

Kirkwood

Leaving Abusive Partners

From the Scars of Survival to the Wisdom for Change

This moving book reshapes our understanding of the nature of woman abuse and makes a major contribution to a key issue for feminist campaigning and theory. The past 25 years of research on 'battered' women has focused on the psychological, sociological and political conditions which contribute to violence, and on women's reasons for staying with violent and abusive partners. The author goes beyond the discourse of 'victims' and 'survivors' to offer new insights into the very specific and multifaceted nature of the abuses women experience - emotional as well as physical. Drawing on firsthand accounts, Kirkwood sheds new light both on the dynamics of abuse which afford abusers control over women and the resources and knowledge women draw upon to re-empower themselves. Examining first the nature of abuse and then the issues confronted by a woman after she has left an abusive relationship, Kirkwood finds that women's experiences of society after leaving abusive partners are highly interrelated. She develops the concept of a 'web' to explain how the different elements of abuse connect to make up the experiences of abused women.

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