

FARNOOSH INTRODUCTION (to be recorded at a later date):

- Welcome to So Money, everybody, and spending part of your day with us. Today's show focuses on a very serious issue, domestic violence and specifically, financial abuse, described as the invisible weapon of domestic violence...It is something that happens in nearly all cases of domestic violence - 96 percent of domestic violence victims experience financial abuse.

We will hear from one very brave survivor, Mercii Thomas, who recently left her abusive partner, a man that made her financially and geographically reliant on him. We'll discuss the importance of understanding financial abuse and how that can prevent a victim from breaking free. We'll explore the prevalence of domestic violence and financial abuse and the importance of financial empowerment...and share important resources for victims, survivors and their allies. If you or someone you know wants to learn more about these issues, you can visit allstatefoundation.org. If someone needs immediate help, please reach out to the National Domestic Violence Hotline at 1-800-799-SAFE.

Farnoosh: Merci, Welcome to so money. It's such an honor to have you on the show.

Mercii: Thanks so much for having me and creating a space for survivors like me to share on your show.

Farnoosh: Yes, absolutely. I just want to start by commending you for your bravery, and your willingness to even come on and [00:00:15] speak with me and with our audience and have everyone hear your story, be public about something that you battled with so privately and painfully for many months. How are you feeling and doing right now?

Mercii: [00:00:30] It just so happened I looked at the calendar and inadvertently scheduled this for what I call the emancipation day, which was a year ago of me completely moving out and finding some semblance of safety. So, I think I am having this full [00:00:45] circle reflective moment. So good right now. But a little nervous because again this is one of the first times I've been so public about some of the things that I've lived through and experienced. So that comes with its own set of emotions and things, but I think I'm doing [00:01:00] well, all things considered.

Farnoosh: I'll say so. Now, a year has gone by. Your relationship with your abuser, your ex started like many romances do. You know, you got in college through, mutual friends [00:01:15] And then, for many years, you remained connected through social media. I want to go back to maybe the beginnings of that relationship, and maybe you can walk us through the journey. One day, he reached out and you were a teacher on the on one coast and he was a doctor on [00:01:30] another coast and you guys began a long distance relationship. How would you describe your early days in the relationship? Pretty normal?

Mercii: Yeah, I think that's sort of the same pattern is just this intrigue and charisma and this curiosity to [00:01:45] get to know this other person. There was a lot of trust. There was a lot of fun because he was a very charismatic so we could talk about anything. So there was this appearance of open communication but that communication was also like, overwhelmingly [00:02:00] romantic. So there were a lot of gestures so much made me a little bit uncomfortable, but there was this desire to be like partners, and to just be each other's like, support systems and bring out the best. [00:02:16] And when we were together, we wanted to be together more and he made every effort to present himself in the best way possible. So, all things considered it was one of those things that, you know, you get swept off your feet. I'm at the same time there were moments [00:02:31] of, yeah, this is, this is a sweet thing and, you know these stories exist. And also, I wonder if this is sort of those one of those authentic stories or if there's more to the story than meets the eye.

Farnoosh: So it sounds like [00:02:46] in the beginning, things were pretty quote-unquote normal. If anything, he swept you off your feet, you are a little uncomfortable or maybe like surprised by that, but you went with it. And I think anybody would, you know, it's what we all [00:03:01] dream for its you're in love. Looking back. Of course now, in hindsight Mercii, do you remember any signs or acts of his abusive nature in the beginning?

Mercii: Yeah. I think things very rarely start physically. So there was [00:03:17] early invalidation or dismissing of opinions, concerns, credentialing where, you know, what he would say would go like that would be it. There was constant communication, which means I was expected to respond and if I didn't, [00:03:32] there would be arguments or tension and then, the lack of reciprocity led to more arguments that would be escalated. For example, he had a significant loss [00:03:47] when we first began dating. So just in my nature I try to be present for people, as they grieve and then we had a very close family, friend passed away, a few months later and he began to center himself in that grief process. Like, yeah, I know what you mean. I had a grief [00:04:02] once too. So I didn't feel as I was being supported, so naturally, I find support through friends and family and that created, huge altercations between us and I would find out much later that it also led to some infidelity on his behalf. So [00:04:17] it was rarely a shared responsibility and there was always a pressure to make decisions quickly. Like you know, moving to be closest person who's living in Colorado at the time making frequent travels [00:04:32] deciding to leave my job. But also that I would be taking care of in the process. And a lot of these gives a sense of like, romance and it's positive. But it was creating this sort of unequal debt where this these over-the-top gestures [00:04:47] and these compliments and these, like, moments of excessive generosity were things that I would later owe him for down the line and those are things I don't think I would have noticed because we, a lot of times, are conditioned to think that some of these behaviors [00:05:02] are like desirable like someone wants to offer you gifts. Someone wants to help support you or provide for you, but I don't know if we talk about the concessions that we have to make in the process. And in my case, a lot of that, concession [00:05:17] revolved around my physical, and mental safety, and it was very difficult to process over time.

Farnoosh: Yeah. So what I'm hearing from you is that initially, the abuse looking back, was not physical. As many of these cases start out, it's emotional, [00:05:32] It's this attempted to take control over you with your time, this demand for your time, this demand for your responses, disrespect really at the end of the day like not not respecting your boundaries and your person. [00:05:47] Your former partner is a doctor and he first presented himself as someone who wanted to take care of you quote, unquote financially and in other ways but he would often like step in, I understand, [00:06:02] and not allow you to pursue your own hopes and dreams. You know, you want to become a yoga instructor. And he interfered with that. Can you take us to that point? Maybe there's some learnings there or an interesting points to mention from that experience.

Mercii: [00:06:17] Yeah, I recognize that people hear the word support and take care and they get this sort of image and I think those can look very different from one person. They think I'm offering care and what they're really offering is control. [00:06:33] So I was an elementary school teacher. I was also very interested in yoga, and I wanted to pursue yoga teacher training in order to sort of do different programs for Youth. And this would be the next step in doing that, and [00:06:48] it was almost as if that was something that was exploited. I think people find the things that you want or need the most. And say, I can provide an opportunity for that and in so doing that, with sort of that indebtedness that was being created was offering without me, asking, because I very, rarely asked for things from him [00:07:03] and then also this, well, you would need to make this decision soon, so we could begin our lives together. So I left my job, I used a big chunk of my savings to pay for those moving expenses, so that I wouldn't have to ask. [00:07:18] And that there wouldn't be this assumption that he would be paying for everything. And then we would often have conversations about, you know, while I'm doing this part-time program, I would be quote, you know, responsible for the house and because he's a doctor and providing, I thought [00:07:33] that this was quote, the least I could provide. I can care. I can clean. I'm here. Why not? And that seems really innocuous and so like simple. And to somehow have that weaponize that over time you go from I'm excited [00:07:48] to move and be in this place and just do the simple things so that my career my life with this individual can develop to being suffocated and saying this is your job, this is your responsibility. When presented with an opportunity to travel [00:08:03] to India for the summer that very year after moving, we talked about it because I want to open communication and was very politely and strongly discouraged from doing a job or responsibilities that would take away from us. And that happened frequently. Even before [00:08:18] I moved, I would look up part-time, gigs and organization asked me, not what would you do? What do you think? And I didn't notice that the answer was always no, you shouldn't until after the fact. The gifts will turn into 'Well, I did this for you, you need to do this' and [00:08:33] No's and disagreements about, you know, me rejecting some of these responsibilities like signing up for lease for a car or trying to purchase a house would create tensions and I would be criticized as ungrateful. So [00:08:48] I had this overwhelming anxiety to please someone who was just consistently unhappy with my performance and it just got to a point where it's a lot of these smaller things and these desires that I had like to work or to contribute to the

house, [00:09:03] will become fights. So I learned to like, pick my battles to keep a false peace so I just stopped picking them.

Farnoosh: Mmm. It doesn't sound like there was much of a conversation had over these financial and career [00:09:18] events or, you know, choices that you wanted to make. It was, did you feel like you kept just getting shut down?

Mercii: Yeah. In the nicest, most manipulative and supportive way possible is like no I can provide for you. I make enough I'm going to be doing these things and getting [00:09:33] these bonuses, I can do this. Why would you want to take the opportunity away from us. You're trying to leave when you have your own money, you have the opportunity to move and freely without me which is the message I started to get when I did eventually decide [00:09:48] to leave but any project or employment that I wanted to pursue the expectation was that I was going to discuss it with him and then I kind of always knew that even in the discussing you he would provide helpful feedback but the answer will always be no. It was not something [00:10:03] that I could pursue and it made me feel sort of like a servant. I was there to work and please and I didn't have a say in how I could provide for myself if I wanted to or even if I wanted to provide for him and [00:10:18] provide gifts, I have to ask for money and it would be a fight. If that was something that needed to take place.

Farnoosh: What do you think he was really seeking at the end of the day? I mean, clearly he's trying to control you, he he [00:10:33] perhaps is feeling powerful in the process but you know, what is it, now that you've sort of, had some time to reflect on it, I don't know if you've even thought about his position, but it's curious to me, like why, what would drive someone to do [00:10:48] this, right?

Mercii: I think people make their own choices, and there are a lot of us people globally, who have a lot of wounds and traumas, and things that have happened to us that we [00:11:03] have never recovered from. I think a lot of us seek people to fill these holes. And gaps and these unmet desires and for him. I think I was acceptance and a supply like you you want someone to Crave and desire you because maybe you've never felt that you [00:11:18] wanted a relationship that didn't require you to reflect or deal with any of the things that you're choosing to do to the people around you and you want to a social lubricant. Someone that can help get you into circles because you are an individual who acts alone and eventually [00:11:33] people do get to this place where they meet this version of you. The one that you work really hard to not show other people so it helps to. I think in addition of power control have a prop and I think he was speaking in me [00:11:48] a prop. And there's a lot of times and in hearing some of the things that he said, you know, even in like the moment when he's patching me up one time where he just like you'd like props don't talk back and I remember her mentioning like you just if you hadn't talked back I remember that. So [00:12:03] I think he was looking for someone that would just be there present whenever it's so that he could use. And I think that's unfortunate and I would say to any Survivor out there that feels that way, that they deserve so so so much better.

Farnoosh: The signs of financial [00:12:18] abuse, as you experience them, and how others experience them. let's just summarize that for our listeners who might be wanting to just get really specific on this. So for you, it sounds like it was, in addition, to blocking [00:12:33] your career opportunities which is a way to make money and that's Financial abuse, what other ways where is he controlling your financial Liberty?

Mercii: Yeah, we had a shared credit card that was one of the means to provide and so he [00:12:48] can see the expenses and we had shared carshare accounts. So he knew where I was going, he would know how much would be spent on those rides or any tips, and things like that. So, that was another form of sort of trap, even if relation, but he would be paying for that, someone [00:13:03] who's kind of worked in non-profit administration, I actually don't mind doing credit card reporting. So I wanted to check my spending to see how much I was using and I never had access to that information. However, I could always be sort of pulled to the carpet about spending. [00:13:18] So tell me a little bit about this where this is this money is going and then when there would be sort of a dip in the spending on the card because maybe I was using my own money, there would be a conversation like well what are you spending your money [00:13:33] on? Like what do you what do you need that I'm not providing for you. It was this intrusion into my personal finances and that's what that conversation sounded like then. And would later on turn into log into your account. I want to see how much money [00:13:48] you have right now so that I can take money out and provide for myself. Mind you he's a doctor and he's fully employed at this point. I'm unemployed but that's what that escalated into and one of that's one of those things that I resisted because I recognize that's a very clear boundary [00:14:03] and hearing him I'd recognize that this isn't the first time he's asked me a question like this before and I'm just noticing it now when you do something very egregious. So I think that's kind of the fun nature about financial abuse. Is that it starts so [00:14:18] simply or something that can be so common, but done a little bit differently. Like lots of couple shares, find it finances. Is it common for one couple to have absolutely no access to or knowledge of how those finances are being used? Is that safe [00:14:33] for both Partners, right? These are questions that start to come up as things begin to get deeper and ask late. So that was my experience, right?

Farnoosh: It is a pattern, then covid-19 happened. How long were [00:14:48] you in the relationship up until last year? Or, you know, I know covid. What are we at like month 14? Now month 15. My gosh. How long were you together up until that point? Because covid did impact the relationship. [00:15:03]

Mercii: Yeah, so we were together. Roughly six months and the impact I think outside of just the, the world feeling like it's closing in, is the fact that he's a doctor. And [00:15:18] with so many streams of information, he had cultivated an environment where he was the only acceptable information on what was happening. So remember we started early in the early months about credentialing. Here's how much I know here's how much I've done now in this place where you're [00:15:33] being sheltered and fed indoors, here's this person you're now required to trust because you can look up additional information, but who is providing the best information? And then also it's this atmosphere of hyper-

vigilance [00:15:48] and paranoia because he's, you know, stressed out. So while I should be grateful that I'm sheltered and fed that much time indoors cause me to realize, huh, we're not having the same balance here because [00:16:03] what that look like of hyper-vigilance and paranoia, and we should be safe and we should be social distancing is that he could go to work. He could take leisurely rides, I could only leave with him. I can only go to the grocery store by myself. If I didn't, [00:16:18] it was a problem and that's not something that I know would have emerged, but any attempts I made to make my own choices were extremely volatile, like, communication became a lot more condescending and threatening and hurtful and [00:16:33] simultaneously he's showing up denying the impact because he's a stressed out doctor. Right? And it made it extremely difficult to leave because I think even as I thought about you know talking through the interview, is that I try to leave two [00:16:48] times before the third successful time and both times were extremely difficult. And I think about how he would physically pursue me and the fear of going outside and what that would mean for my physical safety, like with [00:17:03] the pandemic happening around. But also this person who I now, we have to go home to and it's a problem if I go outside. As I'm sitting out there thinking like what do I do? I realize so many shelters at this time were closed because of the pandemic and I felt cornered and I had no idea [00:17:48] how to pursue that. So when I go back we fight some more and he coerces me into calling one of my best friends on speakerphone to try to you know put me on a plane to where she is. Now fortunately, she's a Survivor too. So she understood immediately what was happening even if I didn't know what was going on so she doesn't ask any [00:18:03] questions in this moment and when the time does come to leave, he you know, corners me on the balcony of our seventh floor apartment. And you know, assault me, you know, snatches my glasses off my face and throws them and I stayed and I say that [00:18:18] because so many people ask and wonder when you have these things swirling around you is that you have to trust in the moment that survivors know what's best for them in the moment. Because even in our lived experience, we are doing what we can to survive, and it's [00:18:33] a challenge, because no one ever asked as they ask, why you say no one ever asks why he is doing those things to me or no one's asking. Why didn't like, like, who was there just like, why didn't he stop? It's always why did you stay? And then the the love-bombing and like I want you to feel safe this like overwhelming like affection afterwards. [00:18:48] Like I'm so sorry, this happened. If you go outside, you be unsafe, I'm sorry. I tried to put you in an airport and increasing your risk at probably this thing we know still so little about. So I began to see the pattern of knowing how he will rewrite the narrative. [00:19:03] And the outside dynamics made the inside dynamic, that much more challenging because the second time when it got violent and he attempted to access my banking information to be [00:19:18] a safe place like the the things I knew is this is a boundary I cannot cross. So he tried the overwhelming gestures and I held firm on those boundaries and when he perceived that I could see through them now the hostilities increased. [00:19:33] So the the ways in which she tried to get me to stay and to control was to shred the bank cards, or to cancel the rides to make it so that I would have, absolutely, no means to get out because he had the car and the funds. So, he was essentially attempting [00:19:48] to either trap and or discard me, mmm. The strange thing in high side is the experience I've had with other survivors and knowing that I had taken the steps to recognize what

was happening and do what I could to extend [00:20:03] myself to other people so that can be prepared for what I was hoping wasn't going to happen because I think I want it too much like he was making excuses for him. Like no this is just the pandemic [00:20:18] he's a doctor you know we're all grieving this life that we have and the life were living now. I'm hoping that this is just what this is. Yes and no.

Farnoosh: Right. You have described how the situation that you are in. [00:20:33] and at the time when you were actually looking to leave and getting help, not to mention, there's a pandemic. That's that makes things very, very difficult. But the fact that you are a woman of color, you have talked about how your race as a black woman, [00:20:48] sometimes, put you at a disadvantage. What was your experience?

Mercii: Oh my goodness. I think it was an experience grounded in fear. In the heat of the moment. I thought about, you know, people tell you're supposed to call the police, but being the [00:21:03] villain that called the police on another a black doctor who's doing so well. And here I am this black woman, that's so easily can be discarded. No. I actually thought about the amount of time, it would take for them to arrive and the literal statistical [00:21:18] likelihood. That I would survive and it's not great. I think I read in the Volence [Policy Center study](#), that black women are two and a half times more likely to be murdered than their white powder, kind of parks, and then 9 and 10 times not intend [00:21:33] black. Male victims knew their killer. So here I am sitting in this moment of like where can I turn for help and it started with people constantly making excuses for him and protecting him and shielding him at my expense. As if I'm expected to shoulder [00:21:48] this love that requires like pain and suffering and I get it like, yes. love by its nature is complex. And I feel as a black woman, I'm constantly confronted with this idea that I must endure. I must make exceptions. [00:22:03] I must meet those excuses at the cost of my own safety and well-being. And there's also this perception that my tolerance for pain is high. It hurt to go through everything, not just physically, just all of the things that we experience [00:22:18] and we agree disagree or descent with that as a black woman. We are every nasty name. You can conjure up other than your given name. So in the moment it felt like I was this exposed nerve in a tooth at the dentist office with nothing [00:22:33] to numb it away. So one day I decided that I would rather die out there trying then trying to live in there because if I kept trying to make a life in there I was going to die and I don't mean [00:22:48] just physically. I mean who I am as a person, the individual would cease to exist and I would just be there to comply to someone else.

Farnoosh: You have mentioned now that your final attempt to leave that was your third attempt. [00:23:03] And your successful attempt. What was that day like for you and what made that day different?

Mercii: Wow, that's, I appreciate that question. Because as I think about it, I think it's support [00:23:18] and that support looked a lot like a lot of different things. I talked to family, and friends and doing that, makes it very, very real. I had gotten very good at crafting a narrative and then [00:23:33] sharing that narrative with other people. Like everything's fine. Everything's fine. And I was very fortunate to have friends and family.

Say no, are you sure it's okay if it's not and slowly I'm able to put together a safety plan and that [00:23:48] was a support that I had gotten through like Instagram accounts. Like the National Domestic Violence Hotline that I may have followed years ago because I'm helping somebody else out. So I'm able to put together a practical plans. I could be safe while I'm there. So I'm able to send like daily text messages, [00:24:03] too. A friend with an emoji saying I'm alive. Or this Emoji, says, call the police, and then to this address, the plan after I leave and then what I do and then those friends and that support system and that Network help me get direct help on the ground. So, counseling [00:24:18] like the, the a social worker to help me file for a temporary, protective order. And even as I was on the lease, he attempted to weaponize the building management so that I couldn't access the building to get my belongings. But having the [00:24:34] supportive friends and organizational support made such a difference in knowing that I could do it because I knew I wasn't going to be able to leave if I went back on my own. I knew I was going to be able to get everything and [00:24:49] I wasn't sure I was going to make it out if I went back by myself. So having that community investment having that external support be it like tangible resources or just someone to say, I believe you that made [00:25:04] a huge difference in not just my ability to leave, but to do no contact like and just completely separate myself from such an unhealthy situation.

Farnoosh: Do you feel safe now?

Mercii: I [00:25:19] will be completely transparent. I think as a Survivor that's a very difficult thing to answer because the numbers do not favor us very well. So I think even though it's it feels like a piece of paper, I pursue a protective order to say, I'm doing the things [00:25:34] that I can to keep myself safe. I am in places with other people. I let people know this is what it looks like. Here's my experience. Simultaneously I know that I a moment that's a possibility. That could be hyper vigilance as a trauma response. And or when I look at the [00:25:49] data a reality. So I think to an extent I feel more emotionally safe. I feel more mentally safe and I think there's a level of physical safety simultaneously. I I [00:26:04] think there's a part of me that will always be looking around the corner.

Farnoosh: Well, you have we want to mention since you left your abusive partner you've joined the Allstate Foundation Survivor Network, who SO MONEY has partnered with, and thank you to them for I'm connecting [00:26:19] me with you. Tell us a little bit about that network. I think that, you know, you mentioned how, what made this last and final attempt to leave different was the encouragement knowing that there were resources out there for you, in addition [00:26:34] to your ability now, to really communicate this and have a narrative. B ut the Allstate Foundation Survivor network is doing incredible work. Do you want to tell us a little about your experience there?

Mercii: Yeah, I recognize how powerful it was to recognize my own experiences [00:26:49] by at listening to someone else share their story. So knowing that, your bravery can be someone else's breakthrough. I was able to leave because someone was brave enough to tell me their experiences many moons ago. So when my partner made abuseive choices, [00:27:04] I knew that I could be brave through her lived

experiences and share my own and that helped me get the support that I needed. And when I see the that, the Allstate Foundation Survivor Network was looking for other people to share their stories, I know how difficult it [00:27:19] is to do that. I know how there's a desire to not want to be again that exposed nerve. I also recognize it helps me own my own power, and the light that someone tried to put out because abuse festers in silence [00:27:34] in the shadows. And I think my abuser did a very good job of attempting to isolate and make me think that I was alone in my experiences were extremely unique and something that no one else would understand. And [00:27:49] there is a Survivor out there somewhere right now, that has very likely been isolated from some of the very people who may have tried to reach out to them, who tried to cultivate a space and maybe not have held space for them in the way that would have allowed them to make the safest possible choice for them. [00:28:04] And then there's a person on the other end of the hotline, who's able to pick up a phone and say, hey, we understand what you're going through. How can we help you make a choice for you? Because I think in this work, I felt not even in this work but in my lived experience. I felt [00:28:19] like I didn't have a choice, like things were just happening to me, and I can choose how to share my story, and not share my story, but to bring together so many unique individuals with so many very different experiences, but [00:28:34] we have the heart of someone who just wants to help someone they don't even know. I think there's so much power in that. So I appreciate having the opportunity to join this network and share my experiences and in doing so naming things for myself that I may not have named [00:28:49] and speaking my most authentic story, which I think is kind of a great thing to be able to do.

Farnoosh: Well mercii, we thank you so much for taking the time to share your story with us. And I want to ask as a parting question [00:29:04] to you and of course later we'll also bring up some key resources for listeners who may be experiencing this or know a loved one who's experiencing this to get them, the help that they need, but what for you was the biggest Financial lesson. What were the [00:29:19] takeaways for you?

Mercii: So I think there's always this assumption, that money is going to keep coming in. And I think there's always this In that, you'll be safe [00:29:49] for a lot of reasons. So I don't know if that's the case. So in the process of, you know, growing and maturing and relationships, it's getting comfortable with money so that you can have the emergency fund beyond what you think you'll [00:30:04] need. Because what's one thing I don't know if I highlight is just the impacts of financial abuse can last just as long if not longer than some of the physical and emotional and other components of it. So, being able to not just provide for your [00:30:19] basic needs but to make sure you're able to pay down credit cards or to make some of those payments became very difficult under regular circumstances and now you're trying to account for the fact that your experience housing instability. So you're needing to come up with a lot of money very suddenly. So [00:30:34] having not just say savings but an emergency plan. Like if you were to have to suddenly stop working, if there was a fire and I know that can be, if there was a global pandemic and the things you're able [00:30:49] to do to make a certain amount of money, you're unable to do and you may not be able to get a job in one to two months. It might be six to nine, so I don't know if we had the projections or a lot of us did, or just

that's the nature of the society that we're in right now is that we [00:31:04] have a need to just kind of be paycheck to paycheck or need to have a one to two year plan, where we might have need a five to seven year plan because there's so much uncertainty in that space. So I do know that the Allstate Foundation has a really good resource called the Moving Ahead, [00:31:19] Curriculum and it's free. And although it's there are some Financial Basics rebuilding. Your finances is completely different, I'm learning because there's different things you're trying to account for. I mean, I graduated college so many moons ago and this feels [00:31:34] similar to that but also with the layers and challenging of being 2021. So, the other thing I would say is for everyone, in addition to survivors, is make sure you have access to critical financial documents [00:31:49] because I do remember financial and personal documents. Because I remember one of the reasons I did return on two occasions was because I didn't have my passport and maybe a social security card and there might have been a credit card in the building, so knowing how easy [00:32:04] it is for identity to be stolen or manipulated. If I couldn't get that item quickly, I was at risk of further damage to my financial well-being. So I think having access to those things and be able to get them quickly. [00:32:19] It's really important whether or not you think there's going to be danger suddenly or you just need to apply for something. I think these things are really helpful to have.

Farnoosh: You're helping so many people and just to share the websites for first The Moving Ahead Curriculum, that's moving ahead online [00:32:34] dot org. And if Anybody would like to learn more about The Allstate Foundation you can go to AllState Foundation.org/enddomesticviolence. You brought up some really important points. Mercii just about you know, if you [00:32:49] are seeing a loved one thinking, a loved one might be going through abuse financial abuse to know these resources are out there but also to work with them to gather those important financial documents is so important to also direct them to places like the National Domestic Violence [00:33:04] Hotline at 1-800-799- SAFE (7233). It's wonderful to be with you on the other side of this Mercy. I know like you said, this is for you. the journey is still ongoing, [00:33:19] but we are so appreciative of you just know that you are changing lives through telling your story and sharing your narrative. We appreciate you, and we wish you continued success.

Mercii: Thank you so much. It is wonderful to be on the other side [00:33:34] and to be having this conversation.