

Forever Strong

by Anonymous

I have always longed for a loving family that I could call my own, where I could be loved and accepted despite my flaws. I always questioned, "why I was born? Why didn't she abort me too? My mother knew she didn't want me?" Her treatment towards me planted seeds of feeling unwanted, worthless and broken. That brokenness followed me from birth into womanhood.

When "he" came along it seemed our brokenness bonded us. I didn't hide my yearning for love and acceptance and he zoned right in on that. First he flooded me with attention, admiration, and affection in a way that no man had ever done before. Then he slowly started scaring off my friends. The more he isolated me, the stronger our bond grew, and the more I felt he was the only person who cared about me.

We talked so much in the early stages of being together. We talked and talked and talked - and boy did he listen! He listened like he was breathing me in, taking me in. He took the time to really listen and learn about me in a way that no one ever had. And I did the same for him. He talked to me like I was trustworthy and I listened to him as he talked about his own brokenness. In time, I would learn that we had different goals

with our listening. I listened because I cared. He listened so he could manipulate my empathy, guilt, emotions and logic. He built me up and then tore me down. The crazy thing is that what he did was so subtle that I didn't realize I was being groomed. It was a learned behavior taught to him by the men in his family who had survived poverty by exploiting women. There is an old adage that "Birds of a feather flock together." I didn't realize that he was a reincarnation from my childhood, eventually I became clear. At first, I ignored the red flags and warning signs, because I felt so bonded to him. I didn't want to abandon him, the way he said his mother had done. It was hard to abandon someone who demonstrated his love with such grand gestures. He had tattoo'-----ed my name on his chest - right above his heart. So he had to really love me... right? Right? Hearing I wasn't good enough was a common theme, but with him, I had a new reaction. I was hard to doubt him - when the voice in my own head - my mother's voice - had so often said the same thing. The difference was I could argue with him. I had some voice with him. I could challenge his taunting and verbal abuse in ways I couldn't with my mom. I could talk back to him and I did. But it didn't stop him though from coming back even harder. He held a mirror to my insecurities and feelings of unworthiness and made me face demon after demon while all the while confessing how much he loved and needed me. After the abuse -

there were always words of romance and love. Then after the words of romance and love, there was always tension and anger, exploding onto me like a volcano. At first it was verbal, and then over the months and years, there was physical violence. One of my grandmother's favorite songs was by Sam Cooke, '*A change is gonna come. Oh yes it will.*' Mine came with the birth of our son. I loved my son in a way that I didn't know could exist. With his birth, I knew love. With his birth, I felt the presence of God and I knew God loved me even more than I loved him, and that was incredible!

I knew that I would never let any harm fall upon my child. Eventually, I came to learn that generational curses could be broken.

I broke the chains of shame, guilt and unworthiness, as I recognized that our bond around past mistreatment was unhealthy. I had to cut ties with him. His battle was his own. My battle, my own. I took steps to change my ways of thinking and being. I am still taking steps.

I am working on forgiving him -- and on forgiving my mother. The forgiveness is for my own healing. I am praying for a renewed heart and spirit so that I can release all the love that has been bond up in me for so long.

I am grateful that I no longer look outside of myself to find love. I am love. I love me. God loves me. And knowing this is making me forever strong.