

**BETHANY
FAMILY MINISTRIES
VIRTUAL SEMINAR SERIES**



FINDING PARADISE
in a Pandemic

Formally Abuse Prevention Day

The fourth Sabbath in August each year.

enditnow[®]

Adventists Say **No** to Violence Against Women

Started in 2001. Name changed in 2011 to enditnow

enditnow[®]

Adventists Say No to Violence Against Everyone

Domestic Abuse Emphasis

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Bethany Seventh-day Adventist Church, Bahamas

FINDING PARADISE

In a pandemic



TERMS

- Domestic Violence
- Intimate Partner Abuse
- Spouse Abuse
- Elder Abuse
- Disability Abuse
- Child Abuse
- Incest
- Molestation
- Rape *Stranger and Acquaintance*



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TERMS

Violence
Abuse



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Violence
Abuse



KINDS OF ABUSE

Physical

Verbal/Emotional

Mental/Psychological

Sexual

Religious/Spiritual

Financial

Cultural



KINDS OF ABUSE

Physical

It can include punching, hitting, slapping, kicking, strangling, or physically restraining a partner against their will. It can also include driving recklessly or invading someone's physical space, and in any other way making someone feel physically unsafe.



KINDS OF ABUSE

Verbal/Emotional

- **Verbal abuse:** yelling at you, insulting you or swearing at you.
- **Rejection:** Constantly rejecting your thoughts, ideas and opinions.
- **Gaslighting:** making you doubt your own feelings and thoughts, and even your sanity, by manipulating the truth.
- **Put-downs:** calling you names or telling you that you're stupid, publicly embarrassing you, blaming you for everything. Public humiliation is also a form of social abuse.
- **Causing fear:** making you feel afraid, intimidated or threatened.



KINDS OF ABUSE

Verbal/Emotional

- **Isolation:** limiting your freedom of movement, stopping you from contacting other people (such as friends or family). It may also include stopping you from doing the things you normally do – social activities, sports, school or work. Isolating someone overlaps with social abuse.
- **Financial abuse:** controlling or withholding your money, preventing you from working or studying, stealing from you. Financial abuse is another form of domestic violence.
- **Bullying and intimidation:** purposely and repeatedly saying or doing things that are intended to hurt you.



KINDS OF ABUSE

Mental/Psychological

Mental or psychological abuse happens when one partner, through a series of actions or words, wears away at the other's sense of mental wellbeing and health. It often involves making the victim doubt their own sanity.



KINDS OF ABUSE

Sexual

While sexual abuse can be a form of physical abuse, we put it in a category by itself because it can include both physical and non-physical components. It can involve rape or other forced sexual acts, or withholding or using sex as a weapon. An abusive partner might also use sex as a means to judge their partner and assign a value – in other words, criticizing or saying that someone isn't good enough at sex.



KINDS OF ABUSE

Financial

Because abuse is about power and control, an abuser will use any means necessary to maintain that control, and often that includes finances. Whether it is controlling all of the budgeting in the household and not letting the survivor have access to their own bank accounts or spending money, or opening credit cards and running up debts in the survivor's name, or simply not letting the survivor have a job and earn their own money, this type of abuse is often a big reason why someone is unable to leave an abusive relationship.



KINDS OF ABUSE

Cultural

Cultural abuse happens when abusers use aspects of a victim's particular cultural identity to inflict suffering, or as a means of control. Not letting someone observe the dietary or dress customs of their faith, using racial slurs, or isolating someone who doesn't speak the dominant language where they live – all of these are examples of cultural abuse.



KINDS OF ABUSE

Religious/Spiritual

Religious/Spiritual abuse is the mistreatment of a person who is in need of help, support of greater spiritual empowerment, with the result of weakening, undermining or decreasing that person's spiritual empowerment. Spiritual abuse is also the use or misuse of scripture to control another. We have spiritual abuse when a rigid, traditional approach to life and Christianity is reinforced by rigid pulpit preaching and teaching.



Four Characteristics of Abusive Behavior

It starts in the home. It is behavior children observe from their guardians.

- **Learned Behavior**
- **Selective** Perpetrators often choose persons they perceived are more vulnerable—women, children
- **Permissible** It usually happens because society, church, families allow it to take place.
- **Cyclic**



Four Characteristics of Abusive Behavior

It starts in the home. It is behavior children observe from their guardians.

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- Selective Perpetrators often choose persons they perceived are more vulnerable—women, children
- Permissible **WE ARE SILENT.**
- Cyclic



Four Characteristics of Abusive Behavior

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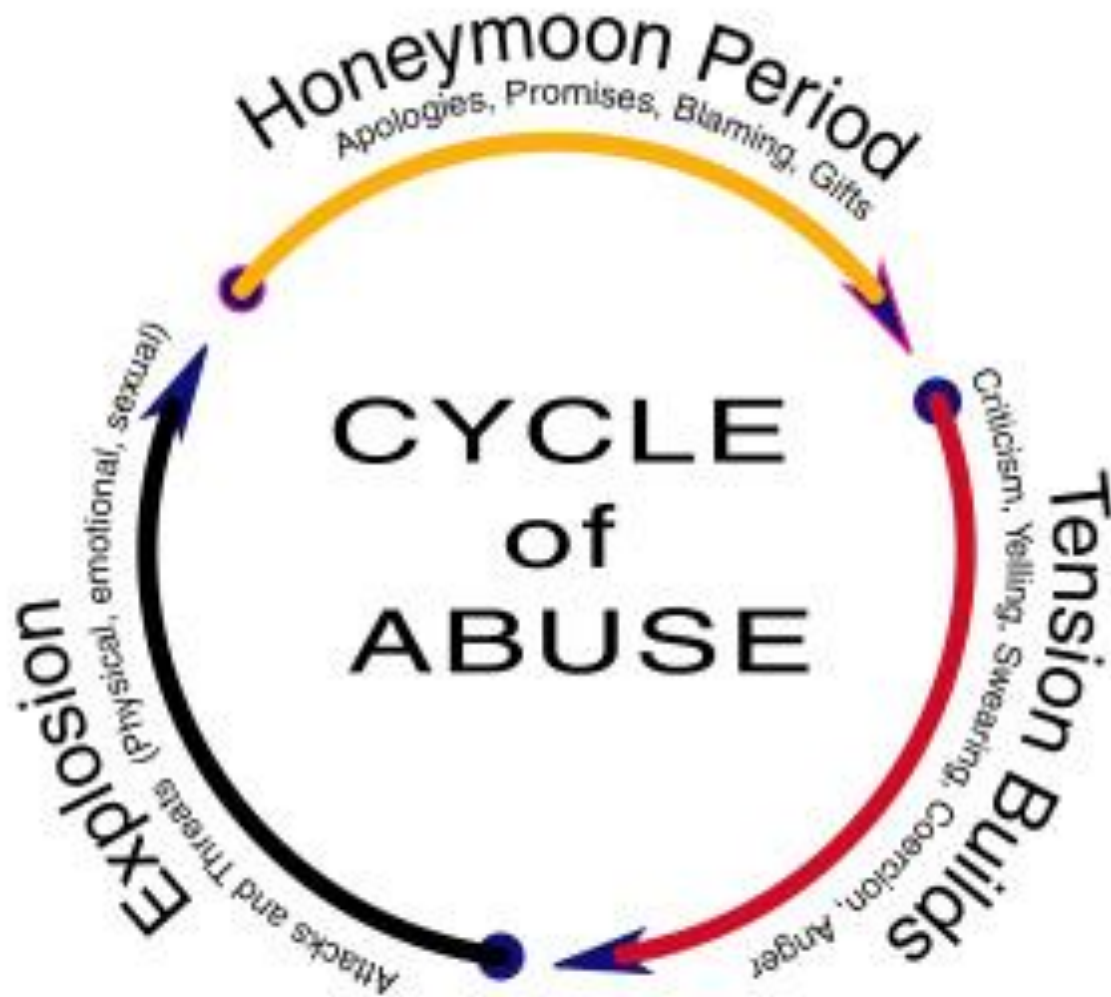
- Learned Behavior
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- Permissible
- Cyclic

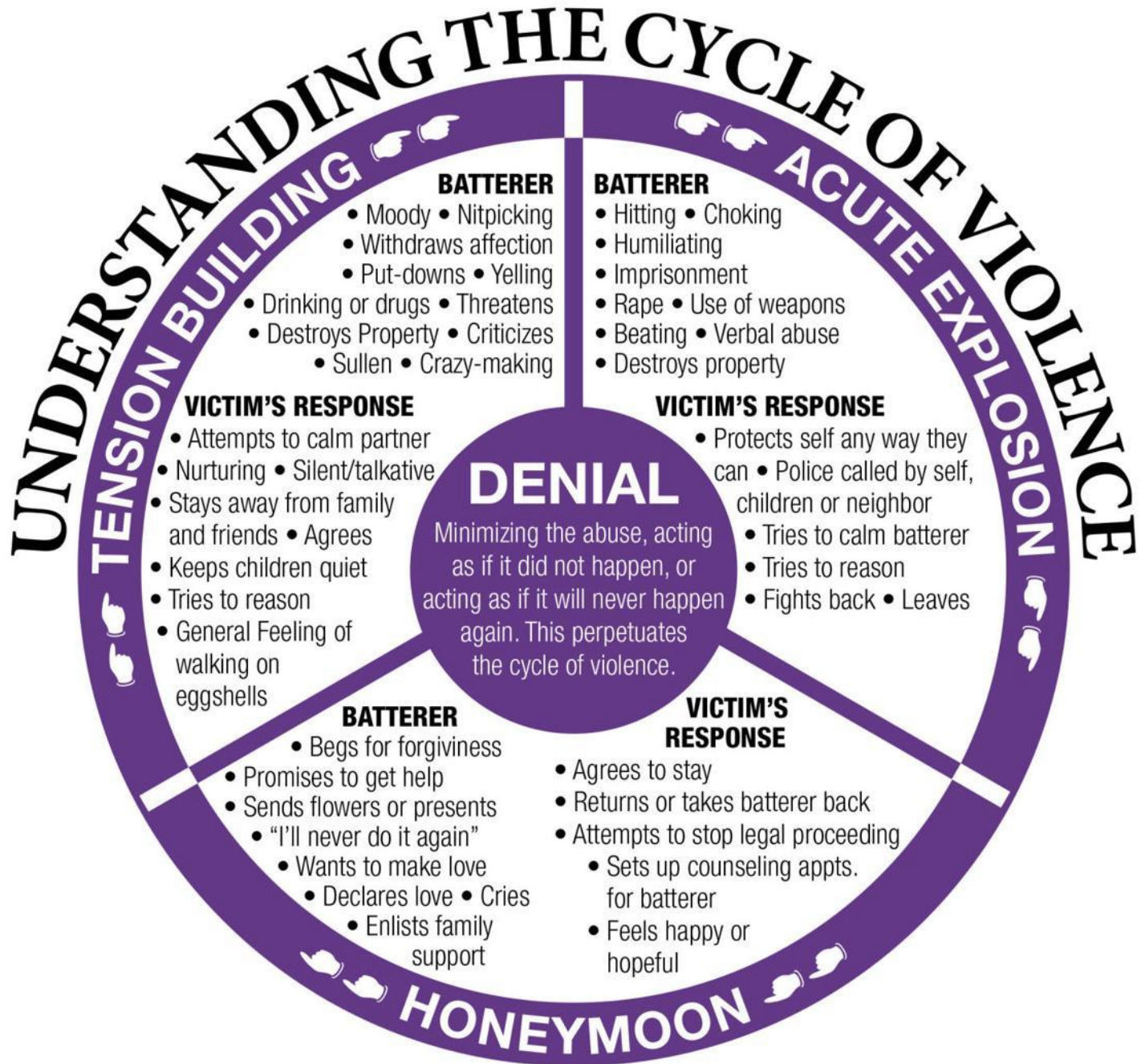
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**PASSIVE
VIOLENCE.**



ABUSE IS CYCLICAL





At the foundation of
all abuse is the use
and misuse of power
and control.





WHO HAS THE POWER?

Perceived or Actual Powerful and Less Powerful Groups of People

Powerful People

Less Powerful People

Men	↔	Women
Adults	↔	Children
Bosses	↔	Workers
Teachers	↔	Students
Whites	↔	Blacks
The Bay Street Boys	↔	Poor Bahamian People
Bahamians	↔	Foreigners
Rich	↔	Poor
Christians	↔	Non-Christians
Able-Bodied	↔	Physically Challenged
Heterosexuals	↔	Homosexual, etc.
Formally Educated	↔	Non-formally educated

FORMULA FOR ABUSE

By Barrington H. Brennen



When rigid traditional family values are combined with rigid traditional religious beliefs or practices, there is always abuse.



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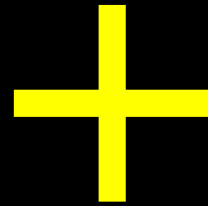


Among professed religious peoples of all faiths

FORMULA FOR ABUSE

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Rigid Family Beliefs/Practices



Rigid Religious
Beliefs/Practices

ABUSE/VIOLENCE



This is one reason domestic violence and intimate partner abuse are as prevalent among Adventists and other faiths as it is with nonbelievers.



The Shocking Truth

“Christians who had been raised with minimal Bible training were less injured by these false assumptions—supposedly biblical teachings—than Christians with extensive Bible training. In other words, Christians who know their Bibles the best are often injured the most.”



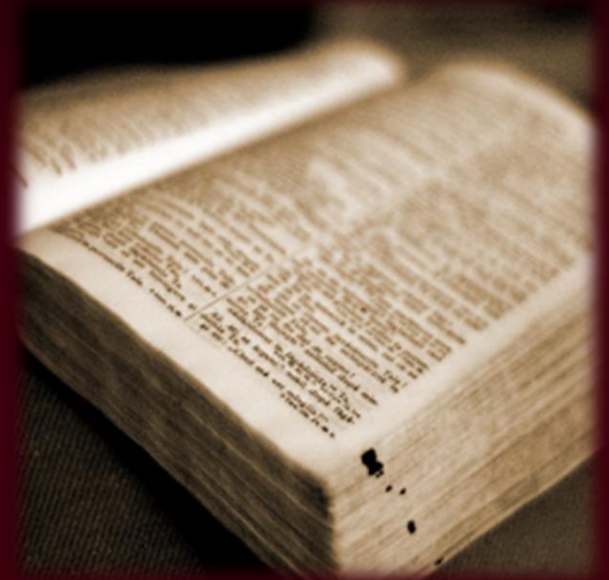
The Shocking Truth

“When the person's allegiance to the scripture was combined with dangerous teachings, much pain often resulted.” Certainly, we can say that one cannot have too much Bible or be too spiritual. However, what it is saying is that when persons read the Bible with preset, rigid, traditional beliefs, the more they read it, the more toxic and abusive their faith becomes.”



Abuse of Scripture and Theology

- Some have misused scripture and theology to justify abusive unloving behavior. Love Never hurts!
- Others who mean well have used scripture inappropriately to convince victims to accept violence in the family.





We (the Church) Must Speak Out!

- The religious community must not be silent.
- Silence only continues the lack of understanding of issues of domestic violence and does not lead to change.
- The church can help families stop abuse by teaching them how to create healthier environments for children, teenagers, and adults.



Freedom *in* Relationships



enditnow Emphasis Day



1 Corinthians 13:4-7

4 Love is patient; love is kind. Love isn't envious, doesn't boast, brag, or strut about. There's no arrogance in love; 5 it's never rude, crude, or indecent – it's not self-absorbed. Love isn't easily upset. Love doesn't tally wrongs 6 or celebrate injustice; but truth – yes, truth – is love's delight! 7 It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres.





LOVE HAS NO FEAR!

“There is no fear in love.
But perfect love drives out fear.”
1 John 4:18



The Impact of COVID19 On Relationships

Domestic Violence
Intimate Partner Abuse
Divorce





Ongoing lockdowns, curfews, joblessness, wondering whether you will have a job, etc., can all lead to stress, anxiety, doubt, fear, frustration, etc.





A headline in last week's newspaper said that application for divorce has increased since COVID19 pandemic.





There has also been some increase in domestic violence and child abuse.





WHY?

What to do?





First, take note that COVID19 pandemic is not really the cause (*in most cases*) of the increase in divorce or abuse.





The divorce was going to happen in any case. The pandemic only accelerated it.





The abuse was already there even though not visible or experienced.

The pandemic only exposed the dark secrets of the heart.

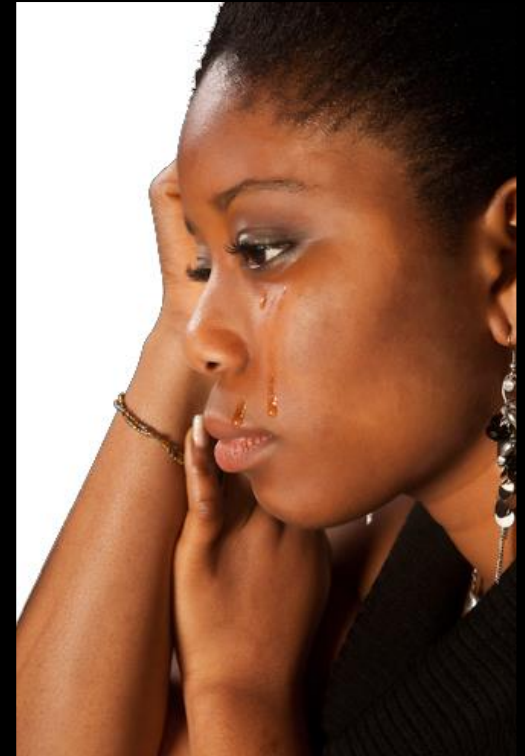
The individuals were not ready for the unexpected change.





Once you are in a romantic relationship there **will** be change, even painful change at times.

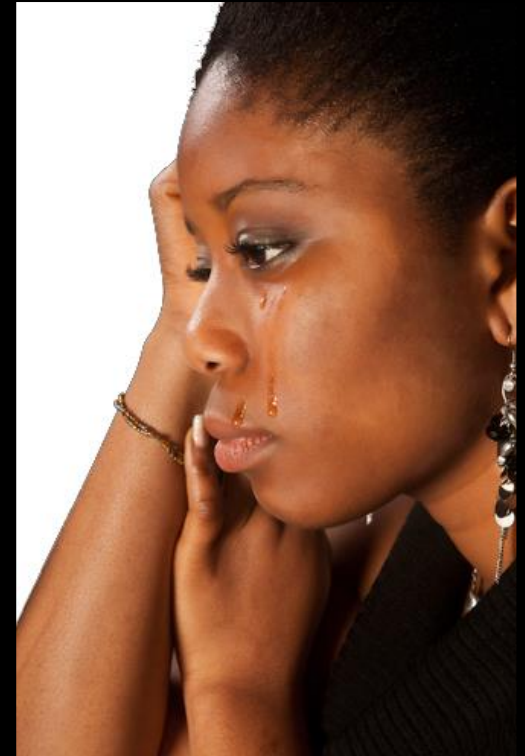
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“Marriage is not just a bed of roses. There are more things in the bed than roses. What makes a rose plant special are the thrones or prongs on the stem. You cannot hold the rose without holding the stem”

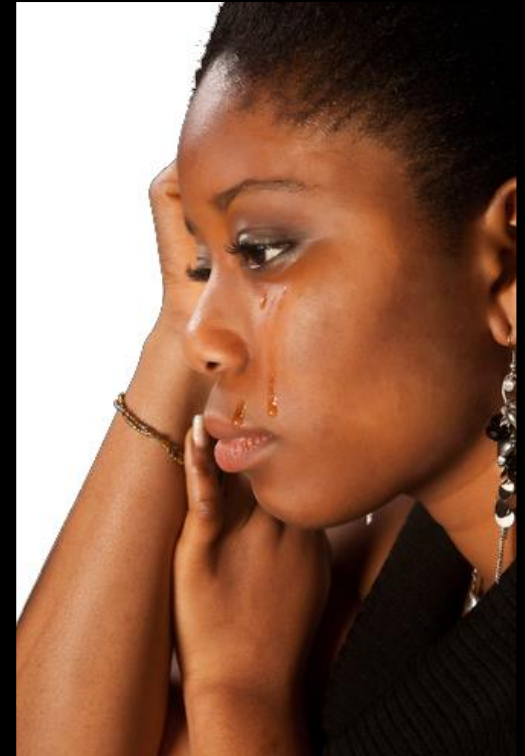
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When the “prongs”
show up, many are
shocked, confused,
and pull away from
each other

Barrington H. Brennen



Here's what I discovered.

First, some did not expect the “prongs” which can represent unexpected changes in the relationship. These change can be due to internal or external forces.

Second, since they did not “expect the prongs” they were not prepared to get “stick” and bleed. They were not prepared for the frustration, anxiety, stress, etc..

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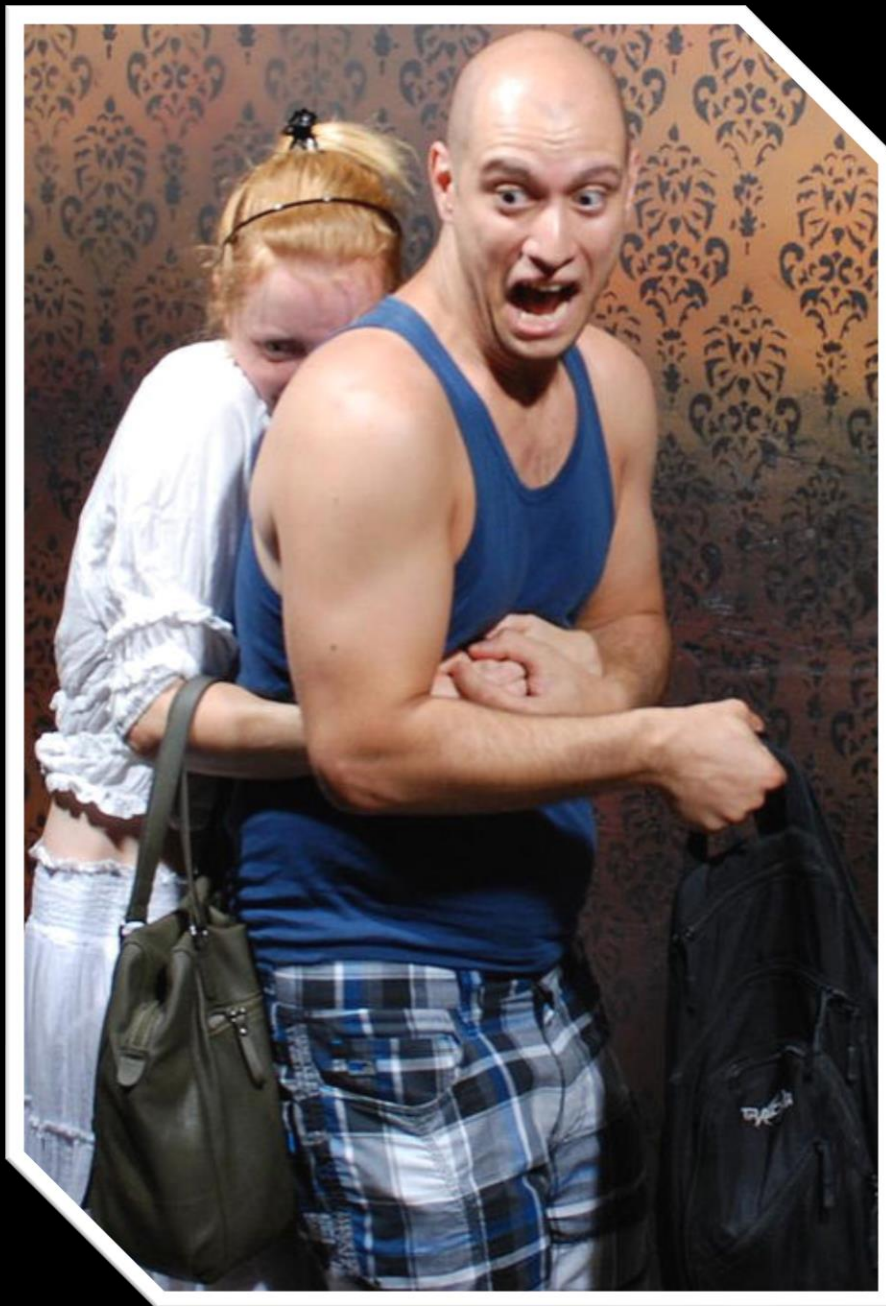
Quotation from the Sabbath School Lesson for April 13-19, 2019
"Are You Ready for Life's Big Changes?"

"LIFE IS FULL OF CHANGES. Things change all the time. The only thing that does not change is change itself. Change is part of what it means to be alive. Science teaches us that change is a basic part of life. Many changes happen with no warning. We are going along in life, and then, boom! Everything changes in a second. We never even saw the change coming."





Alzheimer's
Amputation
COVID19 Pandemic
Curfews
Dementia
Depression
Diabetes
Heart Problems
Lock Downs
Paralysis
Postpartum Depression
Psychological Disorder
Sexual Dysfunction
Stroke
Etc.

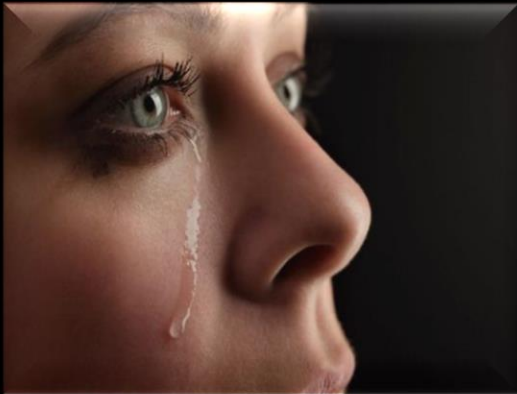


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Here's what I discovered.



If tragedy strikes before compassion is activated, your marriage is in trouble.



If there is very little or no compassion, understanding, openness, sharing, holding each other, loving, or cuddling, then there is a greater chance that the unexpected will strike you out.



If there is lots of passion
and no compassion,
there will be more pain
in the relationship.



For many, they did not know that they were not ready for the tragedy because they were often not at home and the lockdowns forced them to stay at home.



Thank God for the lockdowns. Use them as an opportunity to re-create your understanding of your partner, your compassion, and your passion.





“The dry petals
from a faded rose
can be used to
make a beautifully
scented potpourri
that can fill a home
with sweet-
smelling aroma..”

Barrington H. Brennen



What to Do? *Church*

- Church, start listening.
- Err on the side of the victim.
- Be prepared to hold the perpetrator accountable.
- Do not be guilty of passive violence (*Turning your head*).
- Know the available resources. (*Hotlines, procedures, etc.*)
- Do not seek to preserve the “good name” of the church at the expense of the life and health of the victim – woman, man or child.
- Let **enditnow** be a year-round project.



What to Do? *Victim*

- Seek help. (*The Crisis Center, Social Services*)
- Prepare a get-away-bag and hide it.
- Give all personal important documents to a friend or family member.
- Tell and trusted friend.
- Do not push his or her buttons.
- Avoid just telling your pastor. He/she might not be equipped effectively respond and oftentimes causes more harm.
- Stand up for yourself.



What to Do? *Friend*

- Avoid getting in between by taking messages back and forth.
- It is okay to support the victim even when the partner is your friend.
- Believe the victim.
- Do not blame the victim. *“What are you doing for him to do this to you?” “She/he is a good person. You are not telling the truth.”*



“The thief’s purpose is to steal and kill and destroy. My purpose is to give them a rich and satisfying life

John 10:10, NLT.



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