

## **CASE STUDY: Loula**

For three and a half years Loula suffered family violence from her husband. The only way she could imagine escaping the nightmare, was if she killed him, or if she died herself.

“My life was controlled by his anger and his violence. He controlled me emotionally, he controlled me physically and he controlled me spiritually,” says Loula.

“It started when we were dating. My ex-husband would sulk and insist I abandon outings with friends to be with him. I thought it was flattering. I thought it proved he loved me.”

“Soon after we were married he drove away my friends and family by picking fights with them.”

“The first time he physically abused me, I was stunned. I accepted his apologies that it would never happen again, but it did. The beltings increased in frequency and intensity and it got to a stage where I feared for my life.”

“I asked him for a divorce, but he said that if I left him he would kill me and my parents.”

“He would accuse me of having affairs and if I refused to have sex with him he would force himself on me.”

“Finally I had enough. I made the decision that if I had to die to be free I was willing to pay that price and the next time he beat me I would go to the police.”

“He noticed the change in me that day and he called the police himself and cried battered husband.”

“After telling the police my story they persuaded me to take out an intervention order against him and he was asked to leave.”

“I was a clever successful woman, but I was tricked by lies and blinded by what I thought was love.”

“I remained silent about the abuse I was experiencing for a long time and my silence enabled my ex-husband to continue with the abuse.”

“I wish I had spoken up and made others aware of what I was experiencing and maybe it would've given me the courage to leave the relationship earlier.”

“It was a journey I didn't want, ask for or deserve. But I survived and now I am a free woman and I hope my story will help someone else.”