

Dear W.C.,

I have been told by several people to write a letter to your charity to ask for help with my situation. I am going through an extremely difficult time since escaping an abusive marriage I was trapped in for ten years.

The most recent incident with my soon to be ex-husband landed me in the hospital and finally resulted in his arrest. My recovery from the physical and emotional damage caused by years of abuse has been long and difficult.

My two young children were not abused but they witnessed the aftermath of their father's drunken rages. For years, I tried to convince myself that what was happening was not as serious as it really was. At first, the abuse involved what I considered minor incidents, a slap or a shove. When he was in a particularly bad mood, however, I was left with bruises and cigarette burns.

I was terrified to ask for help. I had seen stories about women who left abusive relationships only to have their husbands return and hurt or kill them and their families. My husband threatened us multiple times, and I never doubted that he was capable of carrying out those threats. I lived in constant fear, never knowing what might happen next.

Now that I am free from the abuse, I am left with unpaid bills, a repossessed car and the possibility of being evicted from our home. My husband emptied his bank accounts and had everything in his name anyway. I was never allowed to have anything of my own.

For the first time in over ten years, I am preparing to return to work. I even had to renew my drivers license because I was not allowed to do that during our marriage. I am going to therapy and learning how to live outside of the constant fear and panic I lived in for so long.

Unfortunately, the financial difficulties continue to be a tremendous source of stress. At this time, my children and I need help with rent, utilities, food, and transportation. The only car we had was repossessed last week, making it impossible for me to get to work when I begin my job next week. Please consider us for your poverty relief program as I have no where else to turn.

Dear Readers,

I made the life changing call to this mother, a woman who had endured years of abuse and lived in fear for herself and her children. As I listened to her story, I could hear the pain she had endured and also the determination she now had to build a better future for her children. Our assistance would be what she needed to begin to build that better future.

The hardest step had already been taken by going through the steps needed to end her abusive marriage and create a safe environment for her children. Escaping abuse does not immediately erase the financial consequences that often follow, especially when someone else has been in control of you financially for so many years.

We were able to provide assistance with this family's most urgent needs. We brought their rent and utilities up to date, and provided gift cards for food, gas, and clothing for the children. It would take more time and effort to obtain a vehicle. This was achieved thanks to several generous donors who were moved by what this woman and children have suffered. These donors knew a car was not simply a convenience for this mother, it also represented independence and the ability for her to provide for her two young children, without having to depend on the person who had controlled her every move for so many years.

Today, this mother and her children are relishing living without constant dread every time a door opens or a voice is raised. Even with occasional difficult days, they are all sharing more smiles and joy now that we provided the opportunity to begin again. They are extremely grateful for the fresh start and independence our assistance provided. For this mother, our assistance was not just about paying bills or replacing a car. It was about giving her the opportunity to begin again. And sometimes, a new beginning is the most valuable gift we can give.

We are grateful that we could step in when this family needed help. There are many people in our community facing difficult circumstances quietly. They may be our neighbors, friends, relatives or even people we pass every day without knowing the challenges they are carrying.

Thank you for allowing The Time Is Now to Help to be there for hundreds of our fellow Americans each year. Because of you, lives are changed and futures are made brighter.

Health & Happiness, Love & God Bless Everyone, Sal

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