



Voices of Courage – BUSHRA



My journey to healing from psychological abuse started at Daya's doorsteps. Though I was never promised a rose garden, Daya helped me build one from the ashes I bought to them.

At the age of 28, my marital life began, not as a fairy tale romance, but as a plunge into wifely duties to protect my husband and mend his faltering relationships.

Alas, little did I know that over time, I would become his appeaser, pleaser, and unfortunately, enabler.

Despite being the sole bread earner, he subtly stripped me of my right to choose where I work or take financial decisions. Infact, the right to take any decision at all, was ultimately taken away. Every misfortune that befell us was deemed as my fault.

My life was a battlefield amid constant emotional gunfire.

As our years together progressed so did the control and abuse.

- I could not visit parents and siblings as, in his mind, they were "hell bent on destroying our relationship."
- I could not drive because "I would crash the car".
- I could not choose my friends, as "I had no idea how evil this world was."
- I could not take medical decisions, as "I was not equipped to understand the complexities of the health care system."
- I could not, could not, could not! Well, ultimately I started to believe I could not.

Despite his constant demeaning behavior and my continuing loss of self esteem, the South Asian wife

in me kept telling me I could fix him and save my marriage for the children's sake; until the fateful day when my children saved me. They held my hands and said "Mama you don't have to do this, we are leaving right now." These words are etched in my memory.

Leaving him was just as difficult as living with him. No one paid heed to my family's plight because there was no blood, no bruises, nor scars to display to courts. His abuse was calculated and careful, unable to be documented.

Psychological abusers leave "no blood on the floor", but inflict emotional wounds that bleed for life and into future generations.

Among this isolation, Daya became my lifeline by giving me what I needed most - the assurance that someone understood what I was going through and believed me. At times when I was completely disheartened and felt the system was failing my family, Daya gave me hope that there was a light at the end of the tunnel. Through protective connections, clarity, and counseling, Daya helped me organize, understand my options, and make decisions with a clearer mind.

Because of Daya, I was no longer alone.

Weapons end lives but psychological abusers leave the living dead. Daya plays a pivotal role in bringing these survivors back to life by pulling them from their depression, restoring their mental health, and helping them rise confidently on their feet.

It has been a long road, but today we are healing. We are thriving.

An abusive spouse once drilled into my brain that I could not, but Daya showed me I can. Daya not only helped me break free but has given me wings.

– Bushra, Houston, TX 2023