

ELIZABETH

My husband and I would have been married 24 years in October.

Up until 3 years ago I believed that I was a very lucky woman in this day and age as we see and hear of some of the terrible things that are happening in society.

I was married to a wonderful man who really loved and respected me. He was happy with our life together. We had a good marriage – love – trust, open and honest with each other.

What more could a woman want?

My Husband:

- Respectable family – the old school (Landed Gentry)
- Money and respected position in the community
- Local Government
- Rotary – Paul Harris Fellow
- Citizen of the year
- Never ever raised a hand to me or was violent or abusive
- Loving and thoughtful (Frugal, but none of us a perfect)

My Background:

- Hairdressing Salon for many years in Mooroopna
- Horses - racing and breeding (very successful)
- BA Degree – Local government
 - Councillor – Shire President
 - Commissioner
- BPW – Woman of the year
- Victorian Award for Breeding/racing
- Many and varied positions in the community
- Respect!

A successful – stable – happily married couple!

That night:

I confronted him over an affair. He pushed me. I woke up in my bed with a towel under my head to protect the pillow from the blood. He had had sex with me. I know he had. And there was a cup of coffee beside the bed. He use to always leave me a coffee.

The Aftermath:

- Flashbacks
- Nightmares
- Guilt / shame / self blame
- Sleepless nights
- Always tired
- Crying
- Depressed – I just wanted to die – go to sleep and never wake up

Post traumatic Stress & acute depression

Doctor:

My description - "He had his way with me." The doctor said "Its rape"

Community:

Acceptance, that's the way he behaves

Police:

Aware of his behaviour but hands are tied – 'the system' – reports – but victims to afraid to press charges – money – position – power.

Friends/Acquaintances:

Don't get involved

Family:

His family – "We don't want to know"

My true friends – I found that I could count the number on my hands and I treasure them – but nothing was done.

Conclusion:

I believe that Society and my friends let me down.

How would I have acted if I had been aware of the happening to someone I knew?

I don't know!

However

I know now what I would do.

Therefore –

It is now up to us to speak out and make the broader community aware of this unacceptable behavior which can have such a devastating effect on our lives.

There **are** things that we can do!

It will **not** go away if we ignore it!

It is not acceptable behavior!