

Not Alone: Working Together in the Fight Against Human Trafficking

What is grooming?

Kathy McGibbon Givens: I feel like I was raised in a really healthy environment in a really healthy family. Because trafficking does not discriminate, that leaves anyone a target.

A mutual friend of mine introduced me to a guy band. The leader of the group, he began to have just this awkward interest in me. I didn't think that I had insecurities until he approached me and started telling me things like I was beautiful and I'm not like my friends and it turned into, you know, him being my entire world.

He asked me if I wanted to do better in life, if I wanted an opportunity to partner with him or join his team to build this music, this record label that he was building this empire. He made it sound so romantic like it's going to be ours and it's our dream and he said that we needed to leave Houston, Texas and go to Dallas, Texas and I'd never been that far away from home especially for the length of time that he was asking me to leave which was three months. That was huge for me but eventually, I said yes and I remember the night that we were going to leave, I remember having just this weird feeling.

I didn't know what was going on at first but it was almost immediate. Someone that I thought that I loved, someone that I thought loved me he just completely turned on me and his plan was unveiled when I got to Dallas. He alienated me and kind of isolated me from my support system, strangers and walking into environments that were completely dangerous, being raped multiple times, I was spiritually, emotionally, mentally, and physically dead while I was out there. It was a game of survival, every moment mattered because I didn't know what was going to happen from moment to moment.

There was an individual that had also been trafficked, this trafficker's right-hand girl. We started to form this secret relationship behind his back. I convinced him to take her to a hospital but bring her to a hospital in Houston and he went for it which is unheard of. He allowed me actually to call my brother and my brother and my sister-in-law came and picked me up from a hotel room with this trafficker. He thought that he had me on such a tight, tight rope and I was you know in the palm of his hand.

Looking back and knowing the signs, knowing what I do now, he definitely took away and broke down my healthy circle and so that he could put himself in the center of my life and have my focus completely on him. That's a huge red flag.

Bullock Texas State History Museum

I believe that he was like okay I'll give her a couple of days to calm down but she'll be back and I thought about it, but he underestimated the power of my support circle and that's what saved me.

Being able to pick yourself up and say, okay this is who I am and reclaiming my identity. It's a daily fight and a daily walk but it's a beautiful process.

I believe that my escape was so that I can go back into the darkness and be a light for others to find their way out too. My whole life is dedicated to ending the movement, ending sex trafficking.