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**"They Should Have Beat Me More" – The Cycle Of Physical Abuse**

**By "Margaret Paul, Ph.D."**

In December, 2005, I conducted a two-day workshop with men who had recently been released from prison for domestic violence. With the men were their wives, as well as the father of a batterer who was still in prison.

The father, Douglas, sat in front of me, sharing his childhood experiences.

"My momma was a very loving woman - a big-hearted, hard working loving woman," he told me. From my many years of counseling, I knew that my definition of love and his definition of love were likely very different.

"Did she ever beat you?" I asked.

"Oh yeah. She beat me all the time. My daddy beat my momma and my momma beat me. But she beat me because I was bad. I was really bad. Maybe if she had beat me more, I wouldn't have been so bad."

"What did she beat you with?"

"Anything she could get her hands on. Extension cords, wooden spoons. Often I had to go into the yard and pick out the switch."

"How did you feel when you knew you were going to get a beating?"

"Oh, I was terrified. I'd beg and plead and promise not to do again whatever it was she was mad at. But that never worked. I always got the beating. Then after the beating she would tell me that she loved me, that it was for my own good, and that it hurt her more than it hurt me."

"And how were you bad?"

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"Well, sometimes I'd come in late, and sometimes I would talk back. Then I got into alcohol and drugs at a very early age. Maybe if she had beat me more, I wouldn't have done the alcohol and drugs."

"Why do you think you did the alcohol and drugs?"

"I was just hurtin' too much. It took me outta all the pain for awhile."

"What was the pain?"

"I don't know. I was just hurtin' a lot."

"Do you think it is possible that you were hurting because the woman who was supposed to protect you was instead hurting you? That she was confusing you by telling you she loved you while she was beating and terrifying you? That there was no one to turn to for safety and nurturing? That you were scared much of the time for fear of the beatings? That you were terribly lonely and could not turn to

your parents because they were the ones causing the pain?"

Silence.....Then he looked at me in shock. As the light bulb when on in his mind, the tears started rolling down his weathered cheeks. Soon he was sobbing.

"That's right...That's right....The beatings were the problem. More beatings would not have helped. And I beat my children thinking it was the right thing to do, and now my son is in prison for beating his wife and protective services want to take away their daughter. And I almost hit her the other day when she didn't mind me. I'm so glad I didn't. This has to stop! This has to stop!"

I looked around the room. Everyone was in tears. Kathy, the wife of one of the batterers, spoke up, sobbing.

"I've always hit my kids, and no matter what anyone told me about it not being good, it never made sense to me. This is the first time I understand why it's not a good or loving way to discipline my kids. And I can see why I'm having so many problems with my older son and why he is on drugs. He has always been furious with me and I had no idea why. Now I understand. I need to learn a new way to discipline. I'm going to take a parenting class and start reading parenting books."

I hugged Douglas for the profound work he did, and for the effect his work was having on everyone in the room. I thanked God for giving me the privilege of working with these people. All of them, it turned out, had been severely beaten as children.

I am deeply grateful to James Beard who conducts workshops within the prison with batterers and to Lindsay Wagner, who also works with these men and their families. Both of them were assisting me at this workshop. We all smiled at each other in deep gratitude for the healing that was taking place.

Margaret Paul, Ph.D., best-selling author of eight books, including "Do I Have To Give Up Me To Be Loved By You" and co-creator of the powerful Inner Bonding healing process. Learn Inner Bonding

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## **RUNNING AWAY**

**By Joan Bramsch**

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#### Useful Links & Things

Need information? Don't know who to ask or where to turn? Here are some useful links and information sources that will respect YOU and your privacy.

Abuse:

Most of us don't know a lot about Child Abuse – what it is and what the results can be. This information is written for young people like you who want to know more. You may be reading this because you're concerned about yourself or about a friend, or just because you're interested in the subject.

As you get older, you start making important decisions about relationships with family and friends, school, and health.

How you feel, how you get along with others, and what you want out of life are all very important parts of growing up and living a healthy, happy life. But these are also the things that are threatened if you are a victim of child abuse.

You might think, Well, I'm not a child any more. But a person is considered a "child" up to the age of 18 in most states; 17 in others.

Even if you are older or you are no longer being abused, abuse can leave a lot of physical or emotional damage. So it's important to take steps to end the abuse if it is still happening and to begin to heal yourself emotionally so you can get on with your life.

In the pages that follow, we talk about what child abuse is and what it is not. We also talk about some of the reasons that child abuse happens and why it is so important for abused teens to get help for themselves and, hopefully, for their families. Then, we talk about how and where to get that help.

What is child abuse?

What are the different kinds of abuse?

## “They Should Have Beat Me More” – The Cycle Of Physical Abuse

Abuse is a family problem  
The abuse is not your fault  
What are the signs of abuse?  
Dealing with the feelings  
Revealing the secret  
Getting someone to listen  
Where to get help  
Take the first step  
Need to talk?

### One Kid's Story

#### Running Away

What comes to mind when you think of kids who run away from home? Teenagers off on an adventure, looking for a good time? Kids who can return home when it doesn't work out?

Or maybe you think of the kids who make trouble at school? Who don't want to listen to their parents or anybody? Who just want to do what they want to do?

Or perhaps you think of young people with lots of problems and parents who don't care?

Really, there's no one way to describe young people who run away or who are homeless, or to describe the backgrounds they come from. They are males and females; from rich families and poor families. They may be your daughter or sister, nephew or friend.

Links that might help:

Who runs away?

Why young people run

What parents and friends should look for

Preventing running away

What you need to think about

What happens on the street: meet Mike

Options Mike thought about

If your child has run

A letter from the street

If you need to talk

#### Suicide

Most young people end up killing themselves because they simply don't know where else to turn. They are in some kind of pain that seems unbearable and they want the pain to stop. They end up stopping their entire lives just because they didn't know what else to do.

Here are some links that might help:

Why do people kill themselves?  
Suicide warning signs  
What do you know about suicide?  
Need to talk?

<http://joanbramsch.com/eens/eenlinks.shtml>

JOAN BRAMSCH is a family person, educator, writer and E–publisher. Her articles appear internationally in print and online. Six of her best–selling adult novels – near one million copies – have worldwide distribution. Her Empowered Parenting Ezine serves 1000 parents around the globe.  
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