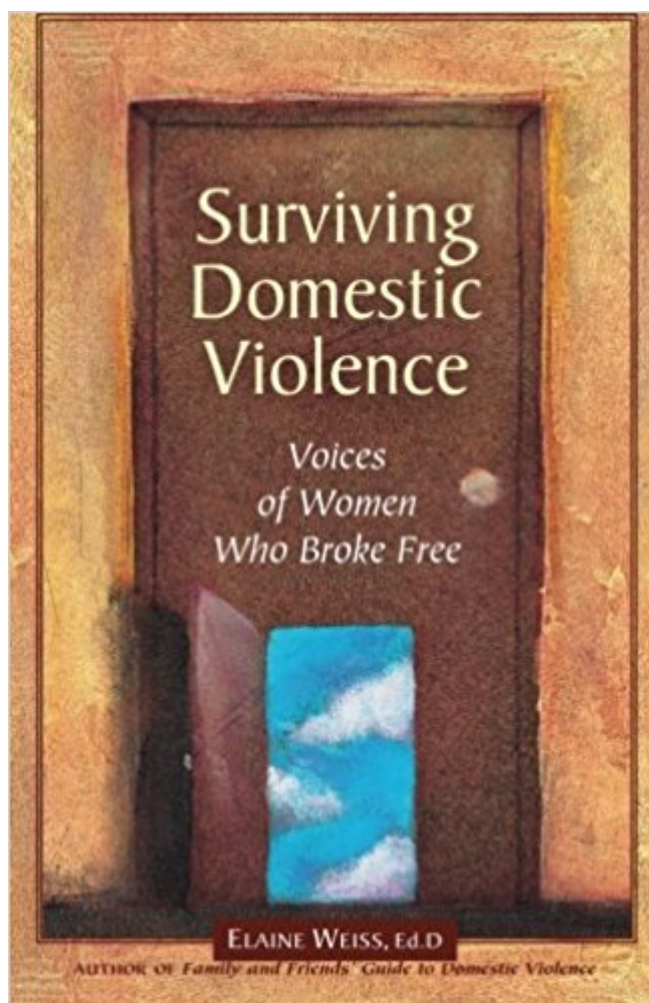


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# Surviving Domestic Violence: Voices Of Women Who Broke Free



## Synopsis

SURVIVING DOMESTIC VIOLENCE tells the stories of twelve women. Each was a victim of domestic violence, escaped from her abuser, reclaimed her dignity, reconstructed her life, and rediscovered peace. Domestic violence doesn't just happen "out there" somewhere. It happens in our town, in our neighborhood, on our street. It happens to women we see at work, the supermarket, the movie theater, the ballet and the PTA board meeting. Every woman who has left an abusive man—every woman who has yet to leave—will find encouragement and hope in the voices of these women who broke free.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

"Early in the marriage, I was too immature to recognize that damage could occur emotionally to my son. But as Bobby got older, and I matured, then I knew I didn't want him to be exposed to any more of this. So my job was to find a way to get free. And then I just started plotting, and biding my time till I was secure enough to let the plan unfold." Carolee Curtis, Hospital Administrator "My mother said, Judy, he has an invisible whip that he's just whipping you with all the time." I thought, you know, he has whipped me enough. I am not going to allow him to whip me any more." Judy North, First-Grade Teacher. "When I woke up in the hospital, I knew that I didn't deserve what he had been doing to me for all those years. It wasn't right. It wasn't my fault, and there was no way I'd ever want to be around him again." Maryellen Kasimian, Medical Student

It is with pride that Volcano Press is publishing Elaine Weiss. Her books demonstrate the great advances in the struggle against family violence that have taken place since we first published *BATTERED WIVES* in the early 1970s. In those early days, a handful of feminists, scattered across the United States, were creating shelters for battered women--without funding, without community understanding, against great odds. It was and still is a historic movement. Today, we have the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA), which established an agency of the U.S. Department of Justice. In addition, there are many state domestic violence coalitions and a myriad of local and national programs to support battered women. And, as author Elaine Weiss says, "Most abused women are not passive victims. They show enormous strength, both while they are within the relationship, and as they work to extricate themselves. One proof of this strength is the huge number who ultimately manage to break free and go on with their lives. They do not wait to be rescued. They rescue themselves. They are resourceful. They fight back. They take care of themselves, and often of their children." We thank Elaine for giving voices to these women. Ruth Gottstein, Publisher Adam Gottstein, Associate Publisher Volcano Press

Honest, Compelling, Compassionate No one can describe domestic abuse more accurately than those who have experienced it. Elaine Weiss offers a remarkable insider's view of the problem. As a victim, and an educator, she covers the topic with a mixture of objectivity and compassion. She takes you inside the day to day lives of the victim, several victims in fact (including Weiss). By drawing upon all the little acts of torture that merge together to make the lives of victims a despotic, complicated, chilling reality, she provides a blueprint of each victim's abuse experience. There can be no doubt that domestic abuse victims are prisoners of war, and unlike most wars, no one is coming to rescue them. The problem is it takes time for victimized persons in this setting to realize they have been drawn into a war. After all each of the persons portrayed in the book were simply trying to overcome the psychological blows that struck them one after another, several times a day, for hours, and the physical blows that came out of no where. These women like most people have no prior knowledge of the techniques used to overthrow the free will of another human. They have had no training in tactical acts of sabotage or sustained psychological violence all of which are used in war. Each victim was simply trying to attain normalcy and as a result the abuser raised the stakes under the pretense that the problem was the victim's unwillingness or inability to comply with their demands. Trying to achieve a normal life meant resistance which to the abuser was disobedience and merited overt or covert punishments that were both psychological and physical and not in the ways we think of domestic abuse. It's like sitting on a person's legs and asking them to stand, then

piling a variety of heavy and dehumanizing items on top of them to torture and observe their suffering and prevent them from standing, while you criticize, and terrorize them psychologically. Then once they have managed to create an opening, you beat them, and degrade them. Then when they reach out for help others scrutinize their resolve and ask the ridiculous question, why don't you leave? Instead of "How can I help?" What I found interesting is how easy it is for others to judge victimized persons, to make light of their situation, to blame them, to do nothing to aid a fellow human in distress and then complain that the victim is not doing enough to help themselves. The fact is those who commit domestic abuse are brilliant military strategists, they place all their energies on keeping their victims trapped to gain complete control over their lives. They are experienced manipulators. Each victim's story shows the planning and careful execution of the person who chose to become the abuser. Surely their actions make them predatory humans. How do we expect a normal thinking person in distress, to out think a predatory thinker? It is not that the victim does not want to defeat her abuser, she does. She simply cannot do it at the speed of lightning. There are many things she has to put in place to survive her abuser's attempts to stop her. The book focuses on the incredible bravery and ingenuity of victims, the way they build a tunnel to get out of the war zone, they do this in microscopic amounts even if it takes them years or decades because on their own it is the best they can do. This book breaks down domestic abuse from the point of view of a victim/victims. It shows how willing they are to empower each other knowing that no one outside their experiences can grasp the agony they face alone, terrified in a war zone without human aid. The methods the victims used were so ingenious I made notes of them and bought additional books, two of which were on Guided Imagery, a technique used by one of the victims who imagined herself pushing a wheelbarrow and piling bricks into it and building an imaginary wall while she was being psychologically abused by her spouse. The author pointed to the fact that Guided Imagery is used by Olympic athletes. Another victim decided not to pursue domestic abuse charges because the outcome was uncertain instead she focused on other illicit acts her husband had committed and took the information to the police, this clever move led to his arrest and a lengthy sentence, giving her the time she needed to get him out of the house, gain a job, establish savings, and move to another state with their son. This was incredibly smart because most abusers are also breaking the law in other areas of their lives where the rules for punishment are more clearly defined, and the sentences are steeper. Another victim, a teenager, had her abuser arrested for rape because he broke into her parents home to carry out the assault. The book points out that once the victim is free of her abuser she must still deal with the aftermath of the abuse which can make a victim vulnerable to other injurious personalities...after all sharks smell plight better than most, they

are always searching for the wounded among us. For example, after the victim who was raped sought psychological care, the therapist tried to convince her that she was also to blame for the relationship and what happened to her. Having experienced what abuse sounds like and looks like she knew from just one session that this therapist was harmful to her well being and did not return for a second serving. Good for her!!!! The bottom line is once victims understand how to spot an abuser they do their best to avoid persons with abusive traits. Additionally I bought the companion book by Elaine Weiss for individuals who would like to learn how to help abuse victims Family and Friends' Guide to Domestic Violence: How to Listen, Talk and Take Action When Someone You Care About is Being Abused. When purchasing "Surviving Domestic Violence" for a victimized person in a DV setting also purchase a copy of companion book for yourself. If you would like to help someone who is out of her abusive situation I also recommend Mary Ellen O'Toole, book "Dangerous Instincts", and In Sheep's Clothing by George K Simon. Also look for a good resource on personal safety because leaving an abuser means forcing them to give up their control, and it is during this period that victims are harassed, stalked, threatened, attacked, and / or murdered. A good example of how this occurs is the case of Trottie and Barbara Canada. I am using this example because this media advisory offers details in such a way that one can clearly see the escalation of the abuser's behavior. Keep in mind that at anytime he could have simply left her alone but that meant giving up the control he needed to have over her.

Sick. <https://www.texasattorneygeneral.gov/oagnews/release.php?id=4832> Other books that can be useful for personal safety: Abusers often monitor the victim's activity after they have left to determine when is the right time to plan an attack. 1.) Countering Hostile Surveillance: Detect, Evade, and Neutralize Physical Surveillance Threats by ACM IV Security Services 2.) Also visit the National Stalking Resources for free literature, downloads, and advice on cyber security. Many abusers stalk victims after they leave online. Website resources for personal

safety: <http://www.nonenseselfdefense.com/> Items sold by that can be used for personal safety: The victim should try to document any threats has a good digital recorder that can be used for this: 1.) iGearPro 8GB Digital Audio Voice Recorder - Multifunctional Portable Rechargeable Dictaphone MP3 Player by iGearPro A great device for making sure the door cannot be opened even if the abuser should attain a key to the victim's new residence. 2. Addalock - (1 Piece) by Rishon Enterprises 3. Door Jammer / Portable Door Security Device by DoorJammer###

It's been going on 12 years since I escaped my abuser. I'm back to school now, working on a social work degree. I want to help others in ways I wanted to be helped back then. While researching

material for a research paper on domestic violence I happened across this book. It came to me, along with several others, from the library, borrowed for research. From the moment I picked it up and sat down with the purpose to skim it for relevant data on a Friday night, until late Sunday night, when I finished it, I was riveted with the stories of the women who were told within the pages. I couldn't just skim with this book. I had to read every page of it, allowing it to dig up memories within myself that had been forcefully buried years ago. Dr. Weiss does an extraordinary job in telling the stories of these women without any "props" to make their reality any better or worse than what it was. I like the way she begins with her own story in the beginning and then, when telling the others', she uses examples from her relationship with her ex husband to emphasize just how much she identifies with the brave and courageous women who found often ingenious ways to escape from the oppression of their batterers. Dr. Weiss has the sensitivity and the writing skills to be able to articulate the often subtle aspects of domestic violence. She helps those readers who may not have been victims but who want to learn more about domestic violence to see that it is much more than about blatant physical battering. I want to thank Dr. Weiss for writing the book and honoring the lives of the women who are in it. I want to thank the women whose stories are told for being shining beacons to those who might read them and gather hope and strength from them. Perhaps the most powerful messages from Dr. Weiss' book are that women CAN escape from horrific battering circumstances; and that if you see a batterer victimizing their significant other in a public place, acknowledge it! Your acknowledgement could very well become the victim's beacon of light they focus on to find their way out of the darkness.

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