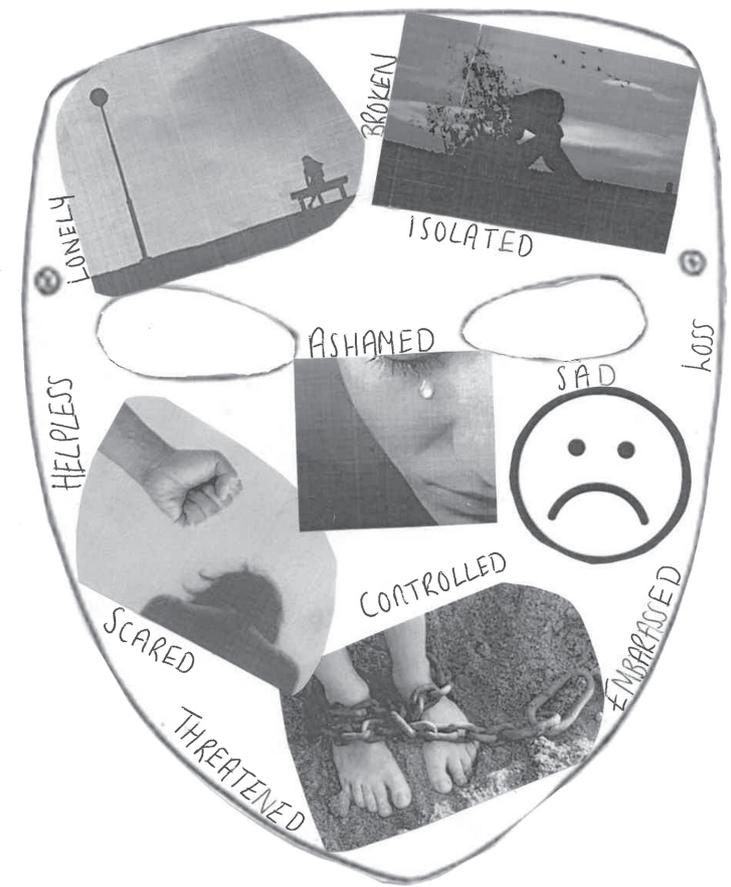


THEN

My husband didn't like it when I wanted to see or spend time with my friends. Some were male and he didn't like that, he was jealous. He would say that he didn't understand why I needed friends and wanted to spend time with them instead of him. At the start of the relationship, he would put pressure on me to move out of my friend's home where I was living and to move in with him. Once I had moved in with him, he started to isolate me from family and friends.

When I was living with my husband, we had a pet cat. My husband would get annoyed with the cat as it would run around his feet playfully. One day, I came back from work and the kitten was nowhere to be seen. I asked my husband what he had done to it as I suspected that he had harmed the kitten in some way. He was adamant that he knew nothing



about the kitten's whereabouts.

When I found the kitten, she was cowering in a corner, seeming as though it was hurt and had some teeth missing at the front. I knew it was him who had hurt her and asked him repeatedly what he had done. He continued to deny having been responsible for ill-treating the kitten. I felt so sorry for her as she couldn't seem to stand on her legs. My husband told me to tell the vet that we believed the cat had been hit by a car.



My husband was a drug user and would regularly smoke cannabis. I was totally against this as I was brought up in a family who didn't take drugs. My family were unaware of this at first as I was ashamed to tell them. He would often promise to stop taking drugs and would set a deadline for himself to stop- such as a special date like a birthday. He would never adhere to his verbal agreement and continued to use drugs throughout our relationship.

He would often start an argument about silly things. Such as, if he had asked me a question and I didn't answer him straight away or if I put away dishes in the wrong place.

Sometimes I would come home from work tired. I would do all that I would need to do at home such as cooking/cleaning and then sit down with my husband to relax. He would always find a reason or excuse for me to get up and do something for him. Sometimes, I'd be so tired and wouldn't want to be disturbed but would do

whatever it is he wanted me to do, so as to avoid him getting angry.

My husband was very self-obsessive and loved himself. He actually said that. He would spend hours in front of the mirror grooming himself, then ask me for my opinion on how I thought he looked. I would always be praising him, telling him how handsome he looked so as to try to make him happy so he would not get angry with me. This made my life easier, for a while at least.

My husband would deprive me of sleep, then argue with me the next day when I was tired. He would tell me something then test me on the details of the conversation afterwards. Because I was tired, I wouldn't always be listening, so was unable to tell him what he had been talking about. He would then get angry with me. He would text me at work, telling me how I had "fucked up his day". I would never know what mood he was going to be in when I got home.

Sometimes, he would act as though everything was normal, like he hadn't even been angry with me earlier in the day. This made me feel relieved but anxious as to when the next time would be. I felt like I was going mad sometimes and that I may have overreacted.

I and my husband went on holiday to Slovakia where all of my family live. On the journey there, he embarrassed me by shouting at me in front of other passengers. Our son was crying and he called me a bad mother because I was unable to calm him down. I walked around for a while to try to settle our son down. When he had stopped crying, I returned to where my husband had been waiting. He was angry and told me to go away as he didn't want to see me.

While in Slovakia, we stayed in my parent's home. They witnessed my husband's controlling, abusive behaviour towards me. I would have to go for walks with him so that my family

would not witness the things he would say to me. He controlled the agenda for the holiday. I had no say in where we went and what we did for the duration of the holiday. My family suspected that things weren't right in my marriage but I hid a lot from them as I was too embarrassed and ashamed to admit to them that my husband was abusive. He threatened me whilst we were on holiday.

During this abusive period of my life, my husband scared me. I lost weight as I often had no appetite and he was obsessed with me being slim. When I was pregnant, he would tell me that I was too fat and that I needed to lose weight. This caused me to be conscious of my weight.

I felt helpless and not in control of anything in relation to my life. I had very little self-confidence and a low self-esteem.

So as not to cause arguments with my husband, I stopped talking to friends and family. This made me feel more isolated and alone.

I was scared to fail at any task he gave me, for fear of being told how useless I am.