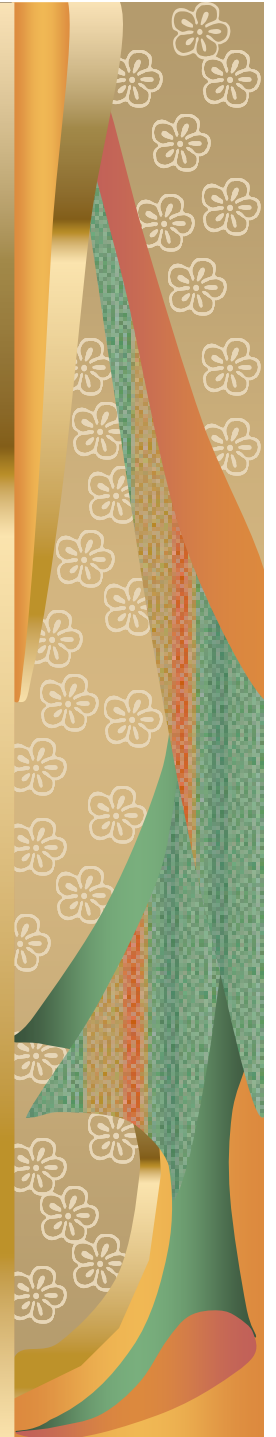


All In The Name Of Family Honour And Izzat

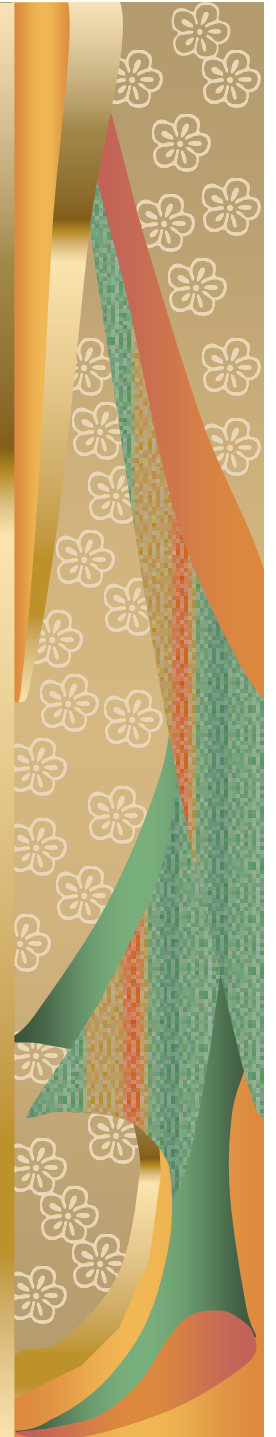
Once a victim of circumstance. Now a survivor out of choice.




Who Am I...

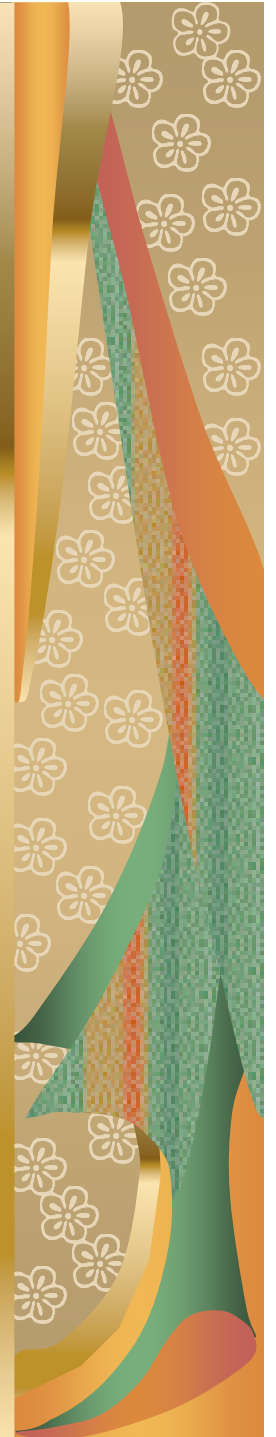


I'm 32 yrs old. I was born and raised in England. I was sent here in 1993. I'm the youngest of 6 children 5 sisters and 1 brother.



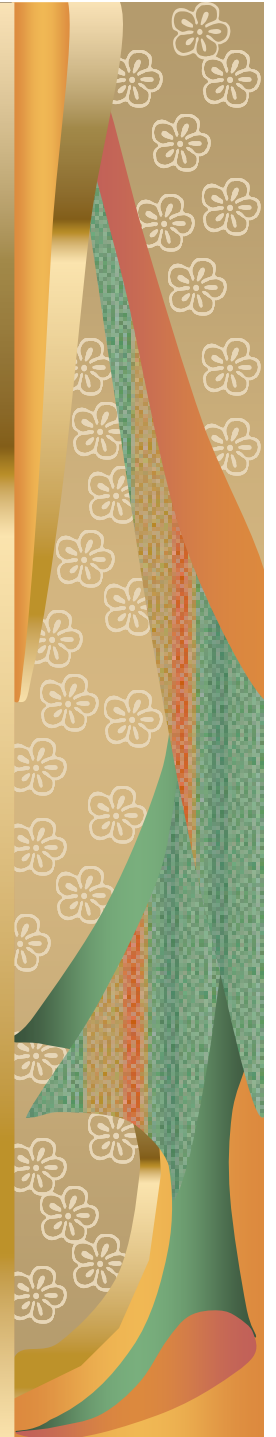
The Message Ingrained From An Early Age

 As the youngest of 6 children I grew up hearing my father say “It took me my whole life to build a good reputation. Remember in your split second actions it can ruin that same reputation and name. Be mindful of every step you take or any decision you make. Ask yourself will it impact your fathers hard work?”



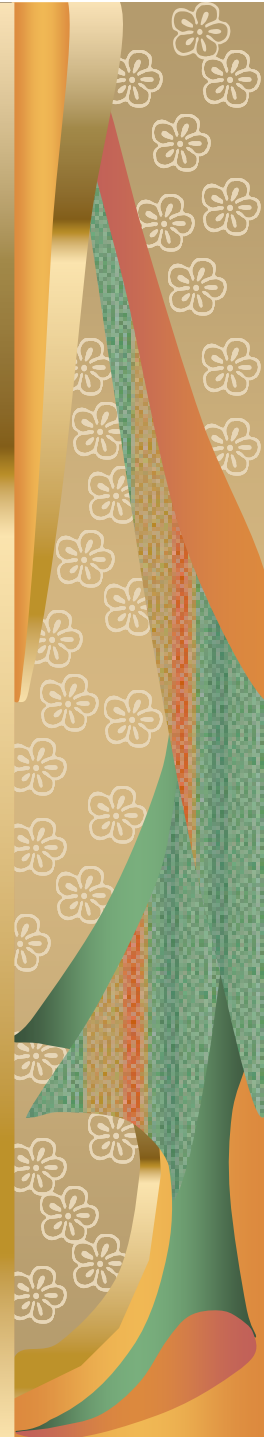
How Did I Come To Canada

- My father was approached with an offer for an arranged marriage from a Canadian family. I wasn't really asked I was told.
- I found it a culture shock, the Indo-Canadian people were very different here. My new husband decided he didn't like my name so he changed it to Sandra.
- Within the first month they cut my long hair and insisted I wear skirts both of which forbidden in my fathers home. Slowly I started to lose who I was and became this new Sandra girl





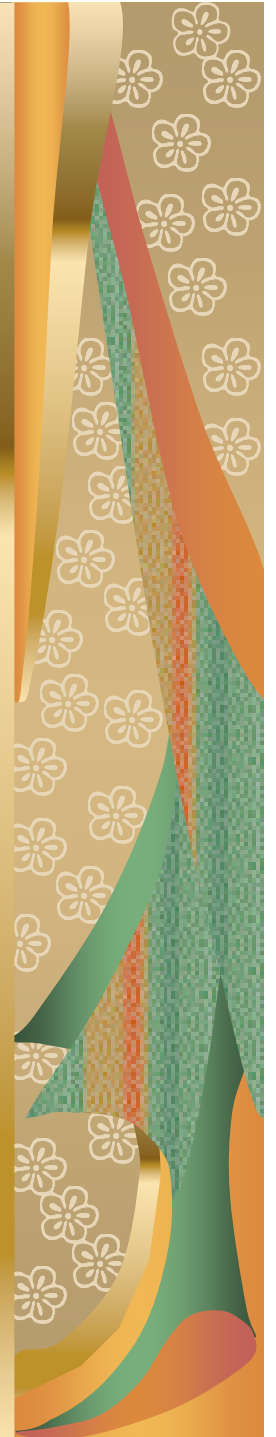
The Journey Into Victim Mode

- 6 years later we had 2 children Nisha was 5 yrs old and Maya was 2 yrs old. I was expecting our 3rd child when he decided I needed to have an abortion. For the sake of our marriage and to give our children a decent future is how he justified it.
- In my head I kept saying “I'm going to go through the motions, when it gets to the last minute I'm not going to go through with this because I'm pro-life”. Lying on the operating table I cried but didn't have the courage to say “STOP”. This was 4 days before my 25th birthday. I kept having flash backs for days due the emotional trauma.
- In my heart I knew my husband was having an affair which was later confirmed, it was with his best friend's wife. I was in victim mode and didn't have the strength to deal with it.



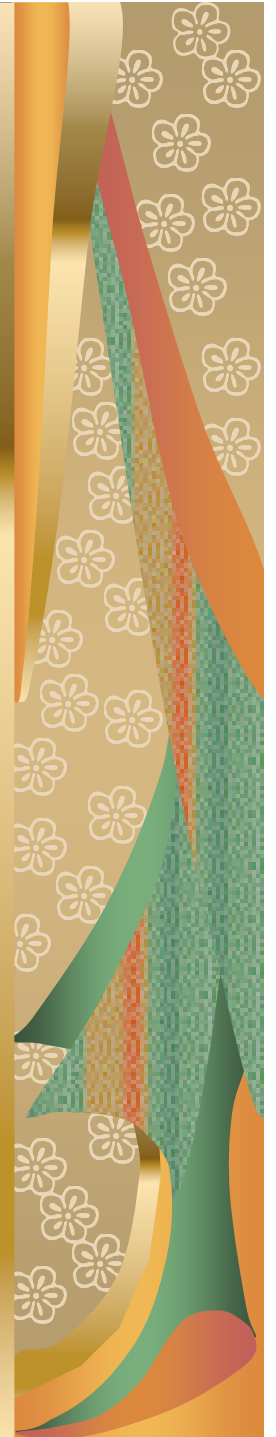
The Wake Up Call

-  I was diagnosed with Genital Herpes a month after the abortion. Devastated, I went to see a counselor to get guidance on how I was going to tell my husband I had an STD.
-  When I told him his response was "oh" because he knew he had passed it on to me. It was a matter of time before it would present itself. The trauma of the abortion had pushed me over the emotional edge, my body showed it in the outbreak.



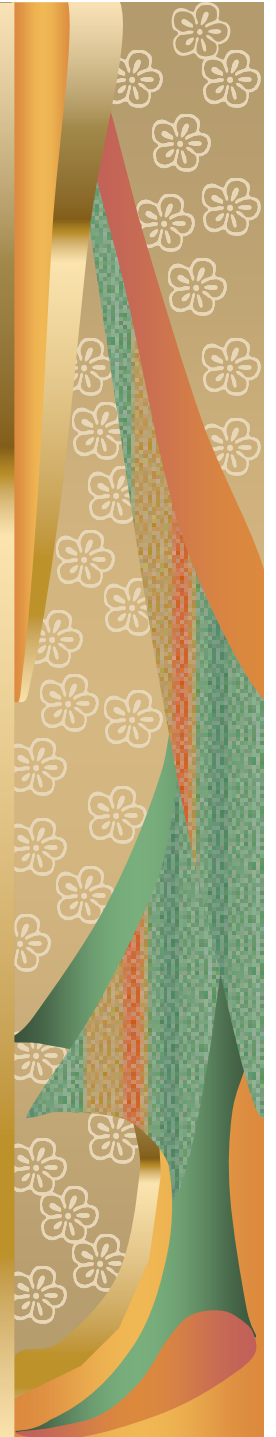
Finally Taking Control

- Knowing this was a deal breaker I woke up one morning and decided not to play the victim anymore, I had been wronged in so many ways.
- My family were some what supportive after my father and my brother got drunk one day and called to tell me "your husband couldn't keep you so how can you expect us to keep you" those words hurt even to this day 7 yrs later.
- I regained who I was and decided I was going to be Sandeep again. I took back my maiden name and my identity and felt so much like the old me I could now take on the world.



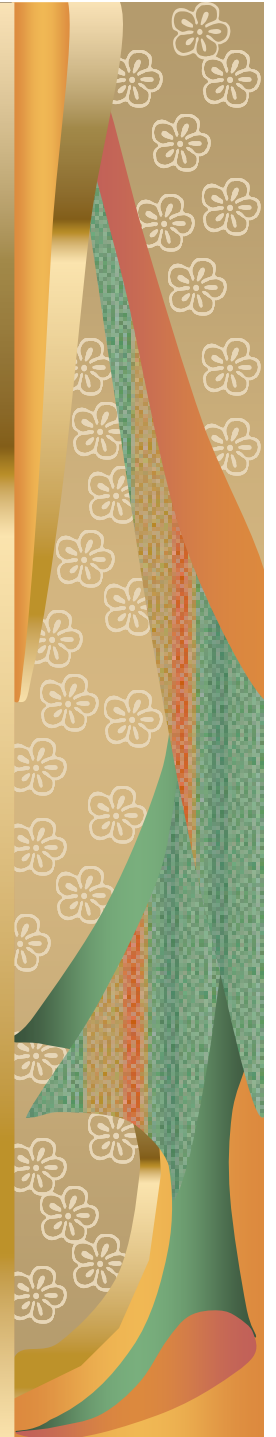
The Ultimate Betrayal

- In 2005 my sister who played the role of mother, sister and best friend suggested I marry her husband's nephew. My children and I had managed to rebuild our lives over the years. So, I wasn't interested in marriage as life was going fine for us.
- Using emotional leverage she told me I had an STD and 2 daughter's from a pervious marriage. No man in his right mind would want me. The nephew was the only person willing to accept me for all these flaws. This would be my only chance at happiness and to be part of the community.



The Marriage

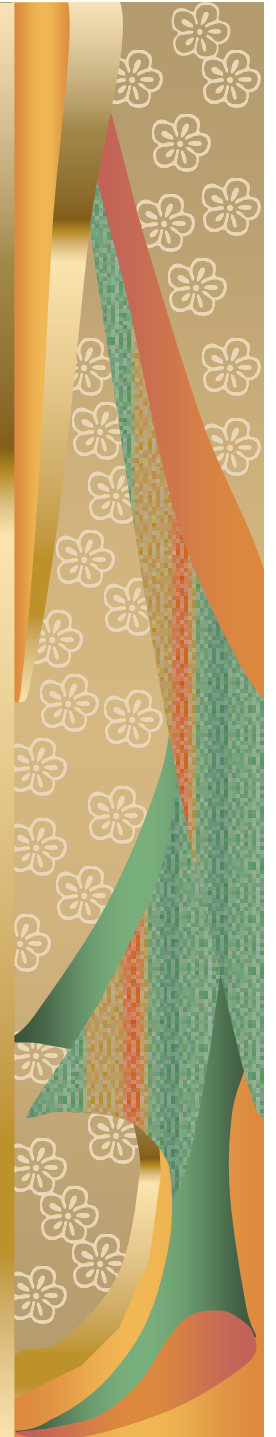
- My sister made sure a registration wedding was done to secure the nephew coming to Canada. She went back to England and turned my whole family against me.
- 10 days after returning to Canada I was hospitalized for what I'm told was a nervous breakdown and later chronic fatigue. My head and heart couldn't understand how or why my sister who I loved so much would do this to me. Why she used emotional power to pull on my heart strings to get her way.
- I refused to sponsor the nephew from India. I now realize I was the pawn, a Canadian Passport for this man. When an invisible line was drawn in the sand instead of choosing me my family chose him.
- The last words my father said before he disowned me was "I have tolerated you doing my beasti/insulting me either sponsor him or else you're dead in my eyes."



Living Proof There Is Light At The End Of The Tunnel

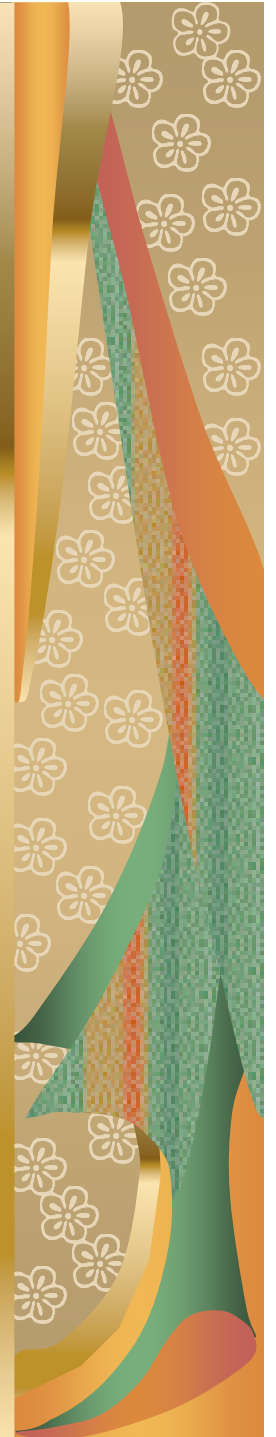


- In my family there are no second chances once my fathers mind is made up that's it.
- Reading Jasvinder Sanghera's book "Shame" gave me the internal permission I was searching for to finally let go.
- Stop sacrificing myself in order to live up to my families expectations the truth is I will never live up to what they want me to be.



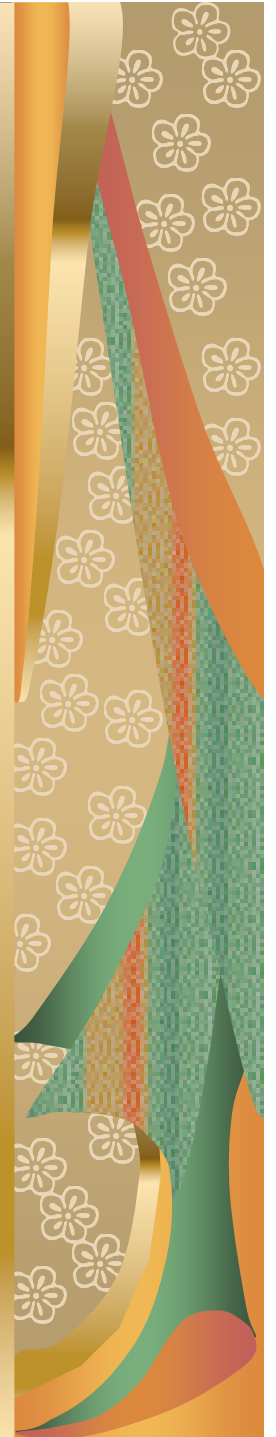
Why Am I Sharing My Story..

- Mine was a lonely path when I chose not to “put up and shut up” I was shunned by my own community, they assumed it was the women at fault.
- I’ve been fortunate to have met many wonderful people along the way also had an understanding employer. Without their kind support I wouldn’t be standing here today.
- In sharing my story I want to give hope to others. My story could be your story, which together becomes our story.



What Can We Do

- Targeting at risk cultures/communities with literature in their languages to bring awareness which also speaks to prevention.
- Making brochures available at places of worship and Immigrant Resources Centers. Having guest speaker at ESL Schools and Universities to educate our young adults.
- Using past examples to put a face to the brutal consequences like Jaswinder Sidhu, Shamina Hirji, Gurjeet Ghuman, Manjit Panghali, Thayalini Subramaniam, Navreet Waraich, Malini Thayakumar, Neruuya Thayakumar are just a few of the many women in Canada who have been murdered.



Q & A

***“A true friend reaches for your
hand and touches your heart...”
Let’s make our actions count
for future change***

