

# Ten Top Tips<sup>©</sup>



## When women want to reclaim control over their lives

1. **If you feel alone or like you are going crazy**, believe that what you are experiencing is real. Many women experience abuse in its various forms and fear no one else could be experiencing or feeling the same as them. This is not true. Abuse is not just physical. It can also be sexual, emotional, verbal, social or financial.
2. **If you need to talk** about what is happening for you, find someone you can really talk to. Feelings of fear, disbelief, confusion or shame may restrain women from talking about what is happening to them, therefore isolating them from helpful support. If you don't have a friend you can trust, a professional counsellor can help you to understand what is happening in your life.
3. **If you think the problems** in your relationship are your fault, allow yourself to see that you are a victim of someone else's behavior and say it out aloud. You do not choose to be treated abusively and you cannot control how anyone else chooses to behave.
4. **If you believe you are the problem**, acknowledge that there is nothing wrong with you. You are okay. It is your situation which is not okay, so stop blaming yourself.
5. **If you are continually put down and ridiculed**, praise yourself for the things you do well and how you look. This can be very difficult, particularly if your self-esteem and confidence are low at the moment, but learning to like and love yourself is vital in the process of change and healing.
6. **If you are feeling worthless**, remind yourself that you are equal to all others and that you have the right to a safe, nurturing environment that meets your needs. You are special – using positive self-talk can help you to feel worthwhile and to make positive decisions about the rest of your life.
7. **If you are feeling like you've hit rock bottom**, try to ask for support from a friend, family member or a trained counsellor. Feelings of intense sadness, helplessness and hopelessness can stop you from doing the things that you normally do. It isn't your fault; again, it is the situation you are in.
8. **If you put everyone else's needs before your own** try to take some responsibility for caring for yourself. This can be tough when you're not used to it, so start by giving yourself small gifts, such as a walk in the sunshine, time to read a magazine, a chat to a friend, going to a movie, singing to yourself – something that makes you feel good. Sometimes you spend so much time giving to others that there is no time left for you.
9. **If you feel you are unsafe physically or emotionally**, trust the feeling. You are very tuned in to the behavior of the person who is abusive and your mind and body will react. By trusting these reactions instead of believing you are crazy or paranoid, you may be able to keep yourself a little bit safer.
10. **If you want your life to be different**, try to take the first step to reclaiming your life and the happiness you deserve. This can be a very frightening and difficult time, but if you want to regain your sanity and sense of self, it is important to make that first step. Telephone Crisis Care or a professional counselling organisation and make an appointment to talk to someone.