

## We need to hear from victims

Victims come forward.

We can't help you if you don't come forward.

Members of each policing system everywhere take an oath to protect and serve.

This article is my opinion, or my truths, that I know them to be.

The law states that abuse towards women is a criminal offence, punishable by law. All abusers should be charged and held accountable, which has not always been the case in Caledon; even with known abusers.

Abuse of any kind to which a woman can be exposed; sexual, verbal or written threats, etc. These can be nightmares. Women can be afraid to go for walks, lose the privacy of their own yards, be afraid of being alone in parking lots and even of a knock on the door. Everything coming out of fear destroys.

Discrimination against women is not always taken seriously. Years of abuse, months or even five minutes may take their toll on women, never leaving them free of fear. Abuse invades one's heart and soul, affecting her personal life and her total well-being. Any and every type of fearful, destroying abuse toward women is a personal 'rape' in some way. And when abusers are not held accountable and charged, it violates every word of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

From time to time, one reads articles about the police advising to be aware of your surroundings, report anything suspicious, call 9-1-1, etc. If any woman does any or all of the above and the abuse continues, then what?

My thoughts remind me constantly of the suicide of a woman who was a victim of total rape and total abuse. All the system seems to do is talk, saying that something must be done. But sadly, and frightening for all victims of rape, total abuse and bullying is death was a better companion than her life.

Her name was Rehtaeh Parsons. The RCMP?in Halifax failed her. Serve and protect? Too little, too late.

We all strive for the pursuit of love and happiness, but too many are denied the right to obtain this if endless abuse, along with threats, are allowed. Will we soon be a country that allows men to not just abuse and rape, but stone women to death?

Why must we live in fear? It's long overdue for all of us to reveal abuse and threats, including documentation ? to come forward.

We must protect ourselves. Time for pepper spray, tasers, permission to own and carry a firearm. Why not?

To say with good faith our policing system does good work, but they do not prosecute various kinds of victimizing, such as abuse and bullying, only adds to one's fearful existence, depriving women of their human rights and dignity.

May God help us all.

This beautiful young woman, Rehtaeh, did not need to die.

So in closing, I sit here quietly, with the saddest, most painful heart ? my inner voice saying it could sure use a hug. How about you?

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