

enforcement term for shooting himself in the head. He shot himself while I listened on the telephone.

I was free. The chief was dead. He had the final word with no reply possible from me.

The good and kind policemen who investigated the incident said that he had left a clear message. He intended to kill our child and me too. There was no supper ready and the table was set with just two bullets: one for our 6-year-old child he had so desperately wanted, and one for me. Two live rounds were ready to go in his service revolver. If I had gone there, my child and I would not be alive today. I called that marriage extreme physical abuse.

I was widowed.

I had terrible guilt, but no more fear. I struggled. I married a third time a few months after the suicide. It was an escape from the terrible memories of that fateful day. It was a rebound kind of thing. The man refused to help me at all after we were married unless I put his name on the deed to my home. I immediately sought legal help and got an annulment.

Married, divorced, widowed, and annulled, I thought what a loser I was. My self-esteem was zero. I finally got over being mad at God and I asked Him for help. I realized I couldn't succeed without His blessing and I promised to do His will. He led my life from that time on.

I opened a business on my farm. It became successful. The Master Planner sent special angels my way to help and direct my progress.

He also sent those who needed to hear that they were not alone as they suffered in

abusive relationships.

I survived. I thrived. My business became a calling. I wrote a book, but it was not easy to disclose my pain to the world. I felt that if I could use that pain to help even one other abused person, it was worth the discomfort of the disclosure.

I am an old lady now. We've come a long way in recognizing and helping helpless folks. Safe Journey is ready and waiting to help YOU on your journey to a new life where you can survive and also thrive. Call them today.

Law enforcement agencies are working to make their officers aware and professional in their domestic violence calls. Most police officers are professional, kind, caring, and embarrassed by the few bad apples in their basket.

If you are silently suffering mental, physical or even financial abuse, call Safe Journey today. They are there to help

Check out Gail's book, "Asses and Angles". Available now on Amazon.com

***I am not just a survivor.
I am a thriver.***

Contact Safe Journey:

SAFE JOURNEY PROVIDES FREE AND CONFIDENTIAL SERVICES FOR ADULTS, TEENS, AND CHILDREN
MySafeJourney.org
814.438.2675



**I AM A SURVIVOR OF
DOMESTIC VIOLENCE**

You are not alone.
Read a survivor's story.

Control has many faces.

Happy life, parental attention, and love as I had known it ended for me when my sister was diagnosed with an incurable disease. I was 10 years old and instantly inherited all the chores my parents no longer had time or interest in performing. I cleaned, laundered, cooked, shopped, and more.

Understandably, they focused on my sister. I disappeared, became unimportant and no longer existed when no one had time to talk or listen to me. I believe that started my search for unconditional love — with all the wrong men.

At 15, I met an 18-year-old guy. I thought I fell in love. I felt sexual attraction and affection and received the love and attention I craved. We married two years later in spite of everyone's disapproval. We had two children and life was good for a while.

My young husband found the religion of his dreams. He insisted I follow its strict rules, which prohibited having friends outside his church, family gatherings, movies, slang language, television, clothing choices, hairstyles, makeup, and more.

My husband ended all sexual contact, even discussion, within our marriage. I was expected to cook, clean, take care of the children and go to his church many times a week. On Sundays I was allowed to read the Bible and go to his church. It gradually became full control by my husband. I was told it was God's will for my life. Meanwhile, he was having an affair within his religion. My life was over until I decided to seek help from family and friends.

Control has many faces. I called that one

brainwashing
and religious abuse.

I sought a divorce.

I met another man two years later. He was a chief of police in a nearby town. He was kind to my children, aging father and family. I dated him for two years and saw no indication of control or abuse. My family and friends all approved of my choice. I married him.

The young, nice looking, kind, well-respected police chief I had married brought his drinking out of hiding. He lined up my children and me and informed us that we deserved no special treatment as the family of the police chief. He threatened to arrest us and prosecute us to the letter of the law if we made a misstep. He said children should sit at the table and be seen and not heard.

I was confused and frightened by that behavior, which only escalated.

Within months he threw hot coffee on me, punched me in the stomach, threw white Rust-Oleum paint on me and my car, and hit and threatened my children. He told me if I dared to tell anyone it would not go well with my children.

He said, "This is family business and it stays in this family. Do you understand that?"

He punctuated his threat by throwing our cat, by its tail, out the back door with such force it hit a tree and lay motionless on the grass at the base of the tree.

The chief slammed me against the refrigerator and said, "If you don't get pregnant immediately, I'll find somebody who will. I want a child."

I was already pregnant and was going to tell him that day. His abuse stopped for nine months when he got news. He was like the man I thought I married. He was also kind for about a year after our son was born. Then he began to "spank" the baby for having accidents, or crying or talking when we were eating dinner.

The atrocities and threats increased regularly for years. I left periodically and asked for help from law enforcement agencies, judicial venues and elected officials. No one would even listen because my husband was the chief of police.

When I went to my dad for help, I found that he was old-school. Dad asked me, "What did you do to piss him off?" There were no hotlines for abuse or safe houses back then.

Finally, the chief made a mistake and grabbed me by the hair, threw me onto the pavement and kicked me into his car. A man and his secretary saw it from their office window. Soon they contacted me with the offer of a lawyer in a neighboring city.

I hid and applied for a divorce, and the chief moved out of our farmhouse. He got an apartment in the town where he was the chief of police. He called me on the phone. He asked me to bring "our little boy" and come to his apartment for supper. He said the food was on the stove and the table was set. I refused. He asked me to hold the line for a minute. I thought he was taking that supper off the stove. Instead he "ate his gun," a law