



Battered Woman Syndrome: Its Repercussions and Implications on Women of the Present Era

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Abstract: Domestic violence is prevalent across the world in diverse cultures and affects hoi polloi of all economic status quo. Over the last few decades, females have become drastically cognizant of the rising domestic violence and its repercussions on their feminine pride and sense of dignity. Survivors of domestic violence may experience a decline in the skills that are direly needed to carry out routine daily activities necessary to live independently in the community. Numerous legal and other agencies have turned up to counsel and assist the victims of domestic violence by means of legislation and other social means. Despite of its intricacy, women attempt to file legal separation to abandon an abusive relationship. The current research venture will primarily focus on establishing healthy, meaningful and evocative connubial relationships and the various successful ways in which spousal abuse can be curbed.

Keywords: Battered Woman Syndrome (BWS), Nuptial Ties, Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, Spousal Abuse, Self-Defense

1. Introduction

Domestic violence is a prototype of behavior which incorporates brutality by one person in a domestic context against another, such as in marriage. Since time immemorial, women who have been persistently the prey of physical and psychological torture or face the risk of severe injury and death, preferably opt to molest the men who abuse them. As the longer the woman stay in an abusive relationship, the greater will be the physical and emotional toll. The woman might turn out to be down in the dumps and anxious. She might begin to distrust her own ability to take care of herself or speculate if the abuse is her own blunder. She might even suffer helplessness and get paralyzed. These subjugated and tortured women assume that they must kill or be killed. Battered woman syndrome is a physical and psychological condition of a woman who has undergone emotional, physical, or sexual abuse from a counterpart. BWS is a permissible action to lend a hand to these women to shield themselves from the criminal charges which followed their attempt to escape from an abuse¹. Developed by legal scholars in 1970s, BWS is a protection for women who killed their men or so called batterers. It is measured as a mental defect that implies a normal individual to perform in an unreasonable style.

Lenore Walker², an expert on BWS eulogizes that BWS is a three-tier cycle. In the groundwork stage, the woman is a sufferer of minor physical injuries and verbal abuse, and thus tries to pacify her lover or in real sense, the batterer. In the subsequent stage, the batterer subjects the woman to acute violence and the victim is encompassed with intense stress and pressure. The third or the last stage is labeled as honeymoon stage in which the batterer expresses remorse and exhibits contrite loving behavior. Such women become impervious of the situation and are sure to kill or be killed by the batterer.

Now the query raised here is, "If the abuse was so bad, why did the victim continue with the relationship"?³ There are sufficient reasons to support this question. The foremost rationale is that the battered women receive reinforcement from the batterer during the third stage which actually facilitates the victim and the batterer to attain peace and tranquility in their relationship. Moreover, terminating of such a relationship will lead the victim as well as the children of the couple to encounter dire economic consequences, low self-esteem and helplessness.

In the current research arena, some of the tribulations associated with representing traumatic experiences of spousal

abuse and harassment will be truthfully and usefully exposed. The work will even provide stringent measures to overcome spousal abuse and render useful tips for a contented and long lasting marital life. Unfortunately, women who have bumped into male partner violence display symptoms by and large explained in a comportment that further victimizes them, rather than unraveling the complexities involved in male partner violence resulting into a battered woman. Male partner cruelty entails continual abuse, committed by an intimate partner, a partner whom you have discerned and bothered about over a period of time. A woman who has been the target of this inconceivable betrayal by her intimate partner fights back with the countless complexities drawn in her matrimonial life.

Even when women strikes back and engages in mutual violence, it is usually the women herself, who is most likely to be hurt, both physically and emotionally. Such women often befall the victims of vague somatic disorders like severe headache, insomnia and abdominal pain. The only unbeaten substitute left to a woman is to abandon her partner and seek assistance in the development of a new self-concept. Generally, women should make sincere endeavors in developing intimate and strong nuptial relationship, where two people are highly interdependent and a change in one's behavior is likely to lead to a change in the other. Individuals should digest this fact that in order to be pleased and satiated, they must be in harmony and survive for true love. Love is an evolutionary device to persuade couples to stay together for long enough to give their children a good shot at making it to adulthood⁴.

Men are communally socialized to display power especially over women- to be the protector, to make decisions without their assistance, and to scrutinize them as a piece of commodity. Women just have three industries to perform- to get tied into a nuptial knot, rear up children and perform daily household chores. Ultimately, women are expected to be submissive, extra pleasing, and not get annoyed even in exaggerated circumstances. Thus, women in association with men are anticipated to be faithful and loyal caretakers, and just need to bear in mind that nothing should be more significant in their life than the needs of their men. On the other hand, man as a goodwill gesture should keep his wife happy by showering love upon her. But there are a few unanswered questions that need to be pondered upon; why a particular man beats his wife? Why men in general use physical force against their partners? Why would a woman put up this kind of a treatment? Why would she continue to live with such a man? How could she love a partner who beat her to the point of requiring hospitalization? We would expect the woman to pack her bags and go. Where is her self-respect?⁵

2. Psychological Stages of Battered Women Syndrome

There are four psychological stages of the Battered

Woman Syndrome. The foremost is the "denial" stage where the woman declines to admit even to herself that she has been beaten or that there are "crisis" involved in her marriage. She may entitle each incident an "accident". She proffers excuses for her husband's violence and each time steadfastly believes it will never ensue again.

The second is the "guilt" stage in which she now concedes that there is a dilemma, but deems herself accountable for it. She is of the conviction that she "deserves" to be beaten, because she has shortcomings in her character and is not living up to her husband's expectations.

The third is the "enlightenment" stage where the woman no longer assumes responsibility for her husband's abusive treatment, recognizing that no one "deserves" to be beaten. She is still dedicated to her marriage, though, and continues with her spouse, on tenterhooks that they can work out with the things.

The fourth is the "responsibility" stage in which the woman accepts the fact that her husband will not, or cannot cease his brutal behavior, the battered woman resolute that she will no longer surrender to it and initiates life anew.

Battered women took numerous steps to ease themselves of the setback. These steps incorporated: (1) get in touch with the police, (2) approaching a battered woman's shelter, (3) acquiring legal counseling, (4) parting the association eternally and obtaining an annulment, (5) convincing the battered to impede his violent behavior by herself or with the aid of others; and (6) combating the abuser.

3. Reasons for Prolonging an Abusive Marital Relationship

The idea of giving up the status of a wife and taking on the still somewhat stigmatized status of a divorcee and learning to live alone and independently can jolt any woman and leave her in a paralyzed state of mind. The status of wife is a source of pride for any married female; our society encourages women to be wives and mothers to be women. As a woman who has been dominated, controlled, and frightened for years had lost a great deal of self-confidence and self-esteem the prospect of living alone was indeed terrifying and this apprehension served as an addendum obstacle to leaving. Parting and staying away from an obnoxious marriage is one of the hardest things happened in a life of any Battered woman.

Due to certain inevitable reasons such as childrearing, children protection, and financial security needs, women have been obligated to swallow their anger, endure cycles of violence, and chase ways for enhancement. However, these women participants' designate that the complete resurgence is unfeasible and their psychological trauma can never be eliminated. The reason women take a long time to leave an abusive relationship is due in part to constant coercion from their male partners, conflicted emotions, and a lack of societal supports; rather than women's inaction or weakness.

Time and again women are haunted with these questions

like- Why do women have to take the responsibility for male violence? What should males do for their domestic abusive behaviors? Do they need any community intervention programs or psychological therapy for mental recovery? How to prevent spousal abuse?

Women have been scrutinized as men's property and had no independent legal standing. Physically and economically, battered women are typically not the equals of their partner. They are socialized to ask for assistance and protection from men. Women in abusive associations are ostracized for years, being cognizant of the fact that they must act to rescue themselves. They stay in tuned with these men for multiple reasons, including trepidation, isolation and love proving the fact that leaving is precarious for many, and difficult for most.

Male partner violence does not have to be an accepted phenomenon in our society; a transformation is possible in a society that upholds equivalent privileges for all people, including women. Women are equally deserving of dignity and respect, yet this revolution cannot begin until we reject disrespectful comments, criticism, and justifications of violence against women. It is possible to change a culture that passively accepts violence and oppression. According to Bancroft, "Once we tear the cover of excuses, distortions, and manipulations off of abusers, they suddenly find abuse much harder to get away with. And we can change the culture's attitude toward [male] partner abuse. There are no excuses for abuse"⁶.

4. Role of Women

Women must put down their love, family, and economic security to struggle for their survival, safety, children, freedom, and personal dignity. We live in a fickle society that flip-flops between judging a woman: for not being able to make her marriage work; for staying and putting up with being abused; for not protecting her children; for insisting that the children's father see his children under unsupervised conditions; for making too big of a deal about his infidelity and/or use of profanity; his dismissive attitude toward your values and beliefs; and for making my experience of male partner violence public knowledge. Women are damned if they do and damned if they don't.

The sole way to break the cycle of domestic violence is to take action — and the sooner the better. The woman should start by telling someone about the abuse, whether it's a friend, loved one, health care provider or other close contact. At first, she might find it hard and reluctant to talk about the abuse, but she will also likely feel relief and receive much-needed support. The victim should call a women's shelter or domestic violence hotline for advice by calling the person at a safe time, when the abuser isn't around or from a friend's house or other safe location.

The victim whose been constantly browbeaten should pack an emergency bag that incorporates stuff she will entail when she leaves, such as extra clothes and keys, and should leave the bag in a secure place. She should always keep important personal papers, money, prescription and medications handy

so that she can take them away on a short notice.

Violent behavior exists as a significant barrier to women's equality, devastating impacts on the lives of women, children, families and Canadian society as a whole. Keeling and van Wormer⁷ (2011) noted how professionals often contribute to the oppression of women. They proclaimed that we should never treat women as powerful beings but rather we need to respect their personal choice and agency. It is vital for helping professionals to practice empathy for the women they assist to begin a societal shift toward eliminating stigma.

Women traditionally would be expected to surrender their personal freedom, and historically, would be obligated to remain married out of a sense of duty and responsibility. Yielding in front of the husband's whims and fancies does not mean that a woman be in concord with him on everything. No doubt, a husband is the bread winner of the family, but that doesn't mean a wife is to willingly place all of her strengths under the authority of the husband to follow him.

Human beings are an altruist. They are endowed to make sacrifice for the sake of others without any consideration of the rewards they will obtain from them in return. According to Duck⁸, some kind and degree of conflict is inevitable in all relationships. But the process of resolving conflicts can often be positive, promoting growth of the relationship. The important question, therefore, isn't whether there's conflict, but how it's handled. However, recurring conflicts may point toward a powerlessness to resolve the underlying source; the partners may come to doubt with each other as reasonable persons, leading to a 'digging in of the heels', a dis-affection with each other and, ultimately, a 'strong falling out'.

5. Measure to Control an Abusive Relationship

One should strive to look for measures that can be of assistance in resolving violent and disturbing marital relationships. The couple should hold high opinion for each other's privacy by being emotionally supportive, otherwise even the most unwavering and amorous associations, unavoidably break up. Berschied and Ammazalorso (2004)⁹ say: It is one of the saddest facts of the human condition that even the closest and happiest of relationships end – if not by some circumstance of fate that causes separation, then by the death of one of the partners. The partner should listen to what the person is not saying as well as to what he or she is saying. Focus intently and listen to the messages conveyed behind and between words. One should treat their spouse's mistakes, as you would want them to treat your mistakes. Let the individual know that you are concerned with the mistake, and that you still respect them as a person. They should share their excitement in times of victory, and offer encouragement in times of difficulty. One should even reflect her interpretation of the person's message back to the spouse and compliment the person for the wisdom and insights he has shared with you.

6. Discussion

Who is really doing whom a favor? Men should always be grateful for the women in their existence as it is not as easy as ABC to be a woman. I am of the conviction that this research work will definitely serve as yet another vantage point to view male partner violence, through different eyes, other than my own. There is always another version, another eye to tell what it sees, and another voice ready to speak. The primary focus in marriage is to remain married for life, rear up children together, and maintain the religious sanctity of matrimony. There are two people that can come together to become one flesh; a husband and a wife. Wedlock is an office ordained by God, a Holy union, wherein the husband serves the wife and vice-versa. When a man enters into a covenant relationship with his bride, he commits to the responsibilities of loving, honoring and cherishing her. The first duty of a man to his woman, or a husband to his wife, is to respect her. Men should give their wife what she needs most – to be loved, honored and cherished. Females need to be more enduring in their marital relationship. Whenever the faults of their husbands pops up, they should not simply to fuss and cuss about how messed up he is, but to analyze thinking yourself to be the one to help mold and shape him into the man.

Spousal abuse is a predicament entrenched in several societies around the world. In the era, where we are celebrating the "Women's Day," it is very unfortunate that such cases of death due to battering of wife are still being reported. The abuse of men is a complex social problem that warrants close attention. Action is needed to prevent and reduce both physical and psychological abuse in their early stages. Government is also trying to protect the women from all such violence and for that recently the "Domestic Violence Act 2005" was brought into the force by Indian government from October 26, 2006. Stringent steps should be taken to shun away violence from the married life of couples. Couples should make efforts to comprehend each other and feel connected. Each partner should be well acquainted with his/ her roles and responsibilities. In the words of Winch (1958)¹⁰, happy marriages are often based on each partner's ability to fulfill the other's needs. The couple should have high level of interaction on equal footing, leading to more polarized attitude towards each other.

7. Conclusion

Connubial relationships direly require ongoing cooperative actions providing synchrony and build trusting alliances to survive and thrive. A woman needs to be herself when she is with her soul mate and be crystal clear about what she will endure. The couple should have the audacity to humbly acknowledge the difference that each other make in their life

and should validate them by expressing their gratitude for their life and contributions. Die hard efforts should be made to make the spouse attune about the sense of value and significance he holds, so that he never overlooks you. Showering gratitude and encouragement by language and action will strengthen the bonds of any relationship. By turning these skills into lifelong habits, a couple is able to construct healthy, strong and mutually gratifying relationship. Men should pay homage to the deeds been performed by women since their inception till death

She changes her name, changes her home. Leaves her family, moves in with you. Builds a home with you, gets pregnant for you. Pregnancy changes her body; she gets fat, and almost gives up in the labor room due to unbearable pains of child birth. Even with kids she delivers, bears your name. Till the day she dies, everything she does- cooking, cleaning your house, taking care of your parents, bringing up of your children, earning, advising you, ensuring you can be relaxed, maintaining all family relations; everything that benefits you. Sometimes at the cost of her own health, hobbies and beauty. (Anonymous, what's App Message, 2014)

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