

NE

More Than My Share

Every night, I would awaken to an orgasm, as he gave me oral sex. Eventually he penetrated me with his tongue, then replaced it with a cold beer bottle then himself. When he grew bored of my being Daddy's girl, I was shared with a private club of Uncles, which were his friends. It all came to an abrupt halt when he committed suicide. But the damage was done; with a lack of boundaries, not able to distinguish sex from love, putting my self-worth in pleasing men- the mold had been cast.

By 19 years old, sexually promiscuous, trying to capture unconditional love and in a whirlwind courtship; I was pregnant. My boyfriend and I lived together when he informed me he was abandoning me to follow the "Grateful Dead". I felt there was no reason to go on living. I was going to commit suicide in front of him (wouldn't he be sorry). But instead, he told me to "do the world a favor" and "check out" like my dad. He climbed in bed that night and ignored me. I shot him and I'll never forget the look on his face; the blood spilled out of him, like milk at full-pour from a gallon jug. I was arrested for the 1st time in my life.

I had an abortion while out on bail. Of course, it was just another strike against me; as if the decision hadn't been hard enough. It was said, I had no regard for human life. I was sentenced to LIFE IN PRISON.

Fast forward, now at 49 years old. I've spent more years in prison than out. It's been 30 years of making my own tampons. (Which you know about if you've been a homeless or incarcerated woman). I'm passed my child bearing years with time for reflection and "what ifs". I understand I should've been sent to prison but the disparity in sentencing is hard to swallow. I read a case where a couple adopted and tortured a child to death. The guy didn't serve time and she served 8 years. How is one life worth so much more or less than another? (But I digress).

I've seen women come to prison, taking the fall for their boyfriends even though they were literally their punching bags out there. While in prison, some women perpetuate and allow continuation of abuse by getting their teeth knocked out by other women.

I don't hate men, but I do love women. I believe men's brute strength can and has been replaced by tools, some robotics and ingenuity. Perhaps, one day- as life givers- incubators could replace women. However, the intangible emotional wellspring of empathy, sympathy and love that women embody won't soon be technologically replaced.

I can't believe we're still living in an age where there's "locker room" talk, campus rapes, women are charged more money for products but paid less for their work.

In addition to the typical curriculum of math, reading and science, perhaps, more sociology, character and kindness could be included. It's not lucrative, because these fall within a women's wheelhouse and we don't value women enough to invest in them.

I am a woman but I believe I've matured and assimilated enough masculine traits to have an androgynous view. I wish more men could do the same. I am becoming the role model that I never had.

Women move their kids, halfway across the country to stand by their incarcerated man. But the *female prison visiting rooms* consist of grandmas, social workers and tricks/johns/sugar daddies.

Most men define themselves via their occupation. Women define themselves by their family, kids and relationships. When tasks go wrong, there are typically manuals to fix things. When relationships go awry, women bear the emotional brunt (usually alone).

You're an amazing survivor, thriving in a slanted world. Women are strong and beautiful - inside and out. Try to tune into your internal guidance system. It's alright to be alone, NO relationship is preferable to a *toxic* relationship. "The hand that rocks the cradle CAN rule the world" IF we heal, share and love ourselves, our chosen family, and world families.

As a woman reading this, please know, you are not alone. When I think I've had MORE THAN MY SHARE of good and bad - I remind myself, there's always someone who has had it worse. Like the man without shoes complaining until he sees the man without feet. - End