

CHALLENGING YOU TO STAND UP, SPEAK UP AND DO SOMETHING!!!

Have You Noticed How Easy It Is To Talk About An Issue, Make Our Own Judgements And Add Our Opinion To The Facts And Talk The Issue Among Ourselves Without Actually Doing Anything To Change The Issue? Are You Aware That Merely Talking About An Issue, Adding Our Comments And Opinions Does Not Necessarily Change Anything, Does Not Necessarily Make The Issue Better Or Even Make The Issue Go Away? How Many Of Us Here Talk About How Bad Abuse, Rape, Violence, Intimidation Are But All We Do And End Up Doing Is Talking About The Issues And Do Nothing Against Such?



We live in society where gender based violence, abuse, domestic violence, rape, intimidation are widespread, irrespective of the talks amongst ourselves, the scourge continues and it is becoming a crisis in our society. Could we perhaps be thinking and saying that as long as this is not happening to me or my family, we then turn a blind eye? Are we perhaps telling ourselves that if we say something we might be accused of meddling in people's personal affairs? Or is it that we are ignorant to the fact that gender based violence, abuse, rape, domestic violence is a wide spread scourge and try to convince ourselves that it will eventually go away on its own one day? The truth is, this scourge is affecting us all and it knows no colour, no religion, no social status and whether you choose to ignore it or not the problem continues to destroy lives, families and communities

Our society is in a desperate need for the Church of Christ to speak up against gender based violence, rape and abuse and not take a back stand hoping that "we will pray the problem away only"! How many lives, families, children's future's must be destroyed before we do something about this problem?

It's about time that we look out for the wellbeing and the welfare of each other not just by words only and whenever we notice violence or abuse of any form, to not just ignore the issue but rather stand up, speak up, act and do something because one life lost, one future disturbed, one rape case, one emotional abuse case is one too many!



1

Educate yourself, friends, family especially young girls and boys about gender based violence, rape and abuse. Understand how it happens and how to prevent it and what the causes are.

2

If you suspect someone is in an abusive relationship or a victim, approach them with concern and offer support. The best thing you can do is to listen to their story without judgement, gain awareness and offer them help about the situation

3

Remember, abusers are very good at controlling and manipulating their victims. People who have been emotionally, physically, financially abused are often depressed, drained, scared, ashamed, and confused. They need help getting out of the situation and by picking up on the warning signs and offering support, you can help them escape an abusive situation and begin healing.

4

If you notice or suspect a child to be a victim of any form of abuse, report the case immediately. Remember you can also report cases anonymously to social workers and police.

WHAT CAN WE DO TO STAND, ACT AND SPEAK UP AGAINST GENDER BASED VIOLENCE, RAPE, ABUSE ETC.?

5

Discourage patriarchal attitudes within your family at all costs. Treat children in the same way and do not teach boys to be more superior to girls by suppressing the girls in the family and leaving them with no voice. Remember the patriarchal attitudes and behaviours are learned from homes communities from a young age.

6

If you are in an abusive or violent relationship, seek help and report the matter immediately. Don't be afraid of what people will think or say about you, remember people always talk anyway.

Do not stay in an abusive relationship or abusive marriage and justify it by saying you are doing it for the children's sake. Remember children are going to learn abusive patterns from a dysfunctional relationship of their parents and might end up believing that abuse is a way of life.

7

HOW DID WE COME TO THIS POINT?



After reading a speech from our President when he was addressing the crisis that our country is facing about gender-based violence and abuse, I couldn't help but wonder how did gender based violence become such a societal crisis in our society. How did we as a society come to this point? Could it be that gender based violence has long been happening but people were not courageous enough to talk about? Is it possible that the families and communities have normalised violence to a point that even when it is out of hand we still ignore the severity of the cases?

I have sat and listened to numerous rape victims who were assaulted by close family members and instead of the perpetrator be dealt with or reported the family decides to keep it a secret and summons the child victim not to tell anyone because it will break the family apart, as shocking as it may sound but this things continue to happen. Are we so much blindsided by the idea of "keeping the family together" to the point that even if there is violence and all sorts of dysfunctions we suppress the issues by covering them up because "what will people say about us"?



I have watched boy children hitting girls, bullying them and acting superior at homes at times while parents are watching but we are forgetting that any behaviour not addressed from the onset has potential to grow and develop to a point it becomes a person's character? Are violent and abuse men born like that? Who has allowed them to practice the violence on them to a point that they end up seeing it as norm?

Growing up I witnessed many cases of domestic violence within intimate partners where a guy will assault his girlfriend in the streets or at his home while other are watching without any shame. To make matters even worse and to my amazement days later I would see the same girl with the same guy who assaulted her publicly in love like never before and the girl would say something like "the guy assaulted her because he loves her and he was just angry". Is it possible that the girls and women have never been taught what a healthy love relationship looks and feels like? Is it possible that women and girls stay in abusive relation-

ship because they think that "this is the best they could get in life"? And end up staying years in an abusive relationships to a point that when they are supposed to get out they will use statement like "better the devil you know that the one you don't know"? Or "where will I get another man at my age with this children"? Is it possible that boys develop abusive patterns and have not being taught to address issues and express their emotions in a healthy way from a young age and when they encounter vulnerable people particularly women and children resort to expressing their violent and abusive behaviour patterns?



Today there are many relationships and marriages that are extremely dysfunctional with violence and abuse to a point that person would rather die than to report and speak up against violence abuse because they stand to lose economic, financial benefits and other benefits. And yet there are many people who have succumbed themselves to all forms of abuse because they were told to stay in a marriage or relationship no matter what with words like "mosadi ke go kgotlelela" and "kuyabekezela emshadweni"! Though such statements have some elements of truth, aren't they also leading people to stay in abusive relationships because such statements were made by elderly family members and people become afraid to leave because they will shame and disappoint the family?

I think it's about time that we reflect and re-assess our own attitudes, behaviours and values by asking ourselves whether we have allowed such attitudes and behaviours to happen under our watch and also convinced ourselves that it is a way of life?.

About the author: Juliet P. Masilela is a Performance and Leadership Coach with the Leadership Academy SA she has a passion for personal development and self-mastery. She is an experienced Social Worker, Counsellor and a mother. Her passion is encompassed on developing and helping people, public speaking, writing and women empowerment and mentoring.