

**TO: David Gould**  
**From: anonymous UI graduate**

..... life lessons along the way....

As a long ago UI 2 times graduate, I follow the happenings of UI and student life with some interest. As a young student myself, I was of the era where it was considered that women should go to school to get an "MRS" degree....and those who weren't getting close to achievement of that in their latter couple years at UI might be encouraged to be concerned.

UI was then (as now) considered to be a "party school", although the partying then was very mild by comparison to what exists now, I believe. It was easy then to flow into a fun and games lifestyle, get a false ID, and be "cool".

I would maintain that alcohol (or other drugs) interfere with one making good decisions oneself and, in a partner/friend/date, make it that much harder to actually "know" the person.

I was certainly guilty on all counts. At age 21 I dropped out of school having attained (first a pregnancy...birth control wasn't all that available) and then that "MRS" degree. My partner was not pleased, but I was determined that I would be the best wife ever and we would live happily ever after. Somehow. He was drunk at the hurry-up wedding.

The physical violence began in less than two weeks. I began the path of lying to my family, to friends, making excuses, trying to hide the problems because...as I was often told....they certainly were all my fault. At 21 I believed it. What money there was mostly went to the various taverns of the town while I waited fearfully at home for the next blow-up. While I had grown up in comfortable circumstances, I fast learned what it was to be hungry, to have my children (soon two of them) to be dressed in rags. I learned to dodge blows, constantly having it reinforced that were it was all my fault. Isolation increased. There was no Domestic Violence Center; a common view was that "women really liked that" (being "knocked around"), that being beat up and then making up made for better sex for those women (not like me) who were "real women".

My life changed when my Dad died. I had thought the world of him. My husband hated him. His death only made daily life worse, which finally caused me to look for a way out. Divorce was strictly frowned upon in my family. My incomplete education left me with no job skills. I had no money to go to school, no day care, and part-time students were frowned upon by UI. (for example, then UI President Howard Bowen was quoted in the Press-Citizen saying "the University of Iowa is not a place for bored house-wives".) Such intolerance by yet another man made me furious. Violence was increasing in my home. The police became involved repeatedly and, to their credit, they did all they could to help. (assault on a wife legally was not the same thing as assault on any other person). I finally got a job and began hiding money until I could afford some tuition. I finished my education amidst escalating violence, death threats and serious attempts on my life. Still no domestic violence center or even a concept that there was such an issue as "domestic violence".

I left this nightmare over 30 years ago....about the time MS Magazine was coming to be. In it, I read with fascination a few articles about domestic violence. Those people didn't blame the victim amazingly enough. They encouraged women to fight back, to get out, to get free, to make a life. There were a lot of challenges, but with them came one success after another. Life became good, very good.

Society has changed much since then. DVP and other organizations exist to help, to try to teach victims that they don't have to live in fear of their lives. The University has come to the realization, long ago, that they could make mountains of money by catering to the part-time "non-traditional" student. (I don't delude myself that they did it out of anything but avarice.) Some things don't change however. UI is still a "party school". Young people hurt their opportunities and cloud their judgments by excessive "partying". Abuse still occurs, although there is help for it if one can be persuaded to use it. Victims still tend...after having probably made some bad decisions....to insist in blaming themselves for being victims....thereby wasting energy that might be more profitably spent by utilizing help to better themselves.

I want to say STOP....stop the excessive drinking....drug use....needing to be "loved" at any cost to yourself!