

## Individual 32

For almost [REDACTED] years I was a victim of coercive control. I cannot begin to describe how humiliating and degrading this is. To the outside world I had it all... a big house, fancy car, good job and loving husband. The truth was so different. I was alienated from my family and friends, verbally abused (useless, fat bitch was his favourite form of endearment), forced into sexual acts that I did not agree with, financially controlled, belittled at every turn, made feel I was a bad mother, tried to convince me I had mental health issues.... the list goes on.

The number of times that I prayed he would physically attack me... then I could go to the police and press charges.

He always took great delight in telling me that nobody would believe me as I had no proof.

I was one of the "lucky" ones. I escaped [REDACTED] ago but am still been controlled as we have [REDACTED] beautiful children and they are now also the focus of his control.

What are the effects on me... mentally, I don't know if I will ever recover. I find it very difficult to trust people, I find it very hard to accept genuine offers of help and support, I constantly think that if someone is been nice to me that there is a hidden agenda, I can't accept compliments Think of all the women that have taken their own life.... I considered it as my only way out several times. My faith got me through these terrible times but if I hadn't been as strong, nobody knew that I was been controlled to such extremes and i would have been just another woman who " had mental health problems and took her own life " Please, please please speak to women like myself and listen to the real stories. This act must be passed and coercive control must be shouted from the rooftops and support be available. Until the first man/woman is charged, tried and found guilty hundreds of women are going to continue to suffer and be afraid to speak out.

Regards

A broken woman with a long journey of healing ahead of her