

# Reach UP

The Magazine to Empower and Enrich Today's Woman

Spring 2018



*Family*  
Mama Knows Best

*Lifestyle*  
Breaking the Cycle



Hi,

Because the articles in this issue are so good, I'm giving up some of my space for them. I'm praying for the day when we can have a larger magazine with more articles like the ones in this issue that really hit home and give practical help.

Maybe as you read these articles, one will remind you about your story. Please write it down and send it to me. Maybe, in God's timing, we will be able to publish even more stories like yours to help other women.

Write me at Reach UP Magazine, 5001 E Main Str, Box 68, Mesa, AZ, 85205, or email me at [crystal@reachupmag.org](mailto:crystal@reachupmag.org).

Together, let's trust God for a Reach UP miracle.

Crystal Knapp  
Editor-in-Chief

# BREAKING the Cycle

## CONQUERING MY PAST

by Marilyn Garcia-Rivera

No child should ever be raised in an abusive environment. The mental stress is too damaging.

That was so true for me. Watching my mom get beaten by my dad and step-dad taught me the lie that "if your man isn't hitting you, then he doesn't love you!"

I was young, happy, and ready to be in the working class. I had just graduated from trade school and landed my first job in the City. I always wanted to work in the City. There is something about Manhattan that I will forever love. Little did I know that in the city of my dreams, I would meet the man who would hurt me.

It started out just fine. I was happy with him, and I believed he was good for me. He was nice and he made me smile. I guess that's how all relationships start, right? With respect and kindness.

However, it all changed one night when I found a few things in his apartment belonging to another woman. Startled, I checked his pager and saw some explicit messages.

When I confronted him, it enraged him. Instead of admitting his wrong, he twisted the situation around and made me feel as if I were the one who did wrong. *Why was I snooping in his apartment? Why did I invade his privacy by looking at his pager?* While arguing he threw a bottle at me, which hit my head and left me not only bleeding, but also in shock and crying.

We had a roller coaster of a relationship after this — a vicious, constant cycle of getting drunk, arguing,

## Table of Contents

### LIFESTYLE

Breaking the Cycle of Abuse ..... Page 2

### FAITH

Colorful Bible Study..... Page 5

### FAMILY

Momma Knows Best ..... Page 3

### HEALTH

Truth about E-Cigs ..... Page 7

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verbally abusing, breaking up, and apologizing. I suffered black eyes and busted lips. I clearly remember times when he spit at me while we were arguing, calling me a whore, and even hitting on females in front of me. He would degrade me until I felt weak and was in tears. He knew how to mentally break me down, crippling me into believing that the way he treated me was all my fault. Though he did hit me a few times, the verbal abuse was so much worse.

Once after a drunken argument, I woke up the next day with one side of my face completely swollen and bruised. The night was a complete blur, and I couldn't remember exactly what happened. But looking around the apartment, I saw a 40-ounce beer bottle laying in a weird place on the floor. I'm pretty sure he flung the bottle at me and it hit my face.

Many of our arguments turned violent. Once I broke his very expensive herringbone necklace, so he grabbed a knife and ripped into my leather moto jacket while I was still wearing it. At other times he roughed me up in the streets because he never cared if he was abusive in private or public. It was so bad that I would flinch and freeze at the sight of him getting upset because I knew what was to come if he was fueled up.

Relationships like these are so confusing because he would apologize and promise he would change, and I would believe him! The apology seemed sincere and sweet, so I was swept away by his kindness. Then we had a cycle of good days and laughter, with a few awesome date nights. Everything was the way I wanted it. After a month or so, he was back to

being that abuser I feared. I had no idea what sparked it or why. It just happened.

The physical scars and especially the mental scars abusers like this leave in us can be haunting. I am not going to lie; the healing process is long. Abuse really messes you up mentally. But once you stop those monsters from having control over your life, you will have your freedom!!

Breaking up with him was hard. At that time I was in a tough position. I didn't want to live with my mom, and I didn't have enough money to pay for my own rent. Plus I would miss him. So we would break up, get back together again, then break up again. The cycle went on and on. A couple of times I honestly did not want to go back to him, but those were also the times he came for me. Once he showed up at my job and another time at my mom's, demanding that I leave with him because he had a gun. Truthfully I don't know if he had a gun or not. He knew I was so deathly afraid of him that I wouldn't even think about challenging him.

During this time of my life I felt alone, embarrassed, and foolish that I had allowed myself to be caught up with a man who obviously had no feelings for me and enjoyed abusing me. I thought I couldn't tell anyone because I was afraid of what people might say. So I lived alone in my private terror — alone with a stranger who never really cared about me or wanted to change.

After almost three years, I finally said to myself, *This is it. I can't take this anymore. I have to leave him for good.* I cried out to God for help because I just couldn't do it on my own. One night the Lord gave me the courage to just leave. My abuser

was not home, so it was easy for me to go.

Several months passed before then he contacted me. He asked me to meet him and promised me that he had changed and would treat me better. Though I had heard this before, I thought, *I'll just see him one last time.*

He was so affectionate, and he said the things I thought I wanted to hear. But something had changed within me! I finally got the strength to shut him out. I was listening, but not accepting what he was saying. At that point I truly saw who he really was, and inwardly I told myself that he would not hurt me anymore!!

*"Go home and I'll meet you there later,"* I told him. So he got on the train, and as the doors closed and it took off, we stared at one another as we both smiled. I waved goodbye and never saw him again.

Why he never came back for me, I honestly don't know. But shortly after leaving him for good, I started going to church. I truly believe God had His hands in removing him from my life for good.

I know that many ladies are in similar abusive relationships, if not worse ones. You might truly think you can't leave. I'm not a professional counselor, but one thing I can say: Please believe in Jesus Christ. Don't lose hope. He's more powerful than we can imagine, and He is with you. Just cry out to Him, and He will free you as He did me.

**National Domestic Violence Hotline**  
www.thehotline.org/ Online help 24/7/365  
1-800-799-7233  
Chat en español disponible todas los dias de 12-6 p.m.



# Momma knows BEST

*My Momma don't like you ...and she likes everyone  
And I never like to admit that I was wrong  
But I've been so caught up with my job  
Didn't see what's going on, but now I know  
I'm better sleeping on my own  
...cuz if you like the way you look that much  
Oh baby you should go and love yourself.*

By Joselyn Ward

*If you didn't have a mom like  
Joselyn, don't despair. You can be  
the kind of mom you wish you had.*

- "Love Yourself" By Justin Bieber

Such a catchy tune. It's true. I've found myself bopping to it and singing along. The song highlights the breakdown of a relationship due to the effects of insecurity. But it also gives a nod to empowerment by knowing when it's time to let go. While talking about the words of the song with my daughters, we found there was a lesson to be learned.

bond is created and nurtured in the very depths of our beings. The job of being a mother goes beyond the everyday tasks that usually go unnoticed, undervalued, and misunderstood. But sometimes a mother's instinct about bigger things in life – things like friends, family, and relationships – go ignored.

But think about it. Other than yourself, who better knows what you want, expect, or deserve in a significant other but the very person who has spent her entire life helping to nurture yours? It's probably best to pay attention to Momma.

Life gets busy. Sometimes we get used to the way things are. Manipulation, deceit, control, and even abuse can cloud your judgment about

what's really happening. It's quite possible that your true reality is very different from what your mind and your heart creates as a means to hide or

STRENGTH AND DIGNITY ARE HER CLOTHING,  
AND SHE LAUGHS AT THE TIME TO COME.  
SHE OPENS HER MOUTH WITH WISDOM,  
AND THE TEACHING OF KINDNESS IS ON HER TONGUE.  
SHE LOOKS WELL TO THE WAYS OF HER HOUSEHOLD  
AND DOES NOT EAT THE BREAD OF IDLENESS.  
HER CHILDREN RISE UP AND CALL HER BLESSED;  
HER HUSBAND ALSO, AND HE PRAISES HER:  
"MANY WOMEN HAVE DONE ESCCELLENTLY,  
BUT YOU SURPASS THEM ALL."

PROVERBS 31:25-30

A mother's instinct is usually pretty good. God knew what he was doing when he gave women the ability to conceive, carry a child, and give birth. A unique and strong

Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves. Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others. Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus...."

Philippians 2:3-5





# Colorful

# Bible Study

by Crystal Knapp

One of my prized possessions from junior high is a stapled and taped together plastic sheath full of stubby colored pencils. We could barely afford those colored pencils, but Mom got them for me. I thought they were the best, and I used them to color in maps for geography lessons.

Now that I'm an adult, I either colored a lot of maps or they were used for something else. And I must confess, I'm not an adult coloring fan. Nothing wrong with the trend – in fact it is pretty nice – just not me.

No, I've used these colored pencils with my Bible study. Some colors have been replaced in the tattered envelope, and I don't need my severely faded Key anymore.

When I read, I take apart the sentence and underline what it says to me.

- |   |  |   |   |
|---|--|---|---|
|   | <b>Red</b> = Warning                   |   | <b>Lt Purple</b> = Faith  |
|  | <b>Orange</b> = Promise                |  | <b>Dk Purple</b> = Something about God's character/How we can praise God  |
|  | <b>Yellow</b> = Song, poetry or prayer |  | <b>Black</b> = Basis of what we believe                                   |
|  | <b>Lt Green</b> = Example to follow    |  | <b>Gold</b> = Name of God   |
|  | <b>Dk Green</b> = Command/Do!          |  | <b>Brown</b> = Interesting facts/the things trivia questions are made of. |
|  | <b>Dk Blue</b> = Penetrator/Wow        |   |   |
|  | <b>Lt Blue</b> = Victory/Thankfulness  |   |   |



Want to try it with me? Let's try it with one of the most familiar verses, John 3:16.

"For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life."

Now you might say, well that's a promise and color it all orange.

"For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life."

But let's look closer. Does that sentence tell you anything about God?

It sure does. We learn that God really, really loves the world — so much that He gives the very best He can, His Son. So you might think *WOW!* and color that part dark blue. Or you might say, this tells me about God, and color that phrase dark purple.

Anything else we can learn? Is there something you and I need to do? Certainly, we need to believe. So is that an example or a command? To answer that, we probably should look at the next part:

should not perish but have everlasting life.

That phrase goes back to the promise, so it's definitely orange. Yet, can you tell that you get the promise if you do something?

believes in Him

So what is God's spirit telling you? Do you feel like it's an "if you want to" or God is urging you to, "Do it girl! I love you!"?

"For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life."

And that is a good example of how personal your Bible study can be.

One more verse. Romans 12:5

Love from the center of who you are; don't fake it. Run for dear life from evil, hold on dear life for good.

Each phrase might say something to you. Is it something you should do? Do you see a warning in there?

Have fun using your color-coding Bible study. Try this out on the other verses mentioned in the magazine.

One thing I know, your reading will be slower, and it will become much more personal.



# E-CIGS SHOULD BE OKAY, RIGHT?

by Pat Gonzalez

As a health care professional, I enjoy teaching people about health issues, including how to quit smoking. One question I am asked by those who are told to quit smoking is, "Can switch to e-cigs?"

One of the hardest addictions to quit is to nicotine. However, today there is help through nicotine patches, medications, and other methods.

But, e-cigarettes are NOT a good alternative. Here is why.

Do you know what is in the liquid part of an e-cigarette? To create an e-liquid, nicotine is pulled out of tobacco and mixed with a base (usually propylene glycol), which may also include flavorings, colorings, and other chemicals.

A study on products in a FDA lab found detectable levels of toxic cancer-causing chemicals, including an ingredient used in anti-freeze! Those chemicals were found in two leading brands of e-cigarettes and eighteen of their cartridges. The levels of toxins in e-cigarette sprays varied between brands. Plus, another study found that aerosol from e-cigs contains formaldehyde, a cancer-causing agent.

Flavors in e-cigarettes are also a cause for concern. Not only are flavors used to target kids, but they may be harmful on their own. The people who sell e-cigarettes suggest that the flavor ingredients are safe because they have "FEMA GRASTM" status that is marked safe for use

in food. Sorry, but this claim is false and misleading. The truth is that FEMA GRASTM only applies to food, meaning that it's safe to eat. It does not apply to inhaling/vaping through e-cigarettes.



Many e-cigarette companies sell their products as tools to help smokers quit. The FDA has not approved any e-cigarette as a safe or working method to help smokers quit. In fact, instead of quitting, many e-cig users find themselves vaping their e-cigs plus grabbing a smoke from their regular cigarettes.

Look into your state's smoking cessation programs. Many are offered as a free service. For more information check out [smokefree.gov](http://smokefree.gov). and see the best option for you or someone you love.



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