

"I do not want to talk about abuse today because to me the Center for Nonviolence is not at all about the abuse, but about the healing I found here. It started with Beth, who whether she knows it or not, became my voice of sanity in those first few insane weeks after I left my abuser. At those times when I felt so alone, afraid I was going crazy, not knowing who or what I could believe in, not even being able to believe in myself, I could call Beth. She always had time to see me and through her patient, gentle listening I was able to tell her things I didn't want to say or to admit even to myself. At a time when my whole world felt like it was crumbling around me, she gave me a solid square piece of ground to stand on and from there I was able to begin my journey of finding myself again. She made me believe that I was strong, and brave, and that I had value. That not just human beings deserved respect, love, happiness and to be free from abuse in all its forms, but that I deserved all these things. For her counsel, her compassion, and her wisdom I will forever be grateful.

And then there is Pat and all the women of the Tuesday night support group. These women I have cried with, and laughed with, and shared my life with for the past 9 months. How do I even begin to explain what they have given me, taught me, and what an imprint they have left on my heart. I love each of these brave, wise, caring women as sisters because that is what we have become. Anyone who walks with you on a journey such as ours can be no less. And now I feel I can reach out to women who are just beginning their own journey, and there is great healing in that. To be able to tell them that yes, I am on this journey too, and there are many things that make us different, but they are inconsequential compared to the journey that binds us together. There is nothing you need to explain or prove to me. I know why you stayed, why you didn't tell anyone, how trapped and terrified you were. And now, if you need a hand, please take mine and we can walk this part of the road together. This was the gift that was given to me by my Tuesday night sisters, the gift that I try to pass on now to other women, and in so doing, change the world one woman at a time. That to me is what this center is all about.

And to everyone whose dedication to women, children, and the ideals of nonviolence make this center possible...THANK YOU for being there for us throughout the journey."