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I am Mia Mantello, of Lincolnvile, Maine. I am a survivor of domestic violence, having been in an emotionally and physically abusive marriage in my late teens and early 20s.

I am also a psychotherapist and have been in practice for 33 years.

Please understand that coercive control is the beginning, and in fact, foundation of intimate partner violence. At first it can appear subtle, but it increases in intensity over time and attacks the very core of the victim's personhood. Self- confidence, self-assertion and self-esteem are eroded over time, and the victim tolerate more and more coercion and control because of growing fear and a keenly felt lack of agency.

Any victim understands this erosion of emotional and psychological strength.

By the end of my marriage I was afraid of many things, including asserting myself and even driving at night.

We need to understand coercive control as the foundation of--- and beginning, middle and end of----one human's domination and terrorization of another.