

the ONE from the Abused person

by Guru Mani H

#Person1: After years of suffering, when I finally share my story with you; why don't you believe me? Just because you can't see it, and have never witnessed the evidence with your own eyes; why do you doubt me and think I'm exaggerating and making it up? Don't you know how hard it was to tell you; to unburden my soul? Don't you know how vulnerable it made me feel; how naked and exposed? Don't you know how devastating it is that you now believe the other side; listen to their smooth talk and their victim speak, and swallow all of that as the whole picture? I feel like I've been violated all over again, but this time by you, the one I thought I could share my story with.

#Metoo: You ask me why I didn't tell you this dark secret before. You argue with me, saying that if it really was as bad as I describe, then surely, I'd have confided in you earlier. Looking back, I don't really know why I kept quiet, but emotional numbness, a sense of guilt, and fear of the consequences, all had something to do with it. I didn't want to admit the reality of the situation to myself, let alone anyone else; even you.

#Person2: What I experienced, happened from more than one person; various people mistreating me in different ways, but all with the same negative and destructive end result.

#Metoo: My abuse happened over many years. For some, it can be over a shorter season, or a one-time event. All who I've talked to or read about, recount similar experiences to me: flash-backs hitting you when you least expect it; brokenness which you drag around with you continually for what seems like an eternity; the inability to cope with life or love, and panic attacks when something or someone triggers a memory.

#Person3: Ever heard the expression, 'walking on egg-shells'? Well, I became an expert! I was the Olympic Gold Medallist of the Egg-shell Walking Event, but no matter how

expertly, professionally or successfully I'd competed in the event the day before, this was not a once in every four-year challenge, but a daily one. My past performance was absolutely no prediction of how it would go today or tomorrow, because the course always changed and there were no rules. Oh, and I forgot to say, I was blindfolded, so couldn't even see the egg-shells, therefore had no idea how to avoid stepping on them!

#Metoo: Corrupted by one so close, so inter-connected with my life and my success, whose journey coincided with mine for decades.

#Person4: Thankfully, I don't have any kids. I know other victims in my support group who do, and the lives of those children have been so scarred by what they've seen, heard, and experienced. Unless they too get therapy and healing, the chances are they will go on to repeat the same pattern, continuing the cycle of harm from generation to generation; the ones who were hurt, then hurting others.

#Metoo: Exploited by someone I looked up to, an authority figure, a trusted person who I admired, even idolised. It was someone I felt safe with at first, who slowly lured me in until it was too late to escape. A bully, a predator; powerful, and keeping me stuck in a position of weakness. I was helpless and at his mercy, too awestruck to see things as they really were; until years later.

#Person5: I'm female, and the facts of my abuse have been fairly accepted by professionals, by friends, and by society as a whole. I have a friend who's male; abused by his wife emotionally for years, but the very ones who believed me, have assumed that what he's saying is not fact, but fiction, simply because of gender stereotyping that this sort of thing happens from men, not to them. I see how hard it's been for him, and still is. He's gone so quickly from victim to villain, just by being transparent about what happened behind closed doors. I wish I could do more to help, but I just don't have the strength.

#Metoo: I'm free, but not yet fully free. I'm out of the danger zone, though it's now that the stress, torment and hurt, all of which I buried so expertly, start to come out. It's like a dam bursting, pouring out years of bottled-up emotion, which are now finally in a safe place to release. The powerful force of those feelings hit my mind and body relentlessly and without warning, seriously affecting every aspect of my health. Things I did so easily before, at home and at work, now become almost impossible, causing me to question whether I did the right thing to lift the lid off the Pandora's box and be honest about everything. Life doesn't feel better yet, and sometimes it's so dark, hauntingly, desperately and unendingly dark, that I wonder if my life is really a life at all; whether it will ever get any better.

#Person6: Freedom. I've had a taste, and how I LOVE the taste, the smell, the feel! But what a price I've had to pay. Where before there was peace outwardly but a storm inwardly, now there is peace inwardly, whilst the consequences of speaking out and daring to stand up to that manipulative bully have created a storm of hurricane proportions that still rages all around me. I dream of the day when all ties to that evil person will be cut forever, and I'll finally be free; inwardly AND outwardly. I want to be free. No, I need to SHOUT this. I WANT TO BE FREE. I'm not there yet; but I cling hold of the hope that one day the memories will fade and new ones, happier ones, will replace them.

#Metoo: I thought I was OK. The painful events were in a box, which I kept firmly shut from others, out of sight. In the rest of my life, I managed to get through each day. I was able to work, and maintain a public persona. I managed my environment very carefully, trying to control circumstances to minimise the potential of more hurt, knowing full well that just at the moment when I felt everything was calm, all hell would break loose, and I would remember again how fragile my life really was.

#Person7: I want to be a refuge and safe space for others, because I see them everywhere. It's like my abuse antenna is finely tuned in, and in just a few words or the look in someone's eye, their reaction to something I say or simply their silence, I get such a

haunting reflection of my life as it once was. I long to be for them, what others failed to be for me: someone to empathise, not sympathise, but really empathise; someone who knows a little of how it feels, who really has walked in their shoes; someone to come alongside them on their journey from abuse to freedom; someone who believes them, and accepts their story as real.

#Metoo: This really did happen to me too.