

## Chapter 9" Tornadoes"

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Sometimes when you are in an abusive relationship, a person on the outside tries to talk with you to help you—they say they can see something is wrong, but you do not believe them because you think they are lying. Again, although I was not in a physically abusive relationship, I was being mentally abused. As I sit down now with my family and look back at old family movies and pictures, I can't recognize myself. During my marriage I aged about fifteen years. I looked so miserable, so much older than I really was, so insecure. I'd let myself go, I was not myself. Today when I look into the mirror I love who I see because I am able to stand strong and show my children a role model; I can give them a sense of normalcy. I look much younger than I am, I am beautiful, I keep myself up, I have God in my life, I am secure, confident, and I walk around with the boldness of Jesus on me. I look at my ex and, after seeing the way he treats his children, the way he acted towards me with such hate, the lies and the dragged-out divorce, I feel sorry for him. I forgive him but really feel sorry for him.

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People in these relationships make excuses, get scared of change, get comfortable in a bad situation, think things wouldn't be better if they left. I know because I've been there, but I am here to tell you it's the opposite. Things can only get worse the longer you stay; you start to lose track of who you were before the relationship. I myself completely forgot how beautiful and fun life was. I have made many mistakes with different men since I left my ex-husband, but I am not afraid to try. No, things haven't always been perfect. We get used to that same type of guy and make the mistake of picking more not-so-good-for-you guys. You