



Smart, Successful and Abused: The Unspoken Problem of Domestic Violence and High-Achieving Women

Angela Mailis

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Smart, Successful and Abused is an important contribution to discussions of abusive relationships that shares resources for leaving and recovering.

Shocking statistics and heartrending personal stories shatter common beliefs about domestic abuse in Angela Mailis's *Smart, Successful and Abused*, which focuses on women who are both high achievers and victims of intimate partner violence.

Mailis reveals that she was in an emotionally abusive relationship for twenty-seven years. A respected pain doctor with a thriving practice, she became another person the moment she came home: a woman whose hidden weaknesses and insecurities kept her bound to her abuser. Her book is objective regarding her situation and the situations of other high-achieving women, including doctors, lawyers, and business owners, who lead dual lives: projecting success, yet finding themselves subservient to their abusers at home.

The book identifies the characteristics of a bad relationship, suggests ten main reasons why high-achieving women are susceptible to abuse, and reveals the surprising reasons that such women give for staying with their abusers. It then examines the stages of awakening and the steps needed to build a better life. Compelling case histories illustrate each topic. The process of admitting that a relationship cannot be "fixed" is traced, and the text relates the emotional, financial, and legal steps to leaving. It warns against entering a new relationship in order to heal and supplies resources for building a new life.

The text commands attention by beginning with a shocking story: the murder of a physician and mother of three by her abusive husband. This anecdote reveals that abuse is not a class issue, but that it's one that's often hidden until severe injury or death make it public. This is supported by statistics, including regarding the number of women killed by their partners juxtaposed to the number of troops killed in action in the same period, and the reality that fifteen percent of all violent crime in America is partner abuse.

Eloquent and moving, the work is objective, compassionate, and research-based. It examines existing literature, analyzes what constitutes physical and emotional abuse, and helps to identify abuse in relationships. Its powerful true stories are its most central feature. An impactful call to women to tell their stories, express their pain and outrage, and educate and empower each other is issued, and the book's sensibilities are urgent.

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KRISTINE MORRIS (August 13, 2019)

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