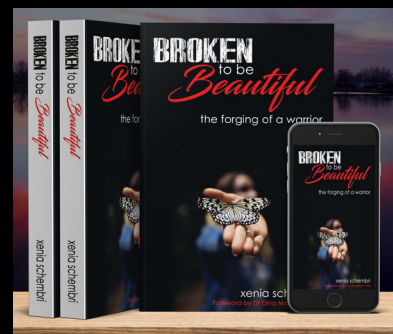


NEW RELEASE

BROKEN TO BE BEAUTIFUL



I rolled over; tears stained my cheeks, mascara-stained my pillow, and my heart was pounding so loudly I could hear the vibrations in my ears; it felt like it was about to physically break in two. Then I prayed:

'God, please, please do something. I can't do this anymore. Take him from me, make him leave me. I don't care how You do it, but make him leave. Make him die if that's the only way. Please God, make him die, please God, I can't do this anymore, I can't live like this anymore ...'

Oh, my goodness, did I really pray that?

What on earth would lead a woman, who fifteen years ago loved this man enough to say, 'I do' make her feel like that? What could have changed so dramatically? Could my life have really deteriorated that much?

I sat up in my bed and began to remember back to the day we first met. I could not believe how I had got myself into this position. Was he always like this? I thought to myself as I analysed the last fifteen long years. Yes, all the tell-tale signs were there, but as an eighteen-year-old girl, I was determined that things would change. Why was I so convinced that I could change him? I had no idea; aren't they the words that echo in every woman's mind during a relationship?

Extract from '*Broken to be Beautiful*' by Xenia Schembri



Domestic Violence was part of Xenia Schembri's life for the 15 years of her first marriage and she now believes that her past does not have to negatively impact her life but positively motivate and direct her future by creating change in the attitudes and mindsets of society.

She is a mouthpiece for the voiceless as she exposes what society would like to shut down such as sexual abuse and domestic violence. 'We have to stand up for people who cannot stand up for themselves, I for one cannot stay silent anymore,' she says.

Xenia had to face challenges as she navigated her way through the domestic violent marriage with her first husband. She has authored *Broken To Be Beautiful* to highlight that there is freedom and a victorious life waiting for anyone who finds the courage to move past their trauma and pain.

Xenia writes: "I know it may be confronting and difficult to read at times, but the aim of this book is to be a beacon of light in the darkness of domestic violence and abuse. Domestic violence is a very personal battle for those who have been affected by it. Most people's understanding of DV will be determined by personal experiences or what is viewed in the media. From conversations that I have had with people, their understanding of DV includes bruises on the body, black eyes, and broken bones. My experience was control, manipulation, misuse of power, emotional torment, financial abuse, sexual assault, spiritual abuse; and physical assault was thrown in, which also included my children.

Xenia and her husband, Simon, are associate pastors of a church on the Gold Coast, and they have also founded a charity called At The Ark Inc. This charity supports families whose children have been sexually abused.

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