

MELODY HERMANUS



RESTART

YOUR LIFE

INSPIRED
PUBLISHING



CHAPTER 1

THE BREAKING POINT

When I returned from work at 17:30 that Friday evening, I never thought my life would change forever. The moment I unlocked the door, and stepped into my one-bedroom apartment, the tension was palpable.

He stood menacingly in the doorway of a big lounging area overlooking our bedroom. To his left, there was a small functional kitchen and short hallway to the bathroom. As he stood there, he fired a salvo of questions and demanded to know why I was late and who had dropped me off.

My heart started racing and I knew that this was going to be one of those intense nights that began with an argument, rising tempers, screaming, shouting, me crying and him apologising. I could smell his breath, it reeked of alcohol; and from his voice, I knew that drama was in store.

It was hard to keep calm, but I answered his volley of questions calmly. I told him that he was imagining stuff, because I was home on

time and he knew I used public transport to get home.

I made my way to the kitchen to prepare something to eat, but I did not get that far. I felt a forceful tug on my hair as he pulled me down to my knees and I sank to the floor.

As he did so, he was cursing: "Do you think I am stupid; you are lying; you are cheating, ungrateful witch; you are not going to do anything until you tell me the truth!" He dragged me from the kitchen to the lounge area while smacking me across the face and punching me in the stomach. I realised he was not going to let me go; I had to fight. I started kicking to break free from his firm grip.

I broke free and ran to the bedroom to find the keys of the front door, but unfortunately, I could not find it. When I entered earlier, he had locked the door and hid it.



The enemy knows that you have something to offer to the world and he uses everything in his power to get you out of the way.

When I could not find the keys, it dawned on me that I was stuck with him there. He came up behind me, knocked me out onto the bed, wrapped his fingers around my throat, and squeezed the breath out of my body. I blacked out after a few seconds.

When I regained consciousness, he pushed me from the bed, and hit me with an object I did not recognise. All I heard was breaking glass and splinters falling everywhere. My legs were shaking. I looked down and saw my warm blood trickling and as if to ensure that I felt intense pain, he hit me with a bottle on my leg.

Blood streamed down my legs and fat protruded from the wound. I ran to the bathroom, slipping all the way and leaving a trail of bloody footprints. He was busy yelling, "Where are you going; you are going to die tonight." I filled the tub with water to wash my wound and stop the bleeding but in no time, I was standing in a pool of blood. He came and stood in the doorway and gave me a savage look. He had cornered me in the tub.

He comes to rob, steal, and kill

At that moment, I shouted out to the Lord: "Please help me, I am too young I cannot die; I have so much to live for; this can't be happening. Is this how my last minutes on earth will be like?" I expected our neighbours to come and rescue me but no one came; I was stuck there with him. I thought I was going to die and at that moment. Disturbing thoughts went through my mind: why did I not stay at home? Why did I not listen to my parents? Why did I ignore the signs?

I believed that being on our own and a different living arrangement before getting married would change his behaviour. I called out, "Father please help me; I can't die in this manner, my life cut short by a loved one". Suddenly, something extra-ordinary happened; it was as though an angel came down and breathed into his nostrils. He turned, strode to the bedroom, hurled himself on the bed, and slept.

I called out his name, "Mark! Mark!" a few times with a frightened voice. I could not understand what was going on, how he could sleep and forget about me completely. That was a miracle from heaven. He lay on the bed like a zombie as though hell had not been loose a moment ago. The Father showed up in such a miraculous way; He heard my cry and came to my rescue.

I managed to stop some of the bleeding and covered the wound with a towel. I then went to the sitting room to see if there was a way out of the apartment.

There was a party in an apartment on the floor below ours. The music was loud and no one had heard me screaming and calling for help. I

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was trapped like a bird inside the four walls. It seemed as though the ordeal from hell had lasted forever. In my bruised, hurting, bleeding state, I kept saying, "Lord please do not let him wake up." It was like a movie playing in my mind- the beating, cursing, and the bloody floors. I curled up in a corner scared, afraid to move or make a sound.

The first ray of sunlight appeared on the horizon and I knew that I needed to leave immediately. I had to go to my parent's place.

I am not sure when he woke up but he was gone early in the morning. He locked the burglar gate, left the key on the floor, and pulled the front door. I was exhausted and blurred that I did not hear him leaving the apartment.

The events of the previous evening were still playing in my mind like a horror movie. A shiver went down my spine when I thought that he could be up the road to buy food and would be back home.

Without hesitation, I gathered all my belongings, washed my face, and prepared to leave. The wound had started swelling since the flesh was torn away; the pain was excruciating. I limped around the apartment and gathered my important belongings.

As I packed, I kept on thanking the Lord; He had saved me. It is an evening I will never forget; even as I am writing now, I can feel shivers going down my spine. I came close to death that night. It was so savage that at one moment he pelted me with a dumbbell and broke a mirror. The dumbbell missed my face by a few inches but made a cut on my upper eyebrow.

I remember picking a piece of mirror and stabbing him on his lower back. From that moment, things quickly escalated out of control. He became crazy, a hulk in the making, thirsty to draw blood and take me out of the game. Being much stronger than I am, he could have killed me and no one would have known; my parents would have got a call informing them about my death and instructing them to come and identify my body in a morgue.

The lies we tell ourselves

The enemy knows that you have something to offer to the world and he uses everything in his power to get you out of the way. A thief does not enter the house before tying up the strong man to steal his possessions. I always knew deep within that I was born for a reason and that I possess greatness. I had a burning desire to make a difference in the lives of others, but I never knew how it would happen.

The enemy deceived Eve in the Garden by planting a lie in her mind. This is what the enemy needed: a suggestion to place in Eve's mind to get her thinking, to place a diversion to mislead her. The snake in its cunning way said to Eve, "That's not true; you will not die." Eve started thinking, "Can it be true that we will die if we eat from the tree?" The enemy had her in a corner to ask God why He would keep the fruit from the two of them since everything in the Garden was for their indulgence. It only takes one thing to divert you from your destiny.

In the aftermath of a drama like this, the first soothing lie he said was, "You are my wife; I can't live without you; I was drunk when I pushed you around. Please forgive me, it will not happen again, I promise. No one else will love you like I love you; I will give you anything you want, just mention it."

A soothing lie engraves itself in your thinking pattern; it takes shape and you begin to believe that you are nothing without him. A belief that no one loves you as he does entrenches itself. Slowly, your subconscious mind inscribes a script of negative beliefs. In that predicament, Melody, the person, was slowly being chipped away, my identity, my dreams and my hopes were supplanted with hopelessness.

Once your partner achieves this, he has you in the palm of his hand and he can handle and play you for a puppet because he has conditioned your mind. The word "deceive" means that you are tricked into something and it has captured your attention, before you know it, it is far too late to see what the true intentions of the person are. He reels you in like a fish with a piece of bait. Therefore, you stay a bit longer, wishing in your heart that it would be the last

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argument, hoping that he would change and praying for things to be different this time around. A month goes by, the second month everything is normal, and love is in the air, but not for long. It is the calm before the storm.

Why did I not leave after the first slap or first punch on my ribs or a bruised body and a blue eye. The enemy holds you in a place with a lie: "I love you, it will never happen again, no one loves you like I do, no one will ever love you like I do, if I can't love you then no one else will, you will never make it on your own. If you leave, I will hunt you down and you will wish you never left me. I will take the children away; you will never see them again."

The affection built overtime makes it difficult for these women to leave their partners even when they face this abuse. The mind stores the stories you share as lovers and what he whispers to your heart. Your subconscious mind has automated the script to play it repeatedly; it keeps you captive in your circumstances.

Do you think that you can get away with this? Do you really think he is going to let you get away so easily? Anytime you want to move on with your life and change, your brain sabotages your efforts. The function of the brain is to keep you safe, but not happy. The subconscious only goes by the instruction of what it has been conditioned with.



**Your life is as good as your thoughts and what
you are exposed to on a constant basis
contributes to your reality.**

What have you been conditioned with for the past years? Have you been told "You are nothing without me" or you have been made to believe that you would never make it on your own. Is it the fear of walking away or an entrapment?

Your brain goes into survival mode of fight or flight when you push yourself to think anything different from what it currently knows. Your brain raises a danger flag for your mind: "Is this cheek for real; she is going to get us killed." On the other hand, your mind is saying, "You have got to be kidding me; we are not sure what is on the other side." It keeps you safe because you have invested your emotions.

I gave him the best years of my life, my youth, my energy, my time, and as a result, belief systems and behaviour patterns were created. I ended up believing that I would die if I walked away.

Most people are in relationships they are not happy with because they have invested too much in them, emotionally and materially; they believe if they leave, the abusers would find them, or they would be worse off than they were before. Walking away is also not an attractive prospect for most women because it means starting all over and they may not have anything with which to begin a new life.

Sometimes victims of abuse self-recriminate: "It is my fault; I made him angry; if I change, cook better, and keep the children out of his hair, he will not be aggressive". This is your mind keeping you in your limitations. It ensures that you stay within your parameters and makes you believe that you are better off in abuse and misery. The mind starts to rationalise the situation and convinces you that things are normal or they will change.

It keeps you in the same place of security, not moving from your pattern of behaviour to which it is accustomed. It convinces you that you are better off if you stay and just try a little bit harder to impress your partner. You begin to deceive yourself by saying, "If I behave better, or dress or style my hair differently, he will love me more."

A lie like this keeps you captive in a relationship that has run its course, but the tragedy is that your mind directs your actions. The enemy has two master tricks. One is to discourage you and render you useless to others, to yourself and to God. This makes you feel defeated.

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The second one is to plant a seed of doubt in your mind and break the faith link that binds us our Father. If you are no longer bound to God, you are disconnected from reality. Your life is as good as your thoughts and what you are exposed to on a constant basis contributes to your reality.

You are not useful to God or to anyone if you are hurt, disappointed, depressed, sad, and unhappy. My family, friends, colleagues, had tried everything they could to help me to see the truth that I was being abused but their efforts were in vain. The only time I saw the trees from the woods is when I realised that I was allowing someone to control my life with his words and actions. How could the person who must protect me from pain cause it? Love must save and bring happiness and not break you down or discourage you.

Being abused by a loved one, a partner, a spouse, or a family member is one of the most unbearable experiences. This must not happen. My long-term relationship, of which three years were characterised by mental, emotional, and physical abuse, was emotionally draining, but the Lord had a plan for my life as Jeremiah 29:11 says, "I know the thoughts I have for you, thoughts to prosper you, not to harm you, to give you a future of hope."

He had a plan for me, hurt and evil were not part of it. Even though the enemy told me, repeatedly, that nothing good was meant for me, I am firm in my knowledge that God did not want evil to be my portion. Sometimes evil creeps into our unions and pollutes them; instead of walking away from those toxic relationships, we continue in them.