



WITHOUT A PLAN WE FAIL

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By Linda Ranson Jacobs

06/30/2014



Recently I was ministering to a lady that was new to our area. She was from another state and had just moved here. She said she had to get out of an abusive marriage so she came to live with a relative and for some peace and quiet while she sorted out her thoughts.

I am always for trying to save a marriage. Unless the children are in an unsafe environment and the mom's (or dad's) safety is at risk, then I will mention the possibility of saving a marriage. As per my normal questions, I asked if there was any hope her marriage could be saved. She

almost shouted at me, "NO! I'll never go back! Not after what he has put me through."

I offered to take her through a program called "[Choosing Wisely Before You Divorce.](#)" It is about saving one's marriage. I've used it several times. It has some thought provoking questions that help one sort through their feelings wisely before a couple divorces. I've seen several marriages saved with this program. If a marriage can't be helped then this program gives helps for setting some boundaries for oneself as the couple moves towards divorce.

I asked her about her plans; her boundaries and what she would do if he followed her to our area. She had no plans. She had no boundaries, and I knew right then and there that *she would go back to him*. I knew because she had no plans; hadn't set any boundaries and hadn't been able to really think through the situation. She had only survived and probably had only been surviving for several years. Her brain was set on surviving in the moment.

If a person has not thought about how they will handle a potential encounter then when the other person, in this case the abusive husband, does show up they are clueless as to what to do. The person's brain reverts back to the surviving mode. They can't think long term or even about tomorrow.

Sure enough, within about a week or two the man showed up in our area. He called her several times a day, texted her even more, and asked to see their toddler and to see her. He got a job and a place to live. And, you guessed it, she went back to him. I don't know what kind of abuse she had tolerated because we never got that far into the discussion.





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How can you help parents who come to you in this situation?

- First of all pray with them.
 - Pray for their physical safety.
 - Pray for their eyes to be opened to the dangers ahead.
 - Pray they calm down and turn to the Lord.
- Make sure they are safe, comfortable and have someone to call upon if needed.
- Keep regular tabs on the single parent who might be struggling to find their boundaries. It sounds simple and you might be saying to yourself, “I just wouldn’t stick around for someone to abuse me – emotionally or physically.” But really, until you are in the situation and have lived in the situation for some time, you don’t know what you would say or do.
- Empathize with this person. They need for you to feel what they are feeling.
- Help them develop a plan.
- Have them write out the plan and check on them to see what you can do to help them succeed.

One single mom told me she left nine different times from her physically abusive husband. When you’ve been beaten down and feel worthless and the person keeps telling you over and over how worthless and unlovable you are, then you might tend to start believing the lies.

While I’d like to say if you do this and this then the person will be set free, it doesn’t always work out that way. We lose some along the way. Like the mom who went back nine times before she found herself and her way out, some will wander back into the unhealthy relationship. Sometimes it is not safe for us to even contact them. All we can do in those situations is pray for the victim.

If children are involved, and there is any possibility they will be abused, watch the abuse or hear the domestic violence then you should call the child abuse hotline.

Some states have “In the presence of a child” law or decree. That means if the child is present, even if the child is asleep when domestic violence take place, an arrest can be made. The state of [Utah](#) explains it pretty explicitly. “Depending on the facts, domestic violence in the presence of a child can be charged as a 3rd degree felony or a class B misdemeanor”.

Make sure you know your church’s policies in this area. Make sure your senior pastor knows about the situation.

Linda Ranson Jacobs is one of the forefront leaders in the area of children and divorce. She developed and created the DivorceCare for Kids programs. DC4K is an international program for churches to use to help children of divorced parents find healing within the arms of a loving church family. As a speaker, author, trainer, program developer and child care center owner, Linda has assisted countless families by modeling and acting on the





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healing love she has found in Jesus Christ. Linda offers support, encouragement and suggestions to help those working with the child of divorce. She serves as DC4K Ambassador (<http://www.dc4k.org>) and can be reached via email at ljacobs@dc4k.org. You can find additional articles from Linda on her blog at <http://blog.dc4k.org/>.

Free articles and devotions for single parent families in your church can be found at Linda's website Healthy Loving Partnerships for Our Kids (<http://www.hlp4.com>).

