**Why Doesn't She Just Leave?**

Because he'll stop the abuse after they marry
Because he'll stop the abuse after they buy a house
Because he'll stop the abuse after they have a baby
Because she had to quit work to take care of the baby
Because the kids are now in school
Because the kids need a father
Because she has no money of her own
Because she's lost her marketable job skills
Because he said he'll take the kids
Because she's afraid of him
Because she knows he'll kill her
Because society doesn't make him stop

**AT FIRST, she stays because:** She loves him
She believes he'll grow up or change
She believes she can control the beatings by doing as he says; cleaning the house, keeping the children quiet, having dinner on time, etc.
She believes she can convince him that she loves him (and end his jealousy)
She believes it is her duty to make the relationship work
She believes he'll get counseling, that he'll stop abusing drugs or alcohol, etc.
She's embarrassed for him and/or herself, so she seldom seeks help
She's afraid of what will happen if the police get involved

**LATER, she stays because:** She loves him, but less
She hopes he'll change or get help
She's under pressure from family or friends to stay
She believes he loves and needs her
She's afraid to be alone
She believes she can't support herself
She believes his promises that he'll change
She believes they'll start living the life she dreams of, that he'll get counseling, that he'll stop abusing drugs or alcohol, etc.
She is confused she is increasingly afraid of her partner's violence and may see lethality in his out of control behaviors

**FINALLY, she stays because:** Fear: he has become tremendously powerful in her eyes
He threatens to kill her or the children or her family
She has developed low self-esteem
She believes no one can love her
She believes she can't survive alone
She is very confused and feels guilty: "he cares, he beats me, I must be bad, I must deserve this, I don't know why"
She becomes depressed and immobile
Decisions are difficult, sometimes even impossible for her to make
She believes she has no control over her life she feels hopeless and helpless
She believes she has no other options
She has developed serious emotional or physical problems

**Other Reasons:** She does not know her legal rights
The risk of being killed when leaving
Fear that protection orders and the criminal justice system will not protect her
Lack of economic resources with which to support herself and her children
The desire to keep her children with their father
Being told by family or friends that the abuse would stop if she changed
Suicide threats from
the perpetrator Threats of violence to others by the perpetrator Dependence on the perpetrator for health care Lack of affordable housing Lack of affordable legal assistance necessary to obtain a divorce, custody/visitation plan, or protection order Lack of faith in systems designed to help victims Inability to speak English fluently Lack of access to resources due to physical isolation Religious pressure to keep the family together no matter what Duty "I swore to stay married till death do us part" Responsibility it is up to her to work things out and save the relationship Identity woman are raised to feel they need a partner ~ even an abusive one ~ in order to be complete or accepted by society Belief that marriage is forever Belief that violence is the way all partners relate (sometimes this woman has come from a violent childhood) Religious and cultural beliefs Denial "It's really not that bad. Other people have it worse." Guilt She believes ~ and her partner and the other significant others are quick to agree ~ that their problems are her fault Shame and humiliation in front of the community ~ "I don't want anyone else to know." Lack of emotional support ~ she feels like she's doing this on her own, and it's just too much Simple exhaustion She's just too tired and worn out from the abuse to leave Fear of losing custody of the children, often based on her partner's remarks Social isolation resulting in lack of information about her alternatives Fear of involvement in the court process; she may have had bad experiences before Fear of the unknown ~ Better the devil you know than the devil you don't The children would have to leave their school, she would have to leave all her friends and neighbors behind For some would be like being in the Witness Protection program ~ she could never have any contact with her old life Ties to her home and belongings She believes him to be all-powerful and able to find her anywhere. Many times he has proven this to her by stalking her and tracking her down, making her return home. Abusive partners who are arrested are usually released in a matter of hours (on bond), and may take revenge on the woman reporting If the neighbors report, the abuser may still take it out on her ~ often when the police come she will not admit to being assaulted Because she has a criminal background She doesn’t know she has the right not to be beaten Some women are afraid that if they report the crime the husband might lose his job, which is the family's only source of income Some believe that outsiders should not be involved in the affairs of a family Some women are afraid of some kind of retaliation by the extended family, if they break up with him or report him to the authorities. Many women do not want any change in the relationship except not to be abused She is deaf She is in a wheelchair She doesn’t have papers to be in this county She is afraid of the unknown She is mentally impaired and therefore not believed She is blind He’s her solitary care giver Because he is a public figure Because she’s a public figure She can’t read

The real question we should be asking is: WHY DOESN'T HE JUST STOP ABUSING HER?