

## **Not victims – Experts By Experience**

By Jill Soderman, Forensic Expert/ Consultant

Alice Walker begins the story of women – “Dear God, I am fourteen years old. I have always been a good girl.”

Women are raised to be good girls – children in blossomed bodies – directed to follow the images and directives of a still-paternalistic society where the word victim is synonymous with women and children. Good manners, obedience, silence are the hallmarks of a socialization that lays the groundwork for victimization by those who capitalize on the assets of the well behaved. Questioning, verbal assertiveness, independent thought, precocious intellectual development are qualities quashed in children who then become easy prey for predators or women who become easy prey for obsessed abusers.

Public advocacy for victim posturing in misery, helplessness, fear of reprisal, submission; painting the picture of pain and suffering is exacerbating the problem and feeds the perpetrator community. Abusers want to hurt, inflict pain and fear, and have a sense of control and power. Stories of abuse teaches how to abuse. Stories feed the imagination of perpetrators who can then plan, refine their craft and teach others of their ilk.

The ranks of the disenfranchised still include women and children whose voices are silenced by excuses. Women are vindictive and manipulative. Children are children; they do not know what they have seen, heard, thought, experienced, believe, unless informed of such by the dominant force in their life and that force will define and articulate, publish their experience.

I do not think so! The ability to talk specifically about what one has done, can do, will do, will persist until the problem is solved and belongs to the expert by experience, because they know with whom they are dealing and what the outcome must be to resolve that which has been experienced. Not the suffering but the solution to suffering must rise above the cacophony of victim charter. The ability to learn from experience, to transform a crushing event into an event that crushes and then gives rise to new life, liberty and the pursuit of environment, free from harm must be the outcome of terrible events.

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