

Discipleship Discussion Series—Battery—for Loving Ones (2)
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The following is a very surface introduction to Battery, intended only to introduce the loving ones (of someone who may be in a battering situation) to the unique dynamics that are in play. It is strongly recommended that the loving ones are in touch with the appropriate supports and authorities.

Domestic violence begins with battery.

Battery: to beat persistently, pound repeatedly (Dictionary.com).

Battery, repeated blows physically, verbally, emotionally, even militarily by another or others is, unfortunately, pervasive in humanity. Dictators. Overbearing bosses. Unhappy spouses. Tormentors of children. Bullies all.

One disturbing and potentially dangerous manifestation is battery that takes place in a home. Battery can become domestic violence. It can be lethal.

At the core is a person who does not have the tools to face and walk through the challenges of a relationship in a healthy way. Lacking these tools, the batterer resorts to manipulation and control, or over-managing, that can be obsessive, demanding, extreme, and can progress to violence and danger.

Often there are loving ones who are concentric to a relationship that has increasing degrees of battery. Often, because they are outside of the relationship, they can observe the obvious offenses and extremes by the batterer, and do not understand why these behaviors are being tolerated by the victim. They can become frustrated with the victim and begin to pressure the victim to act, to retaliate, to not tolerate the offenses.

However, the loving ones need to understand that the battering relationship has a unique and devastating dynamic. Part of the progressive and perhaps unwitting survival strategy of the batterer is to convince the victim that they are at the one at fault, that they are less than, inferior and incapable. This can lead to significant distortions in the thinking of the victim. They are less and less able to objectively understand; they are seeing the situation according to this persistent and destructive affect on their self-view. They become convinced to varying degrees that they deserve the oppression, the repeated pounding, and the persistent emotional, mental and sometimes physical beatings.

Because of the dynamic of this abuse, if loving ones bring pressure, expectations and demands to the victim, it may be replicating the pressure that they are experiencing by the batterer. The victim would then have pressure coming from two sides. In addition, the pressure from the loving ones can be used by the batterer, supported by the distortion to the victim's thinking, to strengthen manipulations. The batterer can insist that all contact be severed. The victim, thinking he or she and the other relationships are the cause of the problems, might agree and sever or greatly limit connection. This achieves the batterer's goal of isolating the victim.

What are loving ones to do when a loved one seems to be the victim of Battery?

The loving ones must be very patient and openly, consistently and gently supportive.

The only way for a victim to come out of abuse is for them to find their own clarity and strength to stand away from it. If they are pulled away by others or try to act according to another's directives, they will likely return to the battery because of the distortions in their thinking.

It is as if the victim is in a dark room with the batterer. If loving ones shout from a distance to come out or go to the door and yell out warnings, even try to go into the room to take the victim out, the victim, in the darkness of the room and in their thinking may be driven more towards the batterer and might even be convinced to close the door to keep the loving ones out.

However, if the loving ones put all frustration and fear aside, or at least only share these feelings with each other, and present only light and positive support to the victim, the victim will be experiencing the fresh air of another way to live, and they will know that there is someone to whom they may go when they have the clarity they need to take action.

Here are some approaches and behaviors to use:

Whenever there is contact:

- Keep the conversation light and pleasant.
- Listen deeply.
- Be lightly, pleasantly interested in all topics brought forward.
- Whenever possible offer phrases of support, such as:
 - “Always know that we love you both very much and will always be here for you.”
 - “I’m sure you will find your way through this.”
 - “I know that you will know what to do when it is time to do it.”
 - “I have always seen in you the strength you need to find and make the right decision.”
- If the victim speaks of the battering relationship, be careful not to speak ill of the other. Listen and only offer phrases of support.

Be careful not to:

- Press the victim about the relationship.
- Demand, ask, cajole or otherwise try to manipulate the victim:
 - To do things that you want them to do
 - To return to a former way of relationship with you
 - To take action against the batterer.

Remain available.

Research resources that are available to help victims of domestic battery.

With the resource personnel prepare a system of response in the event that they do come to you.

Be ready to receive the victim when they come to you, and link them to the resources they need.

You are not alone, and with your patient support, the possible victim of battery will also know that he or she is not alone.