



GOOD SHEPHERD SHELTER
Ending violence. Rebuilding lives.

P.O. Box 19487, Los Angeles, California 90019-6233
www.goodshepherdshelter.org

If Time's Really Up, Complete The Revolution

by Mark A. Rothman

The Time's Up campaign, launched January 1 by over 300 female dramatic artists, pledged solidarity with 700,000 farmworker women. The farmworkers themselves lent their voices of support to the actors and other women who had come forward last fall with their own stories of workplace harassment.

Felicia, living at Good Shepherd Shelter, a transitional domestic violence shelter in Los Angeles, should benefit from these movements of solidarity. Felicia (not her real name) was also “preyed upon, harassed, and exploited by those who abuse their power and threaten [her] physical and economic security,” as the Time's Up leaders write.

She too “suppressed the violence and demeaning harassment for fear that [she would] be attacked and ruined in the process of speaking out.” She too had feelings of anger and shame; she too feared no one would believe her.

But unlike the women defended and supported in the Time's Up campaign, the women protected at Good Shepherd Shelter since its founding in 1977 as the first shelter in the city of Los Angeles – and the only one with an on-site on-site school – did not experience workplace harassment. In a chilling reversal of #metoo and Times Up, they did have to make it through the work day hiding the victimization they experienced at home.

That's why the current noble efforts don't go far enough. They don't acknowledge the home is another sphere of life in which the strong victimize the weak.

The syndrome of domestic violence may seem dramatically different than Harvey Weinstein appearing naked at a hotel room “business” meeting, or Louis C.K. *enflagrante* in masturbatory exhibitionism. The harassment perpetrated by Weinstein, C.K., and the others in their rogues' gallery used sexual acts as



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their weapons. But their actions were merely the symptoms of the disease they share with domestic abusers: the need to achieve their own validation by oppressing someone else.

This is why domestic violence doesn't begin with the punching or hitting Felicia and her Good Shepherd Shelter neighbors experienced. It begins first with subtle efforts to control. The would-be abuser might express jealousy over the victim's social relationships (male or female), encourage or coerce the victim into wearing only certain clothes, or control the victim's time or finances. And abusers are world-class rationalizers. One victimized woman had to call her husband when she left her office, and again when she arrived home. "It's because I love you so much, I want to make sure you got home safely," he explained, "or whether I need to call 911." If his wife was even a few minutes late in calling, his wrathful response looked more like control than love.

The abuser demonstrates consequences for violating his or her expectations with anger, silence, or other punitive behaviors, all with the effect of manipulating the victim to satisfy the abuser's will. Withholding sex and intimacy, or forcing a sex act, are also common tools. The victim learns to live in a tense world, walking on eggshells in an effort to keep the abuser stable.

Violence may enter the relationship as an uncontrollable outburst, perhaps over a minor slight or mistake. Or violence may begin with suggestions, and then threats, before it becomes real.

#MeToo, the farmworkers, and the Time's Up leaders strive to fight victimization by vocalization, by speaking out. These movements recognize silence is the cancer of complicity. Domestic violence too thrives on silence, on the isolation the victim feels, on the fear of repercussions that may follow speaking out.

Laudably, Times Up made a step towards including the home front as part of their battlefield. The web site for [Times Up](#) includes links to the National Domestic Violence Hotline (800-799-SAFE) and RAINN, the Rape, Abuse & Incest National Network (800-656-HOPE).



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But by not openly discussing domestic violence and other forms of private and violent expressions of power such as rape and incest, these movements miss powerful opportunities to shred the cloak of invisibility shrouding abuse and harassment at home.

These movements' leaders must include domestic violence and abuse in their manifestos. And each of us must do the same in our national dialogue, in our #metoo social media posts, and in our private discussions with one another. You can begin by going to the website for Good Shepherd Shelter, adding your name to our on-line petition, using our hashtags #completetherevolution #untilweareallfree or #makehomesafe, and following (and forwarding) our social media.

The fight against harassment transforms every area it touches. Nothing short of revolutionary, it laid low the powerful by giving voice to the vulnerable. But until we say Time's Up on domestic violence and abuse, until victims of intimate partner violence can say not just #metoo, but also #weto, the revolution will not be complete. There's no escaping what Emma Lazarus wrote in 1882: "Until we are all free, we are none of us free."

Please sign Good Shepherd Shelter's pledge to say #weto and use your voice to add domestic violence to the fight and the conversation against victimization. Go to goodshepherdshelter.org/sign-the-pledge or follow the link from our homepage.

Mark A. Rothman is the Chief Executive Officer of Good Shepherd Shelter, which provides a safe, nurturing environment in which mothers and their children can heal, reawaken their dignity and self confidence, and learn the skills that will help them stop the cycle of domestic violence. He can be contacted at mrothman@goodshepherdshelter.org, (323)737-6111 x221.