

# Comforting Words to Help Release Shame

By Ruth Rondon

When a kind detective came to the ER, after I was raped by two brothers and left for dead in an apple orchard, his words echoed like music to my very soul.

I was half dressed with just a hospital gown on as I laid on the gurney. I couldn't look him in the eye. I felt so ashamed. It was just me and him too and this made me feel powerless once again. But, to my surprise, he was so nice. He covered me with a blanket and after getting some information from me he said, "Ruth, I know you didn't ask for this life. You have rights Ruth, and we're gonna get these guys!!"

No one had ever told me before that they believed I had rights. It sounded to me like this guy was willing to fight for my rights? I was dumbfounded. I had to let that sink it a bit. *If he's going to fight for my rights, I'm ready to fight too.* At this point in my life I wanted to die. I didn't want to go on anymore; there was no use. I felt like I was buried alive in a deep hole that I'd never be able to get out of. I was up against the whole world and I just couldn't do it alone anymore. I wondered if the detective was giving me empty promises. I wondered that, if truth be told, he really had no intentions on fighting for me. But these words definitely got my attention. I figured I'd better wait to see if his actions were going to back up his words before I trusted him though. But after hearing that there was even a glimmer of hope that these guys would pay for what they did to me, I decided to put my trust in him and in the legal system, for now, and I decided to move forward to try to get these guys.

## Comforting Words:

- I know you didn't ask for this life.
- You can't convince me that this is the kind of life you want for yourself.
- You have rights.
- I believe something happened to you that made you turn down this self-destructive path that you're on.
- I can see the obstacles you are up against and I'm going to do everything in my power to help you get through this (or to get what and who you need) because you didn't deserve this.
- I would have done the same thing.
- I would have come to believe that too after being so badly abused (or after struggling alone in life for so long).
- It wasn't your fault. You are a victim.
- If you don't want anything done, nothing will change.
- There's something going on with you that may be hard for you to talk about. Together, the two of us might be able to figure that out.
- You may feel sadness, but it isn't necessary for you to feel shame.