

**Family Violence**

**Why must you always hurt the one you love?**

By JACIE B. PALMER  
Herald Special

In the past few weeks I've spent time speaking with a man I know as repeatedly physically, emotionally and sexually abused a woman he professes to love very much.

I often remark to myself on the senselessness of family violence. The cliched phrase says "You always hurt the one you love" but when the hurt is devastating and debilitating to the persons involved there is something very wrong in a relationship.

During our recent conversations I've pointed out to this man as graphically as possible his own violent nature. I've told him about another man whose situation is markedly similar.

There is the emotional abuse, the sexual abuse, the alcoholic haze, the womanizing and the physical assaults that are so very prevalent in his own relationships. He continually repeats "But Jacie, I'm not abusive like he is!"

You're darn right this man is abusive. He simply refuses to see his acts as violence. He denigrates the acts and, perhaps because of the alcoholism he truly doesn't remember some of his actions. Growing up in a violent home has conditioned his responses and taught him that violence can control.

I tried to talk to him about the negative impact their life is having on his victim. He was emphatic in his belief his victim has no knowledge of stress. Yet I have seen the victim hysterical



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OURSELVES**

and upset to the point where I wondered if she'd survive or would have a nervous breakdown. Daily she lives the struggle and must remind herself to just take care of today and tomorrow will take care of itself. I've admired her conduct throughout her ordeal but should she have to face this trauma? She needs to overcome her emotional dependency on this man. But how? She is constantly intimidated, brow beaten, made to feel guilty, and otherwise controlled by her abuser.

She is not a strong person.

The children of this relationship are the silent victims. They listen to their parents individual-

ly and collectively discuss the dissolution of the relationship and problems in the home. Physical abuse would be easy for them to put up with but the constant "Up in the air" family life is psychological abuse at its finest. They wonder who will be there for them in the morning. They wonder about mom's safety. They hide inside themselves. They keep the family secret. Any parents forcing their children to live this way should be counselled by those around them. A friend remarked that he cannot feel sorry for the two adults in this relationship but he's very concerned for the long term effects on their young children.

A mother living in fear for her life and in fear her children will be abducted is not and cannot be rational. How can she hope to build and maintain a life in these circumstances. Children of abuse react in two basic ways: they either become behavioral problems or they internalize their fears and withdraw from those around them.

These children of violence will have problems in school, problems developing and maintaining friendships but most importantly they could develop into abusers or be unable to function in our society because of their reaction to the trauma of abuse to which they've been subjected.

We as parents must learn to deal with our problems in positive ways. Our children should not be pawns in divorces or subjected to viewing or being a part of domestic violence. As a

relative or friend watching an abusive relationship we should kindly point out to these irrational adults the damage they are imparting on their children.

Feel free to contact Jacie by directing letters to her attention at the Herald. All correspondence

will remain confidential. Should you wish to speak to Jacie, call the Distress Centre at 877-1211 and your call will be returned. If you are a woman or child in crisis or an abusive male wanting help, call the Distress Centre or dial 911.



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**Celebrating the new year**

The MacLean family took time to sign the guest list during the New Year's Day Levee at the Halton Hills Civic Centre Wednesday afternoon. (Clock-

wise from bottom) Devon, Arden, parents Valerie and Bruce, Brooke, and friend Melanie. (Herald Photo)

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