

16 *DAYS* ON STARDOLL

HELP STOP VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN





**RADHIKA
BALAKRISHNAN**

1 from missfashion_677:

"Do you put people using violence against women on trial? Or what do you do, sue those who you find guilty?"



Answer: In many countries, there are laws addressing violence against women. However, it is up to the survivor or person experiencing violence whether they want to tell a person they respect and/or go through the legal system. Persons found guilty may be put in prison.

2 from stiff1:

"How can we help these women to build their self-confidence, so that they would have the courage to protect themselves?"



Answer: If you know someone who has experienced violence, the most important thing you can do is listen to them and let them know they are not alone. Tell them that no one deserves to be threatened or harmed. Encourage them to get help or help them to contact a person they respect, the police, or an organization that works with abused women and/or children.

Violence and control are about power and control. People experiencing violence often rely on a community of support of friends and family to help them get out of the situation. They also rely on the legal system for the punishment of perpetrators. As you pointed out, people who have experienced violence need to find the courage to take the first steps to protect themselves. Other things they may need to take control of their lives include knowing about legal rights and other resources, and knowing how to use the Internet safely.

3 from malustardoll200:

"If the victim is afraid of her husband and don't report his abuse, is it correct if the neighbors report it?"

 Answer: If you hear or witness an instance of abuse taking place, you should call the police or a women's help hotline. You can search for hotline numbers on www.HotPeachPages.net. If you feel comfortable and safe enough, you can also try to speak up or interrupt the violence. You can learn more about interrupting violence from a campaign in India called "Bell Bajao" – which means "Ring the Bell." But always be careful about your own safety!

If you think that abuse is taking place and want to help, try to talk to the person experiencing violence to see what they want to do. However, the person experiencing violence needs to take control over what they want to do.

4 from aardvarke:

"Is it happening mainly in the poorer communities?"

 Answer: No, unfortunately violence against women is a problem that impacts people of all classes, races, religions and ethnicities worldwide. Poverty is something that can add stress to relationships. If a woman does not have financial independence, it may be more difficult for her to leave an abusive situation.

5 from newstarmaryn:

"What can we take under our control in order to end violence against women?"

 Answer: You can learn more about the issue as well as concrete steps to prevent and respond to violence against women as well as protect people experiencing violence. You can share your knowledge with others. Use the Internet to search for additional information about laws and services in your country, and share the information with your friends. You should also make sure you are using information and communication technology safely. To learn more about security and privacy settings for the internet, and messaging services, visit www.TakeBackTheTech.net.



**SHARON
BHAGWAN ROLLS**

1 from Fallen Rainbow:

“Hey, what does activist mean and what do you do?”

 **Answer:** Hello or as we say here in Fiji “Bula” and thank you for your question B-) Some definitions of an activist are “campaigner, an advocate, a protestor”.... For me it takes a personal approach, starting from learning and seeing my parents being involved in our community and also contributing to national issues.

For me it is also about taking positive and non violent action when you see that something is not right especially for women – it started at school voicing my concern when girls were treated differently from boys; it is also about joining marches or rallies/protest (find out about the rich history of women’s action in the UK!) or just getting involved about something that you feel strongly about from health to environmental issues, to eliminating all forms of violence.

Women have been involved in the peace movement for a long time, but the sad thing is that we don’t hear enough about women’s actions and activism as much as we hear about the problems.

As an activist I have convened peace vigils, I have written articles in the newspaper, I talk to the media about our issues and my work through femLINKPACIFIC uses media to campaign on women’s participation in peace and security and other issues which women in our network also feel important. We put women’s issues as the key issues in our media and one of the things we do is use our “suitcase radio station” so women are heard and then we take what the women say and make recommendations to policy makers in different ways for the involvement of women in issues relating to peace and security.

So activism is about taking part in community activities for those less fortunate than you – in your community or country or in another country – and activism is also about keeping yourself about the issue that concerns you the most and becoming a specialist ...try not to get caught up in just attending rallies or activities but try and find one or two issues that you feel strongly about, such as violence or peace or women’s rights and stay focused on thisactivism is about working for long term change too!

2 from Slakka:

“I think you’re amazing, where did you get all you’re confidence, I have hardly any.... Could you give me any tips on how to be more confident?”

 **Answer:** Hello or as we say here in Fiji “Bula” and thank you for your question B-)

I have to admit I am quite a private and shy person, especially when I was working in television because on TV you become a very “public person” with people recognising you on the street! But I have to say both my parents encouraged me as a young girl to be confident and strong and speak my mind (and believe me I am very opinionated!) Much of it involved after school activities like Brownies and Girl Guides, ballet, junior choir, etc helped also in mixing with new and different people.

At high school I took part in oratory and debating and even drama/school musicals because those are great ways to express yourself in a group situation also.

When I was 20 my mum encouraged me to get involved in the YWCA – Young Women’s Christian Association and that has also guided me a lot in my own personal development - and recognising that I have the potential to be a communicator for others (and guess what my daughter is now the youngest member of the Fiji YWCA National Board!)

So that’s my story ...and for you I would like to share what I have shared with my own daughter - start by believing in yourself and don’t be shy to express yourself, to be yourself – don’t be afraid of being different especially from what may seem to be the “popular set” – be a doer, recognise that you have the potential to be a leader, not just a follower especially when you know you are just trying to fit in.

3 from MamzelleNora04:

“What do you do to raise awareness of young children who witness violence against their mother?”

 **Answer:** Hello or as we say here in Fiji “Bula” and thank you for your question B-)

This isn’t an easy question to answer, but I hope from my own personal experience and the work I do today with mothers can help. Because I know from personal experience that the first step is for the mum to be supported including with information about her reality and that there are other women who have made a change to take that step out of the cycle of violence. Too often the mother may think that she is staying in the relationship for the sake of her children without realising what it means to the children who are experiencing the violence. That is why schools play a very important role – I think all schools have a responsibility to be able to provide a space where children who may be facing violence at home can find the very important support or space they need to be able to share that this is what they are experiencing. This needs to be in a gentle and respectful way as the children will already be traumatized and should be done with trained counsellors who if the school doesn’t have this type of support can be found through community groups or other networks.

This might be a way for the mothers to be invited to also receive counselling and the support they need to leave the violent situation.

Schools can also join and support campaigns such as the 16 days and display information and children can be encouraged to sign up for more information ... this could lead to more support to help individual children.

Schools can also invite women who are survivors of violence to talk to the school assembly and to share their personal story – when children and even other women realize they are not alone in facing this awful situation, this can help build confidence in making the decision to leave the situation.

4 from lloveRosalie3:

“How come you came with an idea of creating femLINKpacific?”

 **Answer:** Hello or as we say here in Fiji “Bula” and thank you for your question B-)

I was very inspired by one woman Anne Walker who is my friend now, who after helping start the Fiji Young Women’s Christian Association went on to help establish the International Women’s Tribune Centre in the 1970s! I discovered the IWTC’s work when I was learning about women’s human rights issues and discovered women’s media!

I have to admit that aside from some freelance writing initially there wasn’t much of an opportunity for this work when I started in the broadcasting media here in Fiji, first in radio and then TV and I learnt everything – from production to management but then by 2000 I needed to take a break from all the commercial media and then as my country faced a civilian coup and I became a spokesperson for our women’s peace vigil I realized that this is where women’s media can help ... to bring women into decision making for peace in our country and so a few of us got together and helped establish femLINKPACIFIC! So it took media skills and a passion for using the media to be a voice for women and young women and girls who don’t make the news...

it took having mentors like Anne who encouraged me and now ... femLINKPACIFIC is 10 years old and recognised for the work we do including having one of the few women’s community radio stations – operated for and by women – and involving young women as programme producers and broadcasters! I hope you will visit femLINKPACIFIC on Facebook or our website www.femlinkpacific.org.fj to find out more!

5 serabear434:

“Hi you’re inspiring to all people! I think that you are doing a great thing to help people! But, one question how did you get inspired to do this job? thanks!”

 **Answer:** Hello or as we say here in Fiji “Bula” and thank you for your question B-)

My work as a media professional and young feminist have been a parallel or interconnected journey and my inspiration has been the YWCA which always had a strong communications programme and I have had the privilege to be involved to express myself, to find my “voice”; there is my Mum and other women’s media advocates in particular Anne Walker who is actually from Melbourne, Australia and Vanessa Griffen who is from Fiji and loads of other women who recognised that the work I do is also important and encouraged me and the acceptance by women in the rural communities which says that what we have created as femLINKPACIFIC makes sense for them keeps me inspired ... and finding a whole host of other women’s media activists so realising also that across the world there are a whole host of us dedicated to using media, to use our media skills as feminists and to speak out for and with women!



 **NYARADZAYI
GUMBONZVANDA**

I hope you will visit femLINKPACIFIC on Facebook or our website www.femlinkpacific.org.fj to find out more!

1 from kenziegirl12345:

“Do men have the rights to be against violence to?”

 **Answer:** YES! men, women, boys, girls should all be against violence. No one has a right to make another person experience pain, hatred, anger or shame.

2 from giftogirl1998:

“Is most violence against women physical?”

 **Answer:** Most violence that can be seen is physical, like battering, rape, kicking, etc. However, many people suffer from psychological and emotional violence. It is not seen, unless someone has acute depression or stress. There is also social violence, and discrimination.

3 from msc04:

“What are the effects if a woman tries to tell about what the man is doing to her?”

 **Answer:** The first step in addressing violence is to tell the story. One gets power, strength and confidence from sharing. Most YWCAs like the YWCA in Princeton, Silicon Valley, Zambia, Canada, and other countries, have counsellors. If a woman or girl is able to tell what someone, or a man, is doing to her, she can be assisted and supported in finding a solution that puts an end to violence. By telling the story, she

can get legal or medical help. Through her example, she can also encourage other women who may be afraid to tell with their stories. Breaking the silence on violence is of utmost importance.

4 from PerryWine:

"If a woman is beaten and she is too afraid to tell the police, but she tells about it to you... what do you

 **Answer:** If someone tells me her story, I will sit down with her and first make her feel confident and strong. I will first want to understand the nature of the violence, because some women and girls are even murdered, so that she can understand the importance of getting some protection and support. Together we will explore what options exist for her to reach a solution, while also keeping in mind that going to the police is also an option. In most countries beating someone is a crime. It is normal that a person who is experiencing violence carries a lot of fear - for herself, her family or children and her future. It is important to deal with this fear and it is important to feel safe while doing so.

5 from chanice6677:

"Hi, My name is Chanice, im 13 years old. i want to know, what got YOU inspired in standing up for whats right in women? and i want to let you know that YOU have inspired our school to set up a womens rights and respects program in south africa and our school here in canada, where we comare the rights and freedom, and if its not mesured up, we will stand up and take action so they have equal rights. thanks so much, for listening and standing up for what is right!"

 **Answer:** Your story is an amazing story. I call it the solidarity of global measure! You inspire me with your school programme and the work in South Africa. Oh, you make me believe that tomorrow's women and girls will experience a better future I grew up in rural Zimbabwe, and saw many women and girls struggling in their lives. In my professional life, I have met many women and girls who are raped, beaten and made to feel bad, sad, and that experience a lot of pain. I therefore told myself that whatever I do in life, I will always work for the rights of women and girls, to promote happy families and to stand up for human rights. I find the joy of doing this in the YWCA movement as we have a presence in 125 countries and we reach 25 million women and girls. I also enjoy working with the girls and boys in my village in Zimbabwe through the Rozaria Memorial Trust.

6 from IrvingS:

"What was your initial motivation to start working with his issue to help women?"

 **Answer:** My life experiences and the world of women and girls around me was my initial motivation. When I lived in countries that experienced wars and conflict, my conviction became even stronger. The other motivation was also this knowledge and inner voice - that each one of us can make a difference by standing up, by raising our voice and simply saying: "Violence is unacceptable!"

7 from Melodiedior:

"Does a wife who is beaten by her husband have the right to sole custody of her children?"

 **Answer:** The courts decide who has sole custody of children. However, in deciding who should have the custody of the children the courts must always focus on "the best interest of the child". A wife who is being beaten is still a loving mother. It is important for fathers and mothers to know that family or domestic violence affects the children. Its not healthy for children to live in social and family environments there is no love and respect.

8 from 123melove:

"Is it right to swear?"

 **Answer:** Wow! I love this question because this is the first time I am getting to be asked directly on my views. I really think that swearing is not good. I know that people swear when something bad suddenly happens, or bad words are thrown at someone. When we swear we are usually verbalising our displeasure, discomfort or negative reaction to that situation. People who swear usually use bad words. I think we should all find ways of understanding that we will come across bad situations, and that swearing does not solve the problem. We should find more positive ways of dealing with our emotions. If your question refers to swearing as a form of violence and whether this is more acceptable - my answer would be no. There are many different forms of violence - those forms which can be seen and other,

more invisible forms - such as verbal and mental abuse, which can include swearing.

9 from danger.girl1998:

"What is this campaign good for? What can I do?"

 **Answer:** The 16 Days Campaign is good for all of us as it promotes a world where people, and especially women and girls, can enjoy their human rights and do not experience violence. It is good for raising awareness on the fact that many people in the world still experience violence. It is also a good campaign for practical tips, information and help to people who are currently experiencing violence to take steps to get out of the violent situation. You can do many things: Talk to your friends about the campaign; give information to someone you know who can use it; do a blog; join a group in your community; and/or visit me at Stardoll!!

10 from SHICRET:

"Does those organisations exist in Turkey?"

 **Answer:** yes, we have a number of women's organisations in Turkey working on violence against women. Infact, the former UN Special Rapportuer on Violence Against Women, Yakin Ertuk, is from Turkey. The following link gives you the list of these organisations. <http://www.distel.ca/womlist/countries/turkey.html>

11 from loveyangel97:
"Why are the girls in many countries circumcised?"

 **Answer:** Oh, it is great you ask this question. Most girls are circumcised in many countries because of the wrong understanding that circumcision is about culture and religion. Circumcision of girls is a violation of their bodies, and is meant more as a control measure. Many organisations including UNFPA and YWCAs, like in Kenya, are working against this practice.

12 from kikotale:
"How can each one of us individually help someone we know who is being abused?"

 **Answer:** You bring an important issue of helping victims and survivors of violence. Its important for the person to know that you are there, that you care and that you support them, while also respecting their confidentiality. Providing information on how the person can get support is very important.

13 from katers777:
"In which country is abuse to women most active?"

 **Answer:** Women and girls everywhere experience violence and abuse. Some of it is talked about and some of it is not. There is a good media coverage of violence for countries at war. We also know that the rich, the poor, the educated and uneducated - all

women in all parts of the world experience violence

14 from L.M.India:
"Hello, Ms Nyaradsayi thank you for being such an honest and powerful women I am only 11yrs old for certain I know you women will make us women have better lives all around the world!"

 **Answer:** You are a great person too! Thanks for your compliment. Together we are making a difference by our participation in this 16 Days Campaign. Next year we should continue this work, and also every day, so that all women can have better lives! Hugs

15 from Glamour-puss2:
"What A Great Cause, Woman should be respected, thank you(:"

 **Answer:** Ndinotenda, Asante Sana, thank you for your generous comments. Let's all keep the pace in our shouts for human rights!

16 from Ally_101sikchik:
"U an Amazing Inspiration!:) x"

 **Answer:** You inspire me too by simply visiting this site and by joining the 16 Days Campaign. It is a great initiative!



16 DAYS
ON STARDOLL

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17 from RedRochell:
"You have done alot for us THANK you.."

 **Answer:** I am sure you also have done a lot, and together we can do much much more.
Lets keep the flame burning for happy lives and happy families!

18 from Ashez1997:
"I really admire your work. on behalf of women everywhere, I want to thank you for staying so strong:]"

 **Answer:** Your comment, your greeting and your good wishes make me even stronger.
Thank you for the compliment. You made me smile in my heart!