



## **My first relationship was of domestic violence, sexual assault and rape**

I grew up with strong Christian values in a loving home. I went to a private grade school and a private high school. I had never even kissed a boy until college, let alone have a boyfriend.

By the time I was a freshman in college, I was desperate to have a boyfriend. I wanted to experience love. My friend introduced me to her friend from her high school. I met him, and we became friends for a few months. He seemed nice, and came from a Christian environment and even wanted to be a youth minister. I thought he was perfect for me, and would uphold my values about wanting to wait for sex, and would respect me. In the summer we decided to start dating. It was a long distance relationship, but we were determined to make it work, and I was so in love.

Things were great for awhile. But, as quickly as I fell in love, things spun out of control very fast. He started to talk about sex nonstop. He would make out with me constantly, it seemed it was the only thing we did.

One night, he was visiting me in my dorm room, and my roommate was gone for the weekend. We made out, and then he started touching me down there. I was uncomfortable, and told him to stop. He didn't, said it was normal and that I needed to just relax and that I would like it. It didn't feel right. I told him again that I didn't like it, and he told me to shut up, and held his hand over my mouth. I squirmed painfully at his touch. But this was all part of a relationship, right? I cried when he was done, and he held me, telling me it wouldn't happen again.

But it happened time and time again. Each time, things would escalate. I would try to fight back, but that made it worse. Every time I'd tell him no, he wouldn't listen. I'd try to get away from him, but he would push me up against the wall, and hold my face so I couldn't leave. He jerked my body around so I would be afraid to move away. One time he even slapped my face.

He would force me to give him blowjobs, piercing his weapon down my throat. I'd gag and choke, and try not to puke. And then he would always tell me he was sorry afterwards. He would do things for me, act like the best guy in the world. He had me completely brainwashed and fooled... in the best way that manipulators know how. He would make threats too so that I wouldn't leave him and that I wouldn't tell.

One time he came over to my parents house, where I lived in the summer. My parents and brother left, and I was alone with him at the house. He came into my bedroom, which was strictly forbidden, and yanked my clothes down. I fought but it was no use. He pinned my body down on my bedroom floor and raped me. I kicked him, and he yelped, and got up because he heard my parents coming home. He quickly ran into the bathroom, and I changed, and my parents never knew what happened.

I did break up with him that summer, but for different reasons than that. When it all happened, my brain was just trying to survive, and it couldn't store all of the information that was happening



right then. I didn't even remember all of what happened, let alone be able to comprehend it at the time. But it all came back to me through flashbacks and nightmares later. I tried suppressing what happened, and told myself it didn't. No one wants to believe that they were raped.

But the flashbacks and nightmares don't lie, and they don't go away until you actively deal with it and heal. I finally accepted it, and went through crisis counseling and therapy. I learned how to heal. I became a survivor, not a victim. I also became myself again. And the healing continues, as it never leaves.

I am strong, brave, and a fighter. I can't give up on me. And I am free from my fears. I am proud to say that I am now a volunteer advocate for other survivors going through sexual assault or rape, and my greatest desire is to help them and give back to the agency and people that helped me.

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