

WOMEN OF COURAGE:
VOICES AND VISIONS OF LIFE BEYOND DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Daniel E. Keller, M.S.

University of Nebraska, 2004

Advisor: Julia Torquati

Abused women often find the strength to leave their abusive partners. Many women, in fact, leave multiple times before separating for good. Others opt to remain, or are killed trying to leave. There is an extensive volume of literature on domestic abuse of women regarding the nature of abuse, traits of abusers and victims, intervention and escape strategies, and the effects on children. Few studies, however, have investigated the experience of women who have escaped from domestic violence and stayed out. The purpose of this study was to describe the experience of formerly abused women who were removed from abusive relationships long enough to understand and articulate the experience, not only of surviving domestic violence, but also of recovering, healing, and rebuilding lives beyond it. Data were collected through audiotaped, semi-structured interviews. Audiotapes were transcribed verbatim. Transcripts were analyzed by the researcher and the thesis advisor. Three significant and interrelated themes emerged from the data: 1) vision/self image; 2) voice/action; and 3) key personal attributes. Findings are discussed in relation to therapy, education, and research.