



Three Reasons Why Abusers Use Domestic Violence in Their Relationships

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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Frequently I am questioned by clients, family and friends about my work with people who are involved in domestic violence. One of the questions most asked is why someone who appears to be so friendly and nice on the surface can resort to abusive behaviours. This article offers three reasons why a person might do so.

Domestic Abuse was part of their history - Not every person who becomes an abuser was abused in the past and here is definitely not a guarantee that those who were abused will become abusive, however, many children who have been abused or have witnessed others being abused end up following the pattern. Attitudes are generally passed from one generation to another and this includes attitudes towards other people.

Healthy relationship skills for resolving conflict are missing - Often individuals think that the other person "made me mad" or deserved to be abused. They have not learned healthy ways of resolving problems. Everyone experiences emotions but not everyone handles them appropriately. I usually ask questions such as "Is water good or bad?" Actually, it is not either good or bad. You can drink it, wash with it, or you can drown in it. The correct answer is that it is what you do with it that is most important. The same is true of angry or rage.

It works! The abuser often gets what s/he wants or just escalates the behaviours until their goals for control are met. I learned a long time ago that people tend to repeat their actions - no matter how dysfunctional they are - until life doesn't work for them anymore. Those who are watching objectively are often surprised and dismayed to watch the people they care about continually repeat unhealthy patterns and despite their efforts to help the individuals usually realize that they cannot plan if or when changes will occur.

Domestic violence is a complex dynamic and there are many reasons why it starts and continues in relationships. The most important thing for the individuals to realize, however, is that there is help available to stop the cycle. The first step is to talk with someone who will support you in your quest for change.

For some, domestic violence turns what could be a good adventure into a horrible nightmare, but it doesn't have to be that way.