

Invitation to Personal Power

Women have traditionally been taught that they should give up and sacrifice their personal power for the well being of others such as their partners, children, parents. Women are asked to ignore their own interests and yield to others in their relationships, to be passive and powerless. They are taught to silence their voices at the time of conflict and distrust their feelings. This mentality has been so pervasive in the history of relationships that it colors every interpersonal relationship; it reinforces critical negative voices in women's lives. As a result of this way of thinking, women feel stuck in their interpersonal relationships; they feel they have no choice and freedom; they feel pressured to stay in dysfunctional relationships in order to fulfill social expectations, family beliefs, personal obligations and so on. When women ignore their personal strengths, they dismiss their choices and lose control over their lives. By following historical patterns they feel more powerless, helpless, and hopeless. This is a socially constructed pattern, which is perpetuated by individuals, including women. Although it needs to be socially deconstructed, women need to educate themselves in order not to perpetuate this pattern. That takes time and requires a lot of effort and encouragement.

Scarborough Women's Centre offers its support to women who are willing to regain their personal power and voice. During weekly/ biweekly meetings with the Case Manager/Counsellor, who is professionally trained, women learn to use their own strengths to accomplish their personal goal plans. With her facilitation, women discover their pattern of thinking and allow themselves to reevaluate learned patterns and open up space for their own voice; women discover new alternatives and possibilities that lead them to healthy relationships; they learn to value their personal voice and trust their feelings and thoughts; they learn to give themselves choices and decide independently. In this process, women are supported to examine their assumptions, and become more assertive and mentally independent.

Tahereh Barati, Case Manager/ Counsellor
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