

i exsit

©KAMER 2011

By:

KAMER Foundation

1st Edition 2007

2nd Edition 2008

3rd Edition 2011

Cover Art:

This was taken from a piece of artwork created by
Su Yücel and other women. Entitled "It occurred to me that
I might die today, but not paint a picture!",
this piece was displayed at the
Diyarbakır Art Center in November 2003.

Translated by:

Amanda Pearson

Designed by:

KolektifAtölye

www.kolektifatolye.com

Printer:

Berdan Matbaacılık

Güven Sanayi Sitesi, 3. Blok

No: 264-268 Topkapı İstanbul

Telephone: +90 212 613 11 12

KAMER FOUNDATION

Ali Emiri 3. Sk. Dışkale Apt.

No: 2/4, Yeniflehir, Diyarbakır

Telephone: +90 412 228 10 53

Fax: +90 412 224 23 19

www.kamer.org.tr

d.kamer@superonline.com

i exist



i exist, we exist too

This book contains stories from 15 women across 15 provinces in Eastern Turkey. They were shared with Nilgün Yıldırım, Fulya Kama and Ayşe Gül Altınay (and some with Yeşim Arat) in 2006 and 2007. These sharings were often challenging, yet also empowering for listeners and narrators alike.

After the initial oral sharings which were recorded, the stories were put down on paper and edited by Nilgün, Fulya and Ayşe Gül. Each woman saw her story in writing, edited it and gave its final form. In order for these stories to remain anonymous, the actual names and locations were changed. Through their chosen pseudonyms all the women in this book are saying “I am here.”

So that we can all say together “we are here”...

Contents

| | |
|--|-----|
| Forward: We were a drop, now we are an ocean | 9 |
| 1. Kardelen - I started a revolution in my life, my husband is the overthrown king | 13 |
| 2. Çilem - I wear every color now, I am like a rainbow | 20 |
| 3. Asmin - I walk on the fields of freedom created for KAMER women | 26 |
| 4. Jale - I am a feminist because I want to be free | 32 |
| 5. Solin - It won't work unless we tear down the wall inside | 39 |
| 6. Yekbun - Now I have 'no way's' and I have 'new ways' | 46 |
| 7. Demsal - I call myself a feminist within the framework of KAMER | 54 |
| 8. Tibelya - You experience this much abuse, you have such a disgraceful life, yet you still wait for him every night | 60 |
| 9. Havva - One month ago I couldn't go to the market without my husband, today I came to a meeting in Diyarbakır | 75 |
| 10. Heyyam - You are in this kind of relationship and you try to be a part of the women's movement | 80 |
| 11. Rojin - I am here and there are things I can do | 85 |
| 12. Papatya - There are very few things left for me to overcome, I'm making time for those too | 90 |
| 13. Bermal - Somehow we experience violence, we are the source of violence, and we resort to violent measure | 99 |
| 14. Nilgün - We are always taking, I am giving what we too | 106 |
| 15. Canan - The words are different, the language is the same: Suffering | 112 |

Foreword

We were a drop, now we are an ocean

We are all passengers on the same road - all the women who told us the stories within these pages, who have picked up a pen to transcribe these stories, and who have contributed their efforts to the work mentioned here. We are women who understand each other because we have all experienced suffering. In a divided world, we have succeeded in coming together. What unites us are the things we have collectively become aware of. We came together despite all of our differences. The places where we live, our economic statuses, our educational levels, our beliefs, our mother tongues—these may be different, but we have created a common language that binds us—because our sorrows are one and the same.

Violence has caused every one of us pain, but, coming together in KAMER, we have faced our violence. We became aware, we suffered, we scattered, but by holding onto each other we have created new spaces in which to recreate ourselves. While trying to cope with the abuse we have experienced, we saw that the system governing the world—that all power—is built upon violence. We realized that the violence one person experiences is connected to the violence experienced by another, and that all forms of violence are related. We realized that the hierarchical structure that formulates this violence was founded on discrimination and narrow-mindedness, and that the violence we all experience is a result of this structure. Neither we nor others who have experienced abuse are the “other”; we are one of you. We can see ourselves in each of the stories narrated here...Each of us have a little of Rojin, or Havva, or Tibelya, or Asmin, or Jale, or Solin...sometimes one of them, sometimes a few, sometimes we are all of them. We are here: inside you, beside you, one of you.

In becoming aware, we saw the havoc that violence has wreaked and tried to recreate ourselves. We were born again and became hopeful; through our renewal we saw that it was possible to dream of a new world. We know that it is difficult to become aware, and that everyone who does is a passenger on the way to this new world.

In our stories we explained how we discovered ourselves. We understood that earlier on in our lives we weren't living for ourselves; we didn't have our own opinions or decide anything based on our own lives—actually, we understood that we had never existed. We used to be like pieces of furniture owned by someone else. We became aware of the hierarchical structure which objectified us, the discrimination which split us apart, the borders which isolated us, the process which turned us into puppets. Every realization was a discovery. We discovered ourselves. We found ourselves within. We all managed to say the word “I.”

When we went through this process, some of us were young women, some were mothers, married, single, in relationships; some of us were grandmothers. This discovery can happen at any age—there is no such thing as being too old for it. We remedied the pain we experienced in the past with our hopes for the future that we would create. We understood that we would have to empower ourselves to cope with the violence. We became empowered in different ways...Every realization and discovery we had about ourselves contributed to our strength. Without ever having existed, we took the right path towards existence. Now we had feet to walk with, hands to work with, and heads with which to think. We made our own decisions for new beginnings. We began to prevent others from making decisions regarding our lives. If we stumbled when applying the decisions we'd made, we felt strong knowing that supportive women were all around us.

After all these discoveries here, we couldn't ignore the plight of other women far away. In order to break the cycle, we realized we should share our realizations, grow through sharing, share again, and again grow. We saw that through sharing we could learn enormous amounts from each other.

This journey began in 1997 and continues today. Between then and now:

- We reached 150,000 women, and as many children.
- We opened women's centers in Diyarbakır, Mardin, Batman, Bingöl, Urfa, Antep, Kilis, Adıyaman, Tunceli, Erzincan, Malatya, Elazığ, Siirt, Şırnak, Hakkâri, Kars, Ardahan, Iğdır, Erzurum, Ağrı, Van, Bitlis, and Muş. In these provinces we established emergency support centers in 90 districts.
- We completed awareness groups with over 30,000 women. We shared our awareness and discovered new realizations.
- We worked with over 10.000 women who applied to us for help in their struggles against abuse.
- We supported 600 women at risk of death due to so-called "honor" crimes.
- We covered more than 2,500,000 km over land.
- Some of us planned and coordinated, some of us wrote down what we did. Some of us facilitated group work, some of us provided emergency support to women experiencing abuse. Some of us shared the things we know with our neighbors. Some of us worked in children's homes, met them one-on-one, hoped with them for a future free from violence. Some of us served in restaurants, prepared food, and worked in workshops. Some of us drove the long roads, became passengers, covered the long distances from province to province. Some of us cleaned the women's centers and set up the furniture. Some of us participated in meetings and shared our experiences... We all contributed to valuable team work with our labor.

We have hope for the future!

We were a drop, now we are an ocean...

1- Kardelen

“I started a revolution in my life,
my husband is the overthrown king”

Before coming to KAMER I was a severely abused woman. My husband and I eloped. We ran away together because of the reaction it would get, to punish my family. Meanwhile, I ended up punishing myself.

Out of four siblings I was the only girl. My father passed away and I endured intense abuse. As I was born in 1962 and the war was going on around us in the 1970s, I was deprived of my ability to attend school. Although I really wanted to be a teacher, I wasn't able to. I left school during middle school and couldn't start high school. In those times there was a civil war here. The city was divided in two: the leftists on one side and the rightists on the other. Our family was on the left side.

I met my husband like this: he wrote me two letters; I wrote one letter and ran away—that is to say, without seeing or talking to him. He is seven years older than me. I was 17 years old at the time, and he was 24. We can be so quickly fooled by one or two sweet nothings; at the age of 17 people are very open to this. I mean to say, we are open to this; to be a woman is to be inclined to believe and to trust. I trusted my husband. “I'll treat you like a princess, I'll do this, I'll do that.” What he would put me through, only God and myself would know.

After I ran away to my husband it was out of the frying pan and into the fire. A raging fire. There was a mother-in-law, a father-in-law, and my father-in-law's unmarried sister. Aside from them, there was the wife of my brother-in-law and her child. We all lived together. My husband was

severely alcoholic...now there was abuse from the family plus the abuse from my husband. There was every kind of physical, emotional and economic abuse. I wasn't even allowed to go outside the home. Inside that house I always said, "This place is a crowded prison." I also told my husband, "You are a Saddam." Later on, of course—I couldn't say it in those days.

At that time I was not wearing a headscarf. My husband didn't get involved in my choice of clothing; only in that area was I at ease. Headscarf, no headscarf, I wore whatever I wanted. This is how I later on became covered: my younger daughter came into this world, and my mother-in-law passed away. My mother-in-law's mental health was in a bad state, and she wasn't aware of herself. Caring for her was really strenuous. I had two children, my brother-in-law, his wife and child, and my father-in-law. All their work fell to me. After that my younger daughter was born. Before that I never read the Kuran, or anything for that matter. A Kuran course opened up near us. I really needed to get out of the house and go somewhere; I had cabin fever from always being at home. So I went to the Kuran course. This is how I began to wear a headscarf.

My coming to KAMER was right as I experienced a great crisis. My father-in-law died, my father-in-law's sister, and my mother-in-law all died. When you are waiting on other people, something is always keeping you busy. I don't know, did I think of myself as if I were just a 'thing'? I still can't put words to how I felt. After that it was as if I fell into a black hole. In the morning I used to wake up, bathe my father-in-law, diaper him, feed him, give him a drink. That took up half of my day until 12 o'clock. After noon I would clean the house, cook, attend to my children, wash clothes, do the dishes and ironing. When my father-in-law died, half of my day disappeared. I couldn't do anything. I started psychological therapy. I fell into a deep depression. I felt homeless. You sink down into quicksand so deep that only your hands can be seen, you want help... At that moment, Aslı came to me. Her older sister was my neighbor. She said, "A women's center called KAMER is coming. Will you come to the meeting today?" "Ok," I said.

My dreams were always like this: I'll get rich, when I'm rich I'll open a café, I'll have a library only for women and I'll do something for young girls. There they could read books but pay only for what they eat and

drink. I had always wanted a place like that here. I wanted this so badly ...I was experiencing such severe abuse at home that one day I called the governor's office. They said, "We can't help you in any way." All doors were closed to me. I also tried the police. They came to our home and said, "You are a family. Bury the hatchet; what's the problem?" I said, "I'm leaving." The police said, "No." Again I said, "I'm leaving." The police said, "No." That day I told the police, "You are not men. You are all the same. You are protecting him because he is a man. If I were a man and if I were subject to this same violence, you would have immediately taken the man across from me into custody. You wrote down my complaint, but you aren't taking me in." And they didn't take me. I wanted that policeman to suffer. I mean, to be under arrest for just one night even. Let him know that laws are in effect, laws that apply to domestic violence. This happened a few years before I met KAMER.

For years I was intimidated through oppression and fear. After that a rebellion started inside me, but I couldn't put words to it and I was again afraid. I went to a KAMER meeting. There was a beautiful woman there. A really beautiful woman, an engaging and confident woman. I was sitting in a corner. I felt so awful at that moment. I felt so low, thinking "Will she even talk to me?" I felt so inferior...After that Hayriye started to speak. She gave some information about herself, said her name and asked mine. I was shocked! It's natural, people even name their dogs and cats. I, a 44-year-old woman, must have a name, but I wasn't aware of it, I must have forgotten it. After that I experienced a deep shock. I started shaking. I told her my name, and she asked for its meaning. "Who picked your name?" These were questions I'd never been asked in my entire life. That was the first shock. At that point I had accepted the violence. "This is my fate, it's predestined," I said. There is an expression we have that says a mother's bad fate is her daughter's dowry. The police didn't help; there was no support from the family...where could I go? I had no economic freedom.

I left something out: after going to the Kuran course, I went to the mosque on the Night of Power. The teacher said, "Did you bless your husbands while serving them?" All the women said, "Yes, we did." Only I said no. All the women turned towards me. "Do I have to?" I asked. "I don't." The teacher turned and argued, "Don't men bless their wives while serving them?" Why should women bless their husbands? Why should I? I

am aware of my rights. I know my rights within religion, and I don't bless my husband. If I say on the Night of Power that I do bless the serving of my husband, how can I forget the things he's done? I can't.

Then I met Hayriye. After that I thought all night long. The next day I spoke with Hayriye again. After that I participated in a group meeting. However, after going to three or four meetings it began to weigh on me so much that I couldn't pick myself up. I left my first group halfway through.

I was suffering deeply. The violence to which I was subjected was not just one kind—I was a woman exposed to every kind of abuse, and this was not my destiny. I began to question this. Questions arose, and I couldn't answer them. It weighed on me so much, it was a war inside me. At that time there was also a problem with my son, and with both of these happening at once...In the course of the first group meeting I was experiencing this internal conflict. I was living life to the fullest, I was suffering incredibly, but I realized what was going on. I began to say, "I am here and I can do anything." They say women are weak; I looked back at my past and saw that I have endured this for so many years, I am already strong. I mean, I have done things. I am not nothing—I am everything.

First I identified my problem, then I tried to generate a solution to my problem. I was going to write my own prescription. What could I do? What risks could I take? This is what happened. I pulled myself together and joined a second group. This time I knew more, and it was not as difficult as the first group. My ideas had become clearer. If I left my husband, how would I support myself? I had two daughters and a son. My son was in school, my daughter was engaged—there was her wedding to think of—there was the rent, food, drinks. It was important to explore all these concerns in depth. I thought deeply about these issues.

"No, stop this already," I said at last. "This is not my fate. I don't have to put up with you. I am a woman, I am an individual. You have no right to do these things to me. Above all, just stop." I then took the children and one bed from the house. I took just a bare mattress and left. I felt confident. "I can do this, I will succeed," I said, and I took on everyone. Everyone was against me—I looked around and realized I had no friends. Only my KAMER friends were at my side, both physically and in spirit. They provided unbelievable support. Later I finished the second group.

All of this was my decision. When I first met Hayriye, if she had said to me, “Kardelen, go throw yourself off of the city walls and all your problems will be solved,” I would have done it. I needed advice. We get so used to doing what others tell us that we disregard our own thoughts and decisions. It is as if, like a marionette, someone pulls our strings and says “Raise your arm,” and we raise it, “lower your arm,” and we lower it. I had a life like that. I am not a puppet any more—I am a human.

I finished the second group and in the meantime, KAMER found an office. KAMER went through a cleaning phase, then a construction phase...I had the key and came and went as I pleased. I stroked the wall at KAMER just like this, because I finally belonged somewhere. I was here. In my whole life I had never read anything other than a religious book, but I started to read other things. I read Fethiye Çetin's *My Grandmother* and İrfan Aktan's *Nazé*. The last book I read was *The Tide* by Elif Şafak. Next is Aksu Bora's book. I met Ms. Bora at a KAMER meeting; she is a really sweet woman.

During that time we were getting by on my son's salary. With this income God helped us, and we were able to pay the rent and arrange my daughter's wedding. In the meantime my husband was always in the background hurling threats at us. He threatened us so much. I came to my senses. I won my self-reliance. Who gives a damn about his intimidation tactics? I arranged my daughter's wedding then. I had come of age. I could stand on my own feet without him. I married off my daughter; my son continued to university, and my younger daughter was in school. My son was very supportive. “Mom, you shouldn't leave KAMER because you have found yourself,” he said. Now my son loves KAMER more than I do. He says, “Feminism is equality. I am a feminist.”

At this time my husband was really struggling with alcoholism and finally decided to seek treatment. He went to Ankara for treatment and then came back to see me. He was of course expecting the old Kardelen. He had had a kingdom in our home, a throne. I sat him down and said, “Look: I love this job. Whether you like it or not, I'm going to continue working here. I'm going to have to leave the province.” He said “If you are going to be leaving the province, we can't make this work.” I said, “That's just fine if we don't see each other. I didn't come to visit you—you came to

me.” “Think about this long and hard,” he said. “It’s not me—you need to think,” I said. When he saw how strong I was, he was shocked. He wasn’t expecting it.

After that we made peace and I went home. But nothing was like it was before. Now I take pants out of the dirty clothes bin and hand them to him. “I always lived for you all, for your father, for your mother, your aunt, your children; now I live for myself. I am here—do you realize that?” For example, now I come home late, and when I come through the door he says, “Welcome home, my dear husband.” “Thank you, my dear wife,” I say. “Do you feel like a wife?” Recently since I left he has tried to prepare food with things from the cupboards.

I was at KAMER Diyarbakır for three weeks. This morning I got off the bus and went home. He was there. I said, “Now I need to take a shower and leave again; we have guests coming from Istanbul.” I looked at his face. I undressed, went to the bathroom and took a shower. When I looked at him he was staring at me. I didn’t bother with him, I just walked out the door. He was left staring at my back. In the end he has come out behind me.

For this reason I cherish this work. I found myself and my identity through this work. Would you believe: in the 25 years I was married, I never looked in the mirror. Now I look. I always shied away from being in pictures, thinking I would look ugly. Nope—I am a beautiful woman.

I can say this: I started a revolution in my life, my husband is the overthrown king.

My first trip from here was to a regional meeting in Diyarbakır. There I listened to Nebahat, KAMER’s founder; she was amazing. If she were to ask me, “what do you want to change in your life?” I would say, “I would have wanted to meet Nebahat and KAMER ten years earlier.” Nebahat had come to our city ten years earlier when KAMER was first founded. If I had known her then, I would have made a man out of my husband ten years before.

We are moving forward with truly certain, steady steps at KAMER. We don’t just inflate a balloon and leave it to the wind. What is important

is having a strong foundation so that the building doesn't shake in an earthquake, or that if it does shake, it doesn't fall.

It is very important that KAMER is an independent organization. To me, independence is freedom. KAMER is as free as a bird. The women who come here may be interested in politics, but they leave their political opinions at the door before they come in. All the women who come here are special and valuable. For that reason, women come from every race, religion and set of beliefs...in some groups there are women who don't speak Turkish, and in that case we speak both Turkish and Kurdish.

At KAMER we have put together a beautiful mosaic. There was a woman who came to us; her husband was working in the provincial headquarters of a political party. The woman had degrees from two universities and after coming here and working she said this: "This is my second address, and I learned things in our awareness group that I didn't learn from two universities."

When I went to Diyarbakır this time I learned to accept applications for aid and to use computers. Nebahat was our teacher. I can't even explain how wonderful Diyarbakır was. I worked with Sacide and Wildan. The women were all out conducting field work, and no one was left at the office. They work so hard. I was talking with my son on the phone, and I said, "People have paid so much attention to me, I have felt so valuable—was I a queen in a former life? Is there something they aren't telling me?"

I was a woman who couldn't leave the house; I left home. I was a women experiencing domestic abuse; now my husband would never dare try. I won my self-reliance; I stand on my own two feet. The steering wheel is in my hands, and I drive often.

Yesterday I told Hayriye, "Thank you so much, Hayriye. I am so lucky to have met you. If I hadn't, where would I be now?" Whether you believe it or not, right now I would be in a cemetery. With the violence I was experiencing I was seriously considering suicide and had already attempted once. I am here now talking to you. I believe in myself.

2- Çilem

“I wear every color now,
I am like a rainbow”

I was born in 1981. I graduated from a vocational school. I have been married for five years. I have a son who is four, about to turn five. Before KAMER I was working with a women’s organization that focused on family planning. I found out about KAMER through a friend. I asked my friend a few questions but wasn’t satisfied with the answers I got. Just then Nilüfer came here from Diyarbakır. My friend said, “If you want, I can take you to meet her; you can ask her anything you are wondering about.” I met with Nilüfer and really enjoyed it. I asked tons of questions and finally felt satisfied. After that I was an incredibly devoted volunteer; you could say I was addicted.

Later I came to realize a few things and I paused. I fell into a slump. It was as if I lived in a cage and Nilüfer had opened the door. I came out and I felt really different.

My friends often came to me and told me their problems. “What should I do?” they’d ask. I would consider everything and then say, “I don’t have any problems. I love my husband. I have a happy life.” But what am I doing? I’m doing these things for my husband; I’m doing these things for my child. After a group meeting I sat down for the first time, and for half an hour I just *thought*. For the first time in 26 years, I sat and thought about myself. Alright, in this period of time, where have I been? Where am I? It is as if I sewed a cover and hid myself inside it; I think of myself that way, but that isn’t really me. It wasn’t me. Now I truly feel like myself again.

While walking along completely alone with no one by my side, someone grabbed me and shook me and said, "Be yourself again!" I heard their voice. I fell hard. I don't know, I felt so strange, as if ten people had beaten me up. As if I had sustained a terrible beating and I couldn't stand up. I swear, that day I couldn't get up. You become so strange. It is really impossible to put words to that feeling, I can't tell you. I was really in bad shape. I was so sad; I felt empty inside. When you realize it, you look around and it's as if no one is there. It's as if I am falling into a hole; they are pushing me and I am not aware of it; no one is trying to take my hand and pull me back. But I will climb out of the hole, even if I have to crawl, to the place I want, my goal. Afterwards I felt so relieved. It's like putting on wings and taking flight, you can see everything. That was how I felt. I took wing and flew...it was wonderful for me. I am very happy to be included in KAMER.

My background is a bit strange. My mother and father were teachers. When I was little they were posted to far away places and settled there. They left me with my aunt. My mother was young; they thought she couldn't handle caring for two children. At that time my younger sibling hadn't been born. They left, I stayed. I thought of my aunt like a mother. She tricked me; I came to hate everyone. If only she hadn't deceived me...I really thought of her as my mother. The other children said, "She's not your mother." My aunt would show me her belly button and say, "Look, you came from here. They are tricking you—I am your mother." I finished elementary school and went to be with my parents. My siblings said, "Mother, when is this girl going back to her home?" I was really lonely there, all by myself...You can't do it, you can't warm towards them. I couldn't warm up to my mother or my father. Then my aunt got married, a big surprise to me. She became pregnant. The second surprise was the jealousy. I was pulled out of my own skin. I had no one—no one to say hello to, no friends, none. I didn't even want myself. The people closest to me told me lies. You have one life; all of a sudden you find yourself in a different one.

Later my mother and I had problems. They stemmed both from me and from her. I really withdrew into myself. I said, "I won't talk to anyone any more, no one else should talk to me, I don't want to listen." You can't have a sense of safety if you can't trust. I thought, I wonder if this is really my mother? Is she going to send me somewhere else again? I call her 'mother,' but is someone else going to pop up?

After my involvement with KAMER, I talked to my mother. While I was sitting with her she called my brother's girlfriend; she chatted with her and then hung up. I asked, "Why couldn't you have been like that with me? What if you had? I would be different now. If you had just left me alone with my friends...you really limited my development." For the first time I talked, really poured my heart out. We talked about everything over the last 20 years. "You left me with my aunt," I said. "When I see her I still cry because I expect her to hug me and kiss me and embrace me, but she doesn't. Because she has her own children now. Without being able to find this affection I go home and cry, did you know that? I sit and cry all night and can't compose myself for a whole week. This affects my family and my work. Why did you do this? Was it so difficult to care for two children? If you had taken me with you there wouldn't be this distance between my siblings and me, or between me and you." She explained a lot of things to me. Things are better between us now. For the first time I told my mother everything. I explained myself and was shocked. She reacted very maturely. I don't remember my mother ever hugging or kissing me. Now I feel strange hugging and kissing my mother, it doesn't feel natural. I had never been affectionate with my mother. We weren't close like that. Our relationship was very unique, but now we were aware of it. It wasn't too late. We talked about and fixed our problems. She cried a lot. It's rubbed off on her now, too—she said, "What would happen if I came to a group meeting, too?" I am really pleased with the changes in myself. I was always quiet. Now I've gotten going, and they can't shut me up. Talking, talking...My father watches television and glances at me as I talk, gets scared, avoids my eyes. "Hey, I'm talking—listen," I said. "You are going to listen. You always kept me quiet, but you are going to listen this time."

My relationship with my son has also changed. I talk with him now, a lot. Before, we never talked. I managed his daily routine, took him for walks, brought him to the park, that was all...now he is a mature person in my eyes; I don't see him as a child any more. We sit together and talk; he understands me really well. I noticed my son. I always said "He's a child. He wouldn't understand anything I say." But no—he truly does understand. Sometimes now when I'm out shopping I ask for his opinion. What does he think of this shirt? What about the color? For example he tells me, "This red looks better on you." My son and I have become like two very good friends. I notice a difference in myself and in my son. Everything is going great.

At the beginning of our marriage my husband and I had some problems. We couldn't communicate. Now our communication is great; we really understand each other. For example if I were going to leave the house in the past, I would hem and haw and then reluctantly ask, "Can I go?" Sometimes he would say yes, sometimes no. Now I say "I'm going," and I go. He also realized some things. Now he respects my yes's and no's.

Throughout our marriage we never sat opposite each other and just talked. I really don't know why, but we didn't. Why didn't we talk, I wonder? I ask myself, how well does he know me? How well do I even know him? In the past I said, "Which color is my favorite?" For example he would buy me a shirt or something in a color I didn't like at all. On my birthday he would bring a cake, but always a chocolate one. I don't even like chocolate! I never said these things to him: "I don't like chocolate," or "I don't like purple shirts." I never told him, never sat down with him and talked. Did we have free time? We hustled around. My father-in-law was always around as our guest, always coming and going. I put it this way: this is my task, I will go home, sit, take care of my children, do my work, run from work to home, make food, and I will be happy. But I'm not here. Where am I? Now I come home and say, "Honey, will you make the salad while I finish cooking the main course?" He was a bit afraid at first, but at least he respects me.

My friends were really surprised at the changes I went through. "What happened to you?" they asked, "what happened?" "I've come to my senses," I said. "This is me. Do you want to know me? This is me." I explained my awareness to them, everything I'd realized. They also decided to come to group meetings. I had some friends that realized they were experiencing abuse. "We didn't know that this was abuse," they said.

My relationship with my mother-in-law changed. We could never solve problems between us directly, therefore I would always be at odds with my husband. I was always saying, "Why does your mother do this?" She had a lot of anxiety before she was introduced to KAMER. Nilüfer said, "If you have a problem with someone, you should confront them and tell them; you cannot hear their response through someone else." I went directly to my mother-in-law and talked to her. For example, I would say, "My dear mother, I heard something like this—why did you feel the need to say that? Did I do something wrong? If I did something wrong then tell me, I

will fix it. But that thing also might not have been wrong. In that case I can explain it to you. Maybe you understood incorrectly.” Before it was, “Who did you hear that from—who said it? It wasn’t like that. They exaggerated.”

“Mother,” I said. “I heard you talking on the balcony.” Because I started off like that, she told me how it happened. I also provided a reasonable explanation. “So then it was true,” she said. “I must have misunderstood.” Now when there is a problem, she comes straight to me and tells me. It has relieved my husband so much that he says, “God bless KAMER. Neither my wife nor my mother is coming to me with these problems any more. I can breathe now.”

Our great-grandmother, my mother-in-law’s mother-in-law, at 80 years old, insisted “I am going to come to Diyarbakır.” “Really,” I said. “I will bring you one more time. There is a festival in Tunceli; they’re going to folk dance. I’ll take you there.” “They are going to folk dance?” she asked. “I promise,” I said. “I’m going to bring you to it.” I explained KAMER, the things we do, the things I can do. “I think about these things for women,” I said. “Let women be a support to me and I will be supportive to them. We should grow, improve and open better places.” She paused and then sighed and said, “In the name of God, I have also experienced abuse. I got up and kissed my great-grandmothers’ hands. “Get up and bring us water! Can I have a glass of water? This is also abuse.” The woman had awoken; age is not important at all.

My mother-in-law never spoke with her own mother-in-law; there was bad blood between them. I repaired their relationship. One would tell me one thing, the other would tell me another, always putting me in the middle. Finally I said, “I am here today. Tomorrow I am not. Are you always going to be like this?” At the end my mother-in-law was explaining something to me and great-grandmother got angry. “Mother,” I said. “I am not going to answer her for you any more. Look how from the outset we misunderstood each other. She explained it in one way, you understood it in another. You are both women in this house; you need to support her just as she needs to support you. You are both women and mothers. Men can truly not understand you as well as you understand each other. If you tell her, she will understand so well that she will welcome you with open arms.” I told my great-grandma the same thing. They still wouldn’t talk. Anyway as they were sitting together one day, I said that if they don’t want

to trust me, then they shouldn't. "Great-grandma, you did this and it really hurt Mother." I brought the topic up, and they took it from there. For 27 years everything they had done and hadn't done; they sat and talked and talked. I said, "Good God, what have I done?" They wouldn't shut up. I wanted to leave but they were still going. They talked, they poured out their emotions to each other...they explained everything. Great-grandma said "I complained to you often about Mustafa, Nuray. But you also made me angry. These things you do really bother me." My mother-in-law said, "Thank you—for 27 years I haven't known that these things I do annoyed you. If you had told me, I wouldn't have done them." They also came to a realization. Now their home is much more peaceful. My father-in-law says, "What did you do to them?" How wonderful!

I give my whole heart to my work at KAMER. I will do it: if they don't come to me, I will go to the women's homes. Really, I will go to their houses and I will explain that we should be aware of what we are experiencing. We shouldn't always remain like this, be pressured like this. I mean, women do all the work, but men...I work, my husband also works, why shouldn't I also stretch out my legs and rest? That is my right. I also work; should I rush to make dinner so that I don't disrupt the home? What does it matter if there is a disruption? I am also going to stretch out and rest. Now my tea comes to me on its own.

Even when you just go into people's houses and talk to them, a woman realizes something. There are women who can't come into the women's centers. To them I say, "When your neighbors come home, call me immediately. Just tell me to come and I will." Sometimes they zone out while I explain, but later on the things they have experienced come to mind and they really open their ears. They enjoy it and ask questions; later they say things like, "Where is your KAMER? When is there a group meeting? Maybe we'll come."

I want them to see the beauty of the things I've become aware of. I have seen such beautiful colors—I have seen red, yellow, blue. I wear every color now, I am like a rainbow. Red is bold and adventurous, but I wear it now. I have really come to love red.

3- Asmin

“I walk on the fields of freedom
created for KAMER women”

Because my father was a civil servant, I lived in many different cities growing up. When I was at university, I was deeply interested in theater. My friends and I formed a theater troupe. At that point I came to know KAMER and began to work for them as a volunteer. After I graduated I came back to work for KAMER.

I worked at KAMER as a full-time professional for six or seven months, focusing on the “Life for Children” project. I worked on organizing children’s carnivals and related tasks. Later on after we implemented an alternative education model and I became a facilitator for our play groups. I traveled to many provinces. I was not at the Diyarbakır center any more and was more involved in regional work. At this point I dropped out of theater activities. This really bothered me. My being upset over not being able to stay involved with theater also affected my performance at work. I thought for a long time: what should I do? How should things be? This work is really intense—you have to internalize a lot of things. It’s really, really difficult work. I was forced to make a decision. “Can I be as brave as the women at KAMER?” I honestly asked myself. “Can I keep up this pace?”

After assessing everything, I decided, “I should be one of those who opt to walk on the fields of freedom KAMER has created for women.” My volunteer work continues even now. I am bound to this place, inextricably bound because I have really internalized KAMER. I still walk with KAMER’s support in these free spaces. They have never denied me support;

with their support I truly do what I want. Of course we have conflicted in some areas. When you say ‘woman,’ there is a common denominator in both theater and KAMER. Despite the occasional conflict, though, we can still work together well. It is very productive this way. In the plays in which we act, to my surprise, there is too much violence against women, too much of women being pushed into the backseat, too much of women being used as a commodity. Upon realizing this I was forced to change my perspective. Now I read theater scripts with a different perspective.

My work at KAMER had the biggest effect on my views on my family. I had an easy-going family, but at the same time they were very traditional and on some points almost feudal in structure. This was a family that was born and lived on this land. Our lifestyle was also traditional in this way. While questioning these roles after meeting KAMER, small details stuck in my mind. I started to ask questions like, “Why don’t you give daughters a share of inheritance? Why can’t we leave the house as we like? Or, why can’t I do the same things as my big brother?” This was a really painful period for me, because unfortunately rebelliousness is one of my personal characteristics. I fought a lot with my family.

I studied engineering but later decided that it was something I didn’t want to do. Being able to do what I truly wanted was something that KAMER taught me. To be a happy person, I need to be in a career where I can be happy. “I don’t want to be an engineer,” I said. “I want to be an actor.” But when I would go back to my home town, my relatives judged me as soon as the first ‘t’ of the word ‘theater’ came out of my mouth. Where we live, instead of ‘theater’ they say ‘teyatora,’ which has a bad implication for women. My mother always said, “I put you through so much school; after all this effort are you going to go and become a performer?” She looked like a broken woman. Maybe she thought her daughter had suddenly been swept away by popular culture. She said that and other things. In that time, my period of change and development, there probably was an aspect of that. Looking back, I can’t say that I suddenly changed completely. But shortly thereafter I realized I was not interested in pursuing engineering. I knew I definitely didn’t want to. I knew that the money would make me happy, but I was also aware that I wouldn’t have enough spare time to continue with theater. My being able to accept these facts is all thanks to KAMER. I am indebted to KAMER for my not becoming an engineer and instead being able to become an actress, because they really supported me.

My mother really trusts KAMER. Telling my mother that KAMER supported my theater work went like this: “Mother, I am going to do this and this, and going out on the stage actually isn’t so bad. On the stage I am also going to give voice to women’s issues. Our message is the same; the only difference will be the means of conveying it.” She understood this. No other example I could have given her would have satisfied her. In this way KAMER enabled me to change the course of my life.

Hayriye was the facilitator of the group I attended. It was a great success; I’ll never stop telling her that. It was advantageous to get to know KAMER with her as a guide. In the beginning we didn’t really understand what it was about. I thought someone was going to come and lead a therapy session. We gradually realized that actually this wasn’t therapy—we are turning ourselves around, and this was a communal opportunity to share our experiences. At the time, since I was young I felt that my life experiences weren’t as important as the others’. I was a university student, I was well-off, I thought of myself as being free. In my own eyes I was already a saved woman and I was already walking in the free spaces created by those before me. But later on I came to realize that because I was a woman, I was experiencing adversity in various forms.

The other women in my group meetings were a fair amount older than I was. At first I was scared. Really, really scared. I was really apprehensive about how much of my experience I would be able to share. I was really unsure about how much I could trust them. I also stood out a bit because I was a university student and very gregarious. But after one or two meetings I understood that there was a different environment here, a self-induced environment of trust. Then everything came quickly and easily. All of our hardships, all of our positive life experiences, through sharing it all we completed a wonderful series of sessions. It was really pleasant, really exciting.

For me communication issues were the most important. I realized during the group meetings that I had never given much thought to communication. I learned that I didn’t know how to listen. Later I realized that even while listening to someone, the only things on my mind were the answers I were going to give them. I thought without listening to what the person across from me is really saying, thinking how I was going to respond. Then sexism began to pique my interest. Especially after some of the women shared their experiences, I began to realize how huge the

errors of the sexism-based foundation are; it is this upon which we build our entire lives and dreams. The awareness period was really painful. Destroying all the rules I knew and creating new ones was really, really difficult for me. But now...

I struggled the most with the question of societal gender roles. As I questioned these roles and broke down the rules I knew, I began to make a lot of mistakes. When you suddenly demolish these norms, you start to exclude men. Better said, it was that way for me. All of a sudden I began to remove men from my life. This was a big mistake. For about a year, year and a half, I really struggled with this. You have to have a social life. You are suddenly at odds with all men. I followed this method while destroying my rules. This was a big mistake, and that period was really painful. Later on when I actually realized that my unhappiness resulted from not having men in my life, it was as if I'd been smacked.

My problems were with myself, actually. It was my method of communication, my style, my attitude towards life, or maybe my perceived confines of my understanding of freedom. Because this limitless, endless concept of freedom couldn't be right, but that was how it was for me. Or knowing true freedom was also really important... I thought it was totally different for everyone else. I could come and go as I pleased at whatever hour I wanted, live on my own. While these were fundamental to my understanding of freedom, later on my understanding of freedom began to consist of my being able to attend university or my ability to freely speak my mind. For me, being able to openly say whatever came into my head was a great freedom. Later on, due to the group meetings I attended, this even became a small part of my understanding of the concept of freedom. Being able to participate in theater whenever I want is now the end point of freedom for me.

Through the group meetings my relationships with women also changed. In the past I truly judged women more harshly. Even as I was saying in a session that I don't judge women, I realized that I did. Other women, other lifestyles, and women who are forced to live certain ways... my perspective was unchanging and like everyone else's. I realized this very late. But my relationships with women changed a lot.

For example, in the city where I live, there are a lot of women who cross the nearby international border and come to work as sex workers.

I always used to think they were totally happy with their situation. As if life is a bowl of cherries, they just came here to work. When we saw them we would change our paths; we tried to avoid the routes they took. Or if they came into a shop we would immediately leave. That fear stemmed from the belief that if you were seen with them, you would be perceived as one of them. I came to realize a while later that certainly none of them were happy with their situations. To be totally honest I can say I felt a tad concerned for them, though it wasn't possible to suddenly do a 180; it didn't seem realistic to do that either, but it was still important to try to understand. And not to offend or hurt them. Not to suddenly maneuver myself around to take a different path when I see them coming. This seems like a substantial first step to me.

Actually, I started to love myself together with KAMER. I started to look in the mirror more often. I loved myself before, but in a megalomaniac kind of way. I didn't attach much meaning to myself. Now I have started to say, "Yes, I am a woman, and with these views I can more comfortably express these things and these problems." It really helped communication in my daily life. It was extremely useful in my stage performance. I examined my body again from head to toe and came to know myself again. For example I decided on my hair color before founding our foundation and said "this color looks good on me." I said, "It doesn't matter if everyone else likes it, but I do." Perhaps for the first time I internalized this and dyed my hair with the decision that I myself had made. Later whenever I went shopping I started to buy the outfit that I liked the most. I mean, I would be out in a group and everyone would consult the group after trying something on—"Does this look good? Does this?"—and after everyone would ok the outfit we would buy it, but now I'm able to think for myself.

This really comforted me on stage because I gained an incredible amount of self-confidence. This came out in my group meetings when I was sharing. I looked and saw that I was really being listened to, my words just weren't going in one ear and out the other. This really comforted me. First I felt like a priority. I mean, some people really thought I was important, to share the problems I experienced with them...I should explain; it wasn't that I wanted other people to solve my problems. Even just their listening to me gave me remarkable assurance and really motivated me. When I take the stage I go out with that confidence now: they'll hear me, they'll feel me, they'll listen to me, because I have been listened to once, some people have really heard me. This was really important for me.

I am not afraid any more when I make mistakes. An actor's most feared thing is to mess up on stage, to forget one's lines, to trip and fall. This seems really human to me. During training this is the only thing I tell my actors. We are human; we are not robots on stage. We are people with feelings that can make mistakes. We embrace ourselves as human beings far from these constraints. I exist as Asmin.

My sister also worked here for a while. But I was here as Asmin. I know that not as her sister but as Asmin I was listened to and felt. I wasn't Tülay's sister at all. They made me feel this way. This was really valuable to me. Because of that on stage as well I existed as Asmin, and I could have tripped and fallen. Now I am able to easily bridge the gap. I really created confidence within myself. This is thanks to KAMER.

KAMER gives me amazing strength. Furthermore I am someone who was first working as a professional and now comes from here. It doesn't seem to me that that opportunity exists at many other foundations. It would be impossible. I can still come here as I like. Being associated with KAMER, I can get an invitation from any other organization—these people do such wonderful things. For me this has been truly precious. There is incredible strength behind me, and with that strength I can look forward with hope to a future filled with the free spaces they have opened up. I stand with my face to the future.

4- Jale

“I am a feminist because
I want to be strong”

I am Azeri. I am 24 years old. I studied in Istanbul until the third grade. After that I came here. I lost my father when I was in the first grade. I studied through the end of middle school and after that I married. I was 14 years old and attending a computer course at a public education center. My mother's brother's son was interested in me, but I wasn't thinking of marriage at all. They kidnapped me. Right now I am remotely pursuing my high school degree. After I finish that I will enter university.

I have a daughter; she is 9 years old. She was born sick at seven months. On the topic of her education, I used to think just like our elders: “You are a girl, don't do this, don't do that.” Now I don't say that any more. I changed my rules for her. Her development is really important to me now, because I realized that girls are under a ton of pressure. I want to raise her to be strong. How? For example I taught her not to pressure herself. Before she was always getting beaten up at school, but now she knows to defend her rights from teachers and the other children. They fight a lot; whereas then she would get beaten up and come home, now rather than channeling violence she complains to her teacher and demands justice. I said, “Don't you attack anyone; if someone attacks you, tell your teacher, seek justice, and don't pressure yourself.” She is conscious of these things now.

Earlier on, for example, my daughter and I couldn't go anywhere without my husband. Since my relationship with my husband wasn't all that great,

we couldn't go anywhere. But we have vacation plans for this summer. My daughter and I are going to go on a vacation together. This is a first for us. We are very much looking forward to July. We are going to Istanbul. From there we'll go with my sister and her family to Kastamonu. I hope it will be nice.

All these changes in our lives came along with my starting KAMER work a year ago. I learned to communicate with others. Before I would scream and cry; our talks were always ending in a fight. But now, how can I say, I learned to speak softly, to speak with my tongue. That is why I succeed, why I get what I want now. I learned to exert authority. I learned to say, "I also have rights." I can say, "I want this. Just as you have rights, so do I, and I want to do this. What I want is also important."

When we talked about a vacation, this is what I said. "I am also human." He couldn't figure out a retort to this and said, "Good, go then, what can I do." He also learned to trust me, actually. I learned that I am able to succeed at things. Before, when someone said the smallest thing to me I would get really depressed and cry, but now I fight back.

I was abused before. Forced into an unhappy, comfortless marriage, I tried to keep going at my family's behest. Later on it was tough for me even to make it to the KAMER meetings; I couldn't come freely. My husband really resisted my going to the group meetings. I would leave the house saying, "I'm going to my sister-in-law's house; we're going to have tea." Then I would escape to the group meeting. If I hadn't been able to leave my daughter with my sister-in-law, I wouldn't have been able to go. When my sister-in-law would go to the meetings, I would also watch her child. We got through it together. Now my sister-in-law and I are like two real sisters. We are closest the sisters-in-law in the world. When my husband realized that I wasn't at her house, he got really angry. While going to those meetings I was no stranger to beatings.

Later on I realized that I couldn't live like this, and I tried to fix it. I either had to change something or leave this place. I was going to improve this marriage or end it. I was leaning towards ending it—escaping. I looked for ways to slowly melt the ice between my husband and myself. For example, to encourage him to set the table, I started by giving him a glass and sending him to the table. I began to spend time with others

and struggle against the depression that dogged me; I started to produce things. I started to make evil eyes and to knit. I started to do these things because I realized that just sitting around from morning until evening would leave me bored and depressed.

Now my husband supports my involvement with KAMER. For example, one day our office flooded. The entire day he worked with me there and brought a plumber. He supports me now, because after KAMER our lives changed.

Until last year I was physically and verbally abused...cursing, screaming and shouting. This was the worst: there were three of us living in our home—my husband, my daughter and myself—but there were never just three people there; there were other people in our lives. My husband would always mind his older sister's and mother's words. But now it isn't like that. Now we talk amongst ourselves. He says, "You, me and our daughter live in this house."

We also share the chores at home. Now he helps me set and clean up the table, as well as everything else. I help him out his work. When he steps out, I act as cashier, for example. We are getting along pretty well financially now and don't fight. I also learned to handle my mother- and father-in-law; I swear, we get along so well now. For example, when there is a problem between us, instead of fighting and tiring my body and soul, I come to them in such a way that the woman doesn't know what hit her.

In the past, we were going to buy ourselves an armchair, and his mother said, "Buy a maroon or a white one." We didn't want either of those of course; we wanted to go look and see what appealed to us. We went to the store and bought a purple chair. My husband and I chose it together; it was really nice and everyone adored it. My mother-in-law, however, flew into a huff. When I opened the door for her, she was talking to our neighbor across the hall. I took her arm and said "My dear mother, come inside, I'll show you our chair." It was really difficult to convince her to come inside, but later we made up. After that for an entire week I went to her home every day to drink tea, thinking of it as punishment for her being angry at us. Since my husband's sister was also angry at us, I knitted her a shawl and we made up. All of my relationships improved, thank goodness. This was all in the past year.

When my husband and I first married, his family wouldn't talk to me, didn't want me, threw us out in the street. We rented a little hole-in-the-wall apartment and stayed there. They didn't want to see us; we would go to them anyway, and they would scream and throw us out. They didn't want me. My mother-in-law had wanted her sister's daughter as a wife for her son, his cousin. My husband returned from military service five years ago and we moved here. I was really struggling to deal with his family at that time and was really upset and frustrated with them; now, however, I think positively. I try to treat all the people around me well. At the time they weren't treating me badly, either. At least they weren't acting badly, they were smiling to my face. I try to change everyone, but there are times when my strength isn't enough.

My family also didn't want us to marry, but my mother embraced us. We weren't in a bind. When my husband went off to military service, I stayed with my mother. She took care of—really raised—my daughter. I am a child of teachers. I couldn't study earlier in life, but later I will study—first high school and then university. My husband is a graduate of elementary school. Last year when I signed up for my high school courses he got angry at first, but this year he even paid my registration fee himself. To renew one's registration one has to deposit a fee at the bank, and he did that on his own. We had to go to the Open Plan Schools office a few times in order to take care of choosing classes and some other things. My stomach was bothering me and I couldn't walk, and he took me by car to the office time after time. He now supports me, too. While I'm studying he tells our daughter, "Hush, your mother is studying." He started to support my education...

My husband only finished elementary school, but he doesn't say, "What if she is better educated than me; what if she is ahead of me...", and I don't make him feel like that. Earlier on, for example, if he used a word incorrectly I would mention it in front of everyone around and correct him. I don't do that any more; I don't make him feel like he's lacking in anything. He is also developing in his own way. He now also behaves very politely when he goes to a gathering of his friends. This wasn't the case before; he used to not keep up a social life. Sometimes we go out together now; he is trying to fix his own relationships.

My husband is both a master chef and manager at a bakery. One Ramadan I was working at the cash register and the bakery was making

pide bread; work was extremely busy. We had a worker, a young man, and my husband really chewed him out due to rude behavior. The guy cried, and later I started to cry as well. When we were on our way home I thoroughly explained to him, "Why did you do that? He is also human. Speak decently to him." He doesn't scream at people any more. His personal relationships are also improving.

Before, when I would go to the doctor I would always go alone; now, for the past year, we go together. In fact, one time we went to the dentist. I had a tooth pulled and fainted, then regained consciousness. We left the office and started to go down the stairs. He pulled me towards him—we are the same height. He said, "I'll carry you down. You might faint again." It's like this now.

How was my husband able to change? It's because we love each other now. If we loved each other before, we certainly weren't aware of it. Actually, we feel as if we are newlyweds. He wants a baby now, too. I tell him, "My new life has just begun, I'm occupied with a lot of things now." He says, "When you go out, I'll look after the baby." Before we didn't want a baby because we weren't in a good position, both financially or emotionally. We were always fighting. I was thinking, "Why would I bring a child into the world just to wrong them like this, just to corrupt them?" Now I want a baby too, but not right away. I want to continue developing first. I want to continue with my studies. There is supposedly a night school here. If my husband looks after the children then I can go to that school. I want to study pedagogy.

I used to hate sexuality; it disgusted me. I was abducted, you know; I found it revolting. After our group meetings I tried to overcome this and I did. I now take pleasure in my sexuality. My husband is really pleased by this.

In any case, after attending the group meetings, women are changing things in their lives. I believe that KAMER makes it possible for women to be free. I myself am now free. I still can't just leave and go on a work trip on my own, but I can go on a vacation with my daughter, I can go anywhere in the city I want now. Before I couldn't go; my husband had to escort me everywhere. I have a friend named Necla who separated from her husband; she is making handicrafts at home. I bought a shawl from her

for myself and everywhere I go I show it off to my friends saying, “Look how beautiful this is. You should order one too.” I take orders for her. Hence women support each other. This is women’s solidarity.

Before KAMER I was extremely judgmental towards other women. Now I’m not that way any more. I have started new friendships, lovely friendships. There is a walking path near where we live; I met a woman there. We recognized each other but before weren’t sitting and chatting. Through talking to her I discovered that she is a wonderful and positive woman who energizes others. She’s older than I, but we are of like mind; she has a young soul. I formed a friendship with her and see her often.

In the group meetings, how can I explain, I see the group facilitators; they are free; their lives are so great that they can just up and come here from Diyarbakır and other far away places. Is there no one in their families to interfere? This goes to show that those walls have been overcome. Why can’t I even go somewhere within my own city or do things I want? I was a good listener in our group meetings. I came in one day with a neck brace, straight from bed. The doctor told me not to get out of bed, and for 15 days I lay there. I missed one group meeting but for the second one I put on my neck brace and went and sat there like a mummy. Every part of me hurt, but I still went. I forgot my pain there. I was trying to take away a lot from the group. Actually, at the time I thought it was of no use to me.

The topic during the group meetings that affected me most was that of education for girls. I hung on every word. I started to apply all the things I learned to my daughter one by one. What else? I had this fixation; ever since childhood if I was really bored, sitting at home by myself not doing anything for example, I would count up to the number eight over and over again. One day Hayriye brought this up, “Why do you think you count to eight; what is the reason?” “I don’t know,” I said. “When did it start?” she asked. “After my father died,” I answered. “On what day of the month did your father pass away?” she asked. “The eighth,” I said. And then I discovered the cause. Now I don’t count like before. When I’m really bored sometimes I do, but not like before.

I now participate in the group meetings with Nilüfer. Nilüfer’s methods really make one think. She asks a question and the woman across from her answers of her own free will. Participating in the group meetings is a great feeling. I would get really excited in the beginning—“Nilüfer, what

will I do, what will I make?” Later in the first group meetings, I read a part of the book and after that interpreted it. Nilüfer was on my mind, and I wondered how I was doing. After the group meetings ended she said, “Ah, my dear Jale, that was great. Even I couldn’t do that when I participated in my first awareness group; I sat there with my mouth closed.” While reading an excerpt of the book, I was articulating each word with the excitement of an elementary school student, but after that I got used to it. Though I still don’t read that well, I manage. I have gotten used to reading aloud, but I still get excited. Every time I am so excited, it is as if I’m making my debut.

In our daily lives, feminists are thought of as man-haters, but I don’t think that way. I think the description “women who don’t oppress themselves” is more correct. Women who stand strong against men. We have no reason to see men as our enemies. Men represent a big part of our lives. While I don’t believe that feminism is thinking of men as the enemy, I believe that the phrase “man-hater” has been applied to strong women. Wouldn’t you agree? I am a feminist because I want to be strong.

5- Solin

“It won’t work unless we tear down
the wall inside”

I am the oldest of eight siblings. My family was really overbearing. I grew up experiencing abuse, especially from my father. Not just me, my siblings too... My brothers were especially badly abused: hung on doors, beaten, left hungry. First and foremost was my mother of course. For example, when my father came through the door and my mother didn't take the bag out of his hand, it meant she would be beaten the entire day. My parents were related. Maybe this escalated the violence somewhat.

My education came to an end after I finished elementary school. Actually, I registered for middle school, but I could only attend for six months. This aroused a feeling of tremendous pain in me. I wasn't going to be sent to school. The reason was a pair of pantyhose. One of the neighbors we knew well was a boy in my class. One day while walking up the stairs behind me one of the boy students said, “Whoa, look at her legs.” Since my friend said this in the midst of our families, my father said, “It is no longer possible for Solin to go to school.” And that was how I was pulled out of school. My father burned my school uniform in the stove. When he burned it I felt as if my own flesh were burning. Because I had the desire to study. I cried for days. Later on as I slowly became a young woman, I said, “What would happen if you just let me study remotely? If nothing else, please let me do this.” Anyway, after a lot of persistence and with the help of my uncle, my father allowed me to do this. I earned my middle school diploma from home. The next year I said, “I have my middle school diploma, let me get my high school diploma as well.” I did this too. I passed all my exams on the first try.

In this way I was slowly progressing towards marriage. We had no right to choose, unfortunately. No right at all. My husband was from our town but wasn't there very often. He was working in Van. His aunt saw me on the balcony and asked for my hand. That is to say, this was an arranged marriage. I only saw him as I brought them coffee during their visit. I told my family, "I don't want him." I felt nothing for him.

At that time I was 24 years old. Actually, before that my father's uncle's son had asked to marry me. He had been betrothed while in the cradle to another one of our relatives. As he grew up, though, he said, "I think of her as a sister. I can't think of marrying her. I feel much closer to Solin in an emotional way." He really wanted me, but they refused. This was a cause of anger between the families for six or maybe seven years. I also felt close to him, actually. It was for this reason that I said no to everyone else who asked. In my family girls are given away very early. I strained to reach the age of 24 unmarried.

When my husband proposed at 24 years old, my father accepted on my behalf, saying, "I said yes; no one can object." I had to accept this now—I was married. Sorry: I was first engaged for nine months. During the engagement period I was able to meet with him alone twice. I had a foreboding feeling about this. Even explaining this now really upsets me. This was 15 or 16 years ago, but it still really upsets me.

I explained the abnormalities that I saw to my family, but they didn't believe it. My father said, "You are making things up." I had to submit to his will, and 9 months later we were married. On the wedding day his family took me to their house. They were waiting for us at the door. The best man receives the new couple. At the door the man awaits the groom, and his wife awaits the bride. They can't be kept waiting until all hours of the night. After the evening prayers are read you have to go have sexual intercourse, whether you want to or not. You have to display the bloody sheet afterwards.

My husband entered the room. "Welcome," he said. "Thank you," I said. That was it. After that there was no more communication or talking. He quickly took a hold of my headscarf and removed it himself. This of course was to immediately force me to have sex. I think he was using medication; I realized this later on. He forced himself on me and there was excruciating tearing. Later I had to have seven or eight stitches. He

got dressed right away, but I, of course, was covered in blood. The best man had been waiting at the door and came into the room. "What kind of animal are you?" he asked my husband. "What went on here?" They took me to the hospital and I received stitches. The doctor took my husband aside and asked, "Are you crazy?" He also got angry at my mother-in-law.

After that night I never again let my husband have relations with me. It wasn't possible. He tried to force me...beatings, hurling things at the door...I was subjected to a lot of violence, not by his family but by him. This lasted for about two months. At this time our neighbors were also from our home town. They sent word to my family, "Did you marry her off as a result of a blood feud? What did she do—did she do something bad? Can one really hand their daughter over to a man like this?" When my family heard this they came and took me back home.

Later his car entered our town. We have an agha land ownership system. The aghas discussed the topic amongst themselves. Anyway, my husband's family took me back. I couldn't justify this to myself, however. I could see myself ten years from now. I didn't want a child to be dragged along with me into this ... I would never allow it. My husband immediately picked me up and took me far away. He took me to Van. There he left me without food for days. I was a stranger in strange place. For about 40 days he beat me day and night and tried to force me to have intercourse with him. I told him, "If you come anywhere near me I will scream. Let strangers hear, let the neighbors gather around. I am not at all ashamed because I haven't done anything wrong." Forty days passed like this. My father was a driver. After he retired he began taking some part-time jobs. He came out near where we were living to deliver some goods. After dropping off the load, he thought he would drop by and see how we were doing. When my father came and saw the state I was in...in forty days I had lost 19 kilos. As soon as my father saw me I became hysterical. My father said, "I didn't give you away as a blood feud settlement. I feel really guilty for forcing you to go with him," and then he took me back home.

When I explained all of these things to the judge in court, he granted the divorce the first day. After the divorce grant we separated. My husband waited for me for three years. Again he came in his car and tried to appeal to me. "Give her to me; I'll get treatment, I'll be better." My family now said, "We wouldn't even give you the tip of Solin's toe." It was over for us.

Three years after we divorced he remarried. The woman he married was another girl from our town. She supposedly still says, "She [Solin] was saved; now I am stuck in this." They haven't had any children of their own yet. Last year they adopted a child.

After all this I closed the book on marriage. I had such a terrible experience...it is over for me. I have never felt mentally ready to try again. My family hasn't pressured me. Actually, a divorced person would normally be immediately married off again in my family. A divorced person can't go freely to the market or go shopping. They cannot go out anywhere without a family member. It isn't possible for us. My family has not pressured me at all on this subject.

Five months later we lost my 21-year-old sister. She had diabetes. My mother got really depressed by her death and then found out she had a brain tumor, and that it was cancerous. For two and a half years she was bedridden, and I took care of her. I helped her use the bathroom. For two and a half years it went on like this. I lost my mother too, in the end. We married off two of my brothers at that time. My mother died after my second brother married. We lost my father one year later. When we lost him, we ended up as five siblings still living at home under difficult conditions. One of my brothers, the one who was the worst abused by my father, had run away from home. When my father died he called and said "Sister, I am here now. I am alive; don't be afraid. Now that our father is dead I will always be with you all."

My older brother knew Nebahat and her husband. He insisted that I go to KAMER. At that time I was really introverted. I saw only four walls; I didn't know much of life outside them. After my parents died I wanted everyone to move out so that I could sit and cry by myself. I embraced those four walls. My siblings said, "This can't go on. We can't keep you in here because we're not comfortable with it."

Later my sister met with Nebahat. She said to me, "Why don't you go meet with her and see what happens. Just one time." I never thought it would work. It wasn't possible, and I didn't want to. Nebahat said, "We want your help. Come and help us for a few days." Realizing that I was in a bad place, Nebahat wanted to win me over. Anyway I worked for three days. On the third day I told Nebahat, "I can't do this." It wasn't possible. I couldn't work.

I found being outside the house very distressing because I had never seen it before. For me there was only the inside of that house. Nebahat came back to me. "Solin, why don't you come and work for me three days a week? It couldn't hurt." I told Nebahat I couldn't do it. Anyway, through taking interest in me, talking to me and making me feel good about myself, she got me to agree to work three days a week for her. This time I started to go three days a week; the arrangement lasted for a month. Along with this I submitted an application for assistance. Normally a person would submit one application. They brought me in six or seven times. I was in a really bad mental state. I was having panic attacks. My blood pressure would rise; suddenly people had to watch me overnight. I would have to be taken into the emergency room occasionally. I was really in a terrible state. It was at this time that they were taking me in for applications.

In the meanwhile Nebahat said, "I will be conducting a group meeting for the last time, and I'd like for you to participate." I told her I was afraid. After starting to attend the group sessions I began to take a huge weight off my shoulders, and this put me in such a better frame of mind. The group meetings were in their third week. The third week, on a Sunday. I would never miss Doğan Cüceloğlu; it was a TV program I loved. He had a show called "Clean Community, Clean Life." I sat down; my youngest brother was taking a shower. I was watching TV by myself. I must have lost myself in the program so deeply that I couldn't see anything else.

All of a sudden there was no image of the TV in front of my eyes. I was hearing the sound, but I there was no image. I was really doing badly. Either I was going to fling open the balcony door and throw myself down below, or I was going to rip my shirt open and take off my clothes, or I was going to open the door, leave and never come back. I was in an unbelievably bad state. The inside of the house was completely dark, like night. I couldn't see anything. I sat there and couldn't get up. Because if I got up, something would happen. It wasn't possible, I couldn't stop myself. In the moment it was as if Nebahat were in my head. I slowly reached for the phone. "Nebahat," I said. "I am in a really bad way." "What happened Solin?" she asked. "I don't know," I said, "but I can't see anything and I feel terrible." The moment I heard my name coming from her phone I collapsed. The line was open. "Solin, Solin, Solin." Her voice was coming through but I couldn't pick up the phone. My blood pressure fell. I slowly came to my senses. I took the phone in my hand,

and Nebahat was there. "Solin, what happened to you?" I said, "I feel terrible right now." "Who is at home?" she asked. "Remzi is. He's in the shower. He doesn't know what's going on." I said. Maybe due to the noise from the shower he wasn't aware of what was going on. "Solin," Nebahat said, "I am going to send a car right now to come get you." "That isn't possible, I can't go outside right now," I said. "Nebahat, I want to throw myself off the balcony." She talked and talked...then she said again that she was sending a car. I said no. Without collecting myself a bit more I wouldn't be able to come downstairs. There was no elevator. I couldn't endure the stairs. I spent a half hour collecting myself. Nebahat called me back. "Solin what are you doing? What should we do now? What do you think?" "I'm really not doing well," I said. Nebahat said, "I'm sending a car now. Hayriye is going to come and get you." "No," I said, "Hayriye shouldn't come. I'm slowly collecting myself, and after that I'll come." She said "We are all waiting for you by the door." In that moment I felt like a mother had embraced me.

I got myself together. I came downstairs. I quickly called a car in front of the building. When I arrived they were all waiting for me. They embraced me. They made me talk about it a bit. While I was watching that Doğan Cüceloğlu everything I experienced within my family passed before my eyes. The abuse we experienced, the abuse towards my mother, everything...and my marriage. Everything I experienced within my marriage passed before my eyes in that moment. Through making me talk and comforting me a bit Nebahat got me down those stairs. She forced me to have some soup. I hadn't had anything to eat that day. Then they brought me right to a psychologist. After talking with the doctor for a bit they started me on some medications. It started with just one medication, but eventually I was taking four. It deeply affected me. I was living as if dead, but I was still functioning. They didn't suggest that I sit at home. Nebahat said, "Come and go, when you feel tired and want to sleep, just come upstairs." I couldn't talk directly with the doctor. I'm not sure if it was because he was a man or if I just couldn't feel comfortable. I just took medication as treatment. I did speech therapy with Jülide Aral. I continued in therapy with her while taking medicine for almost a year.

And then a new Solin emerged. As if I'd been born again...This is KAMER's skill. I wasn't accustomed to reading books. Now if I don't finish one book per week I feel like I'm missing something.

I worked for almost three years in the local office. Then I started to have foot pain. First I thought of quitting the work. Then Nebahat told me, “We’ll give you a job upstairs.” I worked for a while on the “Honor Killings” project. I still continue to work. With time I learned to keep reports and use computers. All of these things deeply excited me. Later on I became a group facilitator. Now I run the group.

In order to become aware of some things, you should first start with yourself. No pain, no gain. It won’t work unless we tear down the wall inside! We have an expression that means, “You can’t understand someone until you walk a mile in their shoes.” This is our situation. First we were in Diyarbakır, then we started to work in three more provinces. Now the number has risen to 23. This shows that there was a real need for our work. KAMER started as a drop of water, now it is like an ocean...and an ocean continues to grow.

6- Yekbun

“Now I have ‘no way’s’
and I have ‘new ways’ ”

I was born in 1969. I am of Kurdish origin, but my parents moved to the city center; I don't speak Kurdish. I am the middle child of seven siblings. My sister, who is two years older than I, was born with a twin that died. When I was born, they didn't feel the need to get a new ID and passed on my sister's dead twin's old one to me. I couldn't read because it was impossible to send me to school. My father was ill, our financial situation wasn't good, and I had to work. I finished high school and then worked as a substitute teacher for a year. Then I started to work at a government foundation. I was the only woman working among hundreds of men; I still work like this. For years I couldn't leave the apartment in pants. I was my father's daughter could do no wrong. I couldn't apply makeup, get my hair done, wear pants or fancy clothes, or laugh while serving others. I lived through so much...Government offices are small, enclosed places—places where gossip is rampant. I was afraid of being judged. I thought they would judge me purely because of my father; my father is a wonderful person, and I didn't want them saying his daughter was otherwise. I am married and have two children. While my husband doesn't restrain me in any way, I don't open myself up to those at the office. I have been smoking since I was 22 years old, but no one at the office knows it. They even put a sign right over my head that says “Smoking is Forbidden.” They think I am sick, and I haven't even broken it to them. Until two years ago what sacrifices I was making!

Before coming to KAMER I took part in a women's cooperative. I wasn't all that interested, but I participated in some of the activities. Before I went to SHÇEK's awareness-raising groups. I continued with it purely

for the goal of finishing something I had started, but I got nothing out of it; I didn't leave it feeling satisfied. For me that was a period of time that went to waste. The social services expert was a person from Izmir; her perspective was different because her approach was different. I couldn't really relate or feel close to her. Even when Naime invited me to the group I thought, "For goodness sake, who knows what nonsense this could be." I had heard of KAMER and had found out a little about their work, but having gone through this before, the group seemed like more nonsense to me. However, last year the group with Naime changed many things in my life. The first meeting was an introduction; the second and third meetings completely hooked me.

The side of KAMER that affected me most was its valuing women just for being women—not categorizing her, not attributing her to any one person or group, because being a woman in and of itself means being fraught with woes. This is at the foundation of everything. When I talked with Naime, the main reason I was so moved was this: her attitude towards people wasn't based on race, language or socioeconomic position. It was purely because they were women. This deeply moved me.

During the KAMER group I was really struggling with myself; I still am in the process of changing my life. I have come to realize some things. For example, I realized that for years I had devoted myself completely to my family, my husband, my children, and my in-laws. There was no 'I' there. Everyone brought their problems to me, inside and outside of the family. Whether they were relatives, people around me, or siblings, I was the focal point of all complaints and problems. During this period of self-examination I felt so terrible that I couldn't eat for days. For days I cried and wandered around. I went through a tough period. I regretted the things I had done in vain, without being aware of what I had needlessly done. I was going through a transformation. While trying not to offend anyone, I had sacrificed so much of myself. My 180-degree turn was really difficult, but now I feel really good. I have started to change some things; now I have 'no way's and I have 'new ways'. Now I don't necessarily have the intention of embracing everyone's problems. I make time for myself.

KAMER was a big first step in all of these things. The first 'no' I said was to my older sister after the group meetings. I had two children. My older sister, who worked at another women's foundation, had a son. Because

of her job there she was always going on trips and leaving her child for me to look after. I had two responsibilities already, and a third was being added on top of these. Among our other siblings I was the one always at home. I would always be home by five o'clock in the evening. I cut all ties to my friends; I struggled so much with my problems that I had no friends around me. First I told my sister to stop. I first reacted against her behavior. "I don't want your son coming and staying with me," I said. "He should stay with you." He had come over on Thursday and had spent four days at our house; by the third day he was just going to visit his mother as a guest in her house. I had two children, responsibilities at home, my siblings' and others' problems, my husband's family...and on top of it all, my sister's son. I first reacted to this. The boy had problems in school. My sister always said, "It's thanks to you that he reads books." At my sister's house they didn't read very much. Because I read a lot I instilled this in him; he was always reading when he was at our place. My sister said, "When he's at your house he reads, he does his homework, he has a stable life." I responded, "That is your job; I am just his aunt."

My second 'no' I said to my husband and his family. I was working at home and at the government office, on top of raising children and doing the shopping for the house. The entire responsibility of running the home was on my shoulders. To this I said 'stop.' For example, when I came to the Diyarbakir regional meeting, I told my husband, "You are going to look after our daughter," and I dropped off my daughter and left. He is currently looking after her. Since last year he has started vacuuming and doing the dishes. We have overcome some things through talking. When I got my voice back, I explained. I realized that I had taken such strenuous tasks upon myself; I did everything at home, and my husband just came home to sleep. He was a father using the house like a hotel. I was raising the children, I was bustling around, I was the one working. I talked to my husband about all of this. I said, "I'm really worn out, I have made a mistake up until now; if marriage is sharing, then we need to do this together." He showed a lot of understanding. For example a little while ago I was going to go out with Naime and her family to dinner. We have a bus that my husband drives; he came in, and I dropped the children off with him and went out to dinner.

My husband is generally a very understanding person, but he is also a member of a clan, and as a part of this he would tell me, "If you come

over to see my family, don't wear pants. If you come over to my relatives, don't do this, act like a proper wife." I experienced a lot of the difficulties of being a bride within a clan. I came from a very different background. From their perspective I was a stranger; they still haven't accepted me. Their marriages were always within the family to a nephew, a niece, etc. It was a huge clan, anyway; there were just four of us from outside the clan, four brides. I sacrificed myself to them too, because of my husband. My husband is really great to my family, so I feel obligated to his family. Despite the fact that they wore me out so much, I tolerated it. But now I said 'stop' to him. Generally at dinner we gathered in groups of 40 or 45. They all come and sit while you work, make them food, feed them, serve them drinks, and clean everything up. One day I told my husband, "I am working; until now I haven't made a peep, but after this I won't have the luxury to make dinner for them. You can call me to tell me they are coming, but the food will come from a restaurant, waiters will come and prepare it, they will feed you, and you will pay." For the last year and a half guests still come, but I have a restaurant where I answer the phone, make 40 people food, bring out and distribute the food, and there is no waste—none at all.

There is none of this anymore. I wear pants around my husband's family. When I don't feel like getting up and doing something, I don't do it; my husband is very understanding. But in the beginning, his family reacted strongly against KAMER. They said things like, "What are you going to do? You already work, you already have a job—you have two children. What is this KAMER, where did it come from? What are you trying to do?" I especially took a lot of flack from my mother-in-law and father-in-law. You already work, you are bringing money home, in their eyes you can't have this luxury. They have a different perspective. "No," I said, "whether you like it or not, I have gotten myself into this and I'm going to stick with it. I don't mean to make this a topic of discussion as to whether or not I'm continuing this work—I'm going to do this job." I went to their houses one day to speak openly with them; after that talk, my mother-in-law now says, "I must have been dreaming; this job is going to be really good for you."

After KAMER I can now ask my in-laws, "Why do you treat me this way?" Now, for example, if I stop somewhere and someone talks about me, I don't go to a third person to call them out. First I send news to them

through the person who told me, then I go directly to the home of the person who gossiped about me and say, "Why did you feel the need to say this about me? Why did you say this, for what reason?" I ask this without being aggressive. When this happened before I would fly into a huff, I refused to enter their home; it was right back to square one. But now without being ruffled I go and sit with them and say, "Why did you speak like this? I really don't appreciate it. Have you ever listened to me? If only you had asked me." They also explain themselves and relax; between us there is no offense. I figured this out last year. Then I was also picking up the phone to gossip; if it was the messenger, I was opening my mouth and closing my eyes. What happened then? Over a month or two relationships would fall apart. Also, since this is within a tribe, whatever you do, you can't escape. You're going to play your role; there is no possibility of leaving this land. But now I don't react angrily; I talk, and I don't bottle things up inside. Before if they made me mad, I felt my husband should be mad, too. But I said this to my husband, "My relationships with your family don't involve you; they are your mother and father; don't get involved in my relationships with your parents." Now my relationships are much healthier. They also take a step back now. They know that if something is said, I will take a stand. I learned this thanks to KAMER. Before, I would quarrel with my husband. I would hear one thing from his family and then fight with him about it. The effects of this were felt throughout the whole family. But now I don't let this affect anyone else; I handle problems one by one and go to the source myself; this doesn't drag me down anymore.

One of the biggest changes in me has been to my relationships with my children. If someone had told me one year earlier that I would leave my children and come to Diyarbakır, I would have told them it was impossible. I was a mother; I would never have thought of coming and leaving my children. I am really close to my daughters. I thought that if I weren't there, their lives would come to a halt. I focused all my maternal tendencies on them; for me my daughters were above everything else. I didn't conceive of anything without thinking of them first. I had no life outside of the home. Off to work at eight, home by five, home on the weekends; I definitely never went out at night; I arranged my schedule according to my children's plans. If they were in bed by 9, I wouldn't have the luxury of going out. I had to split up my daughters over the weekend. At a certain point I felt, "I am a working mother, I am a bad person because I don't spend enough time with my children." Thinking

that I wasn't able to spare enough time for them, I tried to make up for this in other ways and was really overbearing. I didn't give the children a chance to breathe freely. "You'll hurt yourself, you'll fall, don't kiss anyone, you could get sick." I was making both my and my children's lives miserable. After our group meetings I realized that I was making a big mistake. I wasn't helping them; I was harming them. I worried that I had really done damage to their futures, and I am still working through this in my head. I have read so many books about child psychology because of my daughters. I'm an expert now. 'My child behaves like this, I wonder why they behave that way'...and I run out to get a book. Beyond that I learned a ton about illnesses. I read so many books...I look at their faces and definitely see anemia. My protective instincts are so strong that I was endangering both them and myself.

I made the biggest change to my relationships with my children; now I leave them be. Now they can play downstairs until 9:30. Never having separated the two girls before, I sent my 10-year-old daughter to Istanbul on her own. My children have noticed this difference; to them it's unbelievable. My older daughter going to Istanbul by herself! Even my younger daughter who I leave alone sometimes says to me, "Mother, do you love me?" I made her perceive affection that way because I was such a protective mother. In being alone for just a moment my child was confused. Before I would carry her up a set of three stairs, thinking, I should tire myself, not her. Now I say, "Go, daughter, you can do it." My older daughter was able to analyze this. "Mother, KAMER really changed you," she says to me. She was always criticizing me, saying, "Mother, go out to dinner without father, get some fresh air." But because I couldn't imagine a life without them, my biggest focus was them. My daughter made this distinction; she always tells me, "Mother, KAMER really changed you." But my young daughter interprets it differently. She'll get used to it too, though. Just like everyone else around me, she will understand.

There were a bunch of other things besides these...small details, tiny things, but after the meetings all these things dawned on me. On the topic of discrimination, for example, I can tell you this: first we were five siblings, and then my little brother was born. His discrimination...I realized this much later, that we weren't even aware of the discrimination perpetrated by us older siblings. My God... We took part in that discrimination, but I didn't continue this with my children. I had two little boys—I lost them

due to problems related to premature birth. My mother-in-law never let this go. My sons didn't live, but I had two daughters. I had my tubes tied. I still haven't told my mother-in-law about this. She still says, "After you retire you'll give birth to a son, right?" I tell her, "Yes, god willing, mother," as I avoid the topic. I have tried hard but haven't been able to change this. We experienced a lot of abuse from my father-in-law due to having only daughters. I told him, "Don't come to our house if you don't want; my daughters don't need your affection." They don't need this affection because my husband said, "What are you going to leave to these two girls? You struggle so much, after all they are girls, you don't have a son and you never stop working—are you trying to feed everyone's children?" We were close to divorce at that point. I told him that I couldn't live in under the same roof as him under those conditions. However, through talking we saw eye to eye. I don't have any problems with my husband on this topic; he is a very understanding person, and until now we haven't entered into another argument on the topic of our children's gender. This goes to show that our environments definitely have a huge effect on us.

The environment at work is the same. The most nonsensical things come up when they talk about their wives; 'they are women, anyway.' One man commented about his wife, who had to stay at home: "I work here, I bring home the bread; I have to do that to. She has to make me food and have my children." After KAMER I explained to them so many things that at least they don't talk like that around me anymore. Before, I wouldn't make a peep as they chatted amongst themselves; now they're scared to talk in my midst. I have become dangerous. My reaction against men came from this; I have always worked with very close-minded, conservative people and didn't see any change among these degenerates. I had worked with the same people for 18 years. Changing them is really hard, but I managed to change one colleague from the office. It was a big accomplishment for me. For example, despite the fact that he was deeply religious, he told me, "Why don't you take my wife with you, she can join the group with you and take some things from it." I changed him and 2-3 people around us. KAMER was a huge contributor to this.

We experience discrimination down to the smallest details of our lives, such that it impossible for us not to be feminists. I experienced this in all my surroundings. I experienced this in my work life, within my friends, and as an ideology for years. Someone could be my friend from the party,

I could have been in love with them, but no—I didn't have that luxury. I have now left my old political identity behind. I don't see myself that way after KAMER. I had sacrificed myself for the party, but over time what mistakes...I understand where I am now. I at least try to remove violence from every part of my life. Every single part. I don't discriminate the same way now. For example, before, if a new person had come into my group of friends and if they had different political views, I just wouldn't have talked to them. I would have turned my back. They had to be coming from the same point of view in order for me to share with them. I don't have hang-ups like these anymore. There have been unbelievable changes in my life. I try not to do that now, and to encourage those around me to behave the same. Because I paid a very high price. I wore myself down, spent myself. I don't want the same things to happen around me. Of course I also don't want my children to make the same mistakes. I am making the biggest investment in my children.

7- Demsal

“I call myself a feminist within the framework of KAMER”

I am 22 years old. I am pursuing my degree remotely in the area of early childhood development. I am doing an internship in a nursery school right now. I really like it; I like working with children. I really wanted an education, but my headscarf was a problem. The school wouldn't accept me because of this...I thought I wouldn't gain anything from being in school without others like me. I choose to study from home because of this. I don't have to uncover my head; this makes me happy. Maybe if I had lived in another province I would have taken off my headscarf. In doing this internship they wanted me to remove the scarf; at first they didn't accept covered women. But later they looked the other way on this issue because they found me competent. They can do that, since this is a more conservative city.

I found out about KAMER through my older brother, who works with Nilüfer's son. One day my brother called us on the phone and said, “We have a guest coming from Diyarbakır; can you host her?” I asked why she was coming. He said, “She works at a civil society organization.” I was immediately biased against her. We know well the activities of civil society organizations here...They always present the same face, and, as I see it, don't do much of anything. They propagate the existing hierarchical structure, one that is totally upside down. I have never felt comfortable with them. This was why I couldn't participate in any of their work. I referred to them as the “hierarchical old ladies.” I thought Nilüfer was going to be one of them. And then we met. When Nilüfer explained KAMER to me, there was a key sentence: “The obstacles that covered women face are a form of

violence.” When I heard this, I said, “I should definitely be a part of this work.” There was a woman out there who understood my problem as a form of violence. To most people this isn’t a problem at all, or at least not a type of violence. After this, I really came into being. What made me the happiest was when KAMER opened an office here; the place endured and was furnished, and we were a part of it all...

I always get like this when I talk about KAMER, I get really excited. I tell Nilüfer, “There was a problem; you came here and expressed it, and then left and we were left to our own devices. Before I was living in ignorant bliss not knowing these things, but now I am aware and I feel terrible.” I changed my life and myself. I started with my family. I started to transform the things that bothered me. Now my mother and I are in a really, really good place. We solved all our problems. It used to be a problem for us to go home after spending time here in the evenings. My mother-in-law would often get mad, saying we all needed to be home before the evening call to prayer. When we got home late, my mother would list off the complaints she had memorized. We would try to defend ourselves, and it would turn into a yelling match. One time I left KAMER and came home quite late. My mother-in-law opened the door and said, “Where have you been?” I said, “I apologize, I know I’m late.” She froze; she didn’t know what to do. She had been prepared to chew me out, and I had also prepared some words. She became quiet and went inside and didn’t talk for an entire day. I always tell my mother-in-law, “I wish I could have frozen that moment.” The relationship between my mother-in-law and myself really improved. I tried to explain everything to her. She can’t read or write and gets depressed about this. Because she didn’t want her children to be in the same situation, she put a whole lot of effort into their educations. At the same time, she is a woman who has experienced very strong societal pressure. She also changed with KAMER, took a step back from judging others, stopped gossiping. My mother and I together changed her perspective. Because when you realize some things directly, you start to change. You start with the people closest to you, or those with whom you have problems. My mother-in-law hasn’t joined a KAMER group yet, but she will. Her interest in the world has increased... For example my mother is now really afraid of global warming. She gets sad when she sees something on TV about global warming, and she calls me and says “Come quickly and explain this to me,” because she doesn’t understand it that well. She also tries to explain global warming to others.

My father and I have never talked. My father was the kind of father who loves his children without showing it. But now he expresses his feelings by saying, "You are so thin, it makes me sad that you look so tired." I realized that neither of us had done anything to improve our relationship. Nilüfer has an expression that I love: "People do the best that they know how." In other words, while others are doing the best they can, I have been lowering my standards to theirs, not my own. I never hugged my own father. After coming to KAMER, there was an incident when my father deeply offended me and was definitely in the wrong. I expressed how I felt, saying, "Father, you really hurt me and didn't have the right to say what you did." We didn't talk for two days. After the second day my father came to me and said, "Demsal, I bought you something, but I'm not sure you'll like it." At that time my family was planning on buying a refrigerator; I thought he had gone without the rest of us to buy one. "Did you go without us and buy a fridge?" I asked. "No, my daughter, nothing like that, just look." I looked and in his hand was a small box. I took the small box and opened it, and inside there was perfume. It was actually men's cologne, but it didn't matter. We were seven siblings, I was the youngest, and everyone was married except for me, who was at home. Until that day my father had never bought anyone a present. For the first time after hurting my feelings he gave me a gift! When I told all my older brothers and sisters about it they were shocked; they couldn't believe it. I hid my gift. At that moment I hugged him, and he hugged me back. Of course he didn't use the words "I'm sorry," but it doesn't matter, in the end he was aware of what he'd done. This made me very, very happy.

The group meetings in which I took part affected me most in the area of communication. There were real defects in my ability to communicate. I say this for myself. I was always saying, "but, but, but"; there was always a 'but.' For this reason, I couldn't carry on a dialogue with the person in front of me; I was always on the defensive. I had so many 'but's...I have realized this and worked on it, thankfully. The subject of judgment really affected me as well—I am now embarrassed by how judgmental I was. On the topic of abuse, however, I became very upset and had to leave the meeting room. I cried a lot. This was the most jarring topic. I said, "I am not abused." First I said that, then, "I am a girl, not a woman." Nilüfer said, "Is there such a gender as 'girl'?" Then it hit me, and questions fell on my head like a sledgehammer. "Truly, there is no gender called 'girl,'" I said. There are only two genders: man and woman.

After participating in the group, I realized that I had been subject to serious abuse. Because I am the youngest girl in the family, I have been seriously abused by my older sisters. They always said, "You are too young, you can't do this, you can't do that." I was being ripped to pieces right in front of them, but they couldn't see that. One day I put this into words, "I am here now, and since I am here, the least you can do is to respect my desires, the things I do, and the things I have accomplished." They accepted this later. They still say, "If you grow up, what will we do?" "Sister," I say, "I can't stay little forever; I'm growing up." One sister still turns a blind eye to what I do. I want her to appreciate my various activities, but she won't touch it, won't get involved, won't feel or see it. But the others aren't like that. After I expressed what I did the others all said, "You are right." Some of them even came to me and apologized. I shared so many things with the group. After sharing the mistakes we make in communication, my older sister called me one night really late and said, "I sat and thought about it, and my husband and I have serious communication problems. For this reason I was also experiencing a lot of problems." This moved me. I am probably explaining things in an impassioned way, that's why.

Speaking of discrimination...there has been substantial discrimination against us since childhood. Other children were forbidden from playing with us because we are Kurds. I never said, "I don't like them." Completely the opposite, I really liked those people but we were always the 'other.' Here there are a lot of Alevis. As Kurds we get along better with them. Since Kurds already experience so much discrimination I think we don't discriminate against others. There are others who don't express this, those who are Kurdish but don't tell anyone. I mean, I know very well that they are Kurds, but they don't talk about it because it upsets them, they think people will find them strange. We expended a lot of effort trying to bring these people to KAMER; hopefully they will participate in a group meeting. They all say "ok" but we have a tough time actually gathering them together. I tell them, "You will become aware of a lot of things at KAMER; after you leave, you'll want to stay."

The things that the other women in my group shared affected me really negatively. I couldn't shake it off when I went home. I still think that I could experience the same things...My mother could have experienced those things, or my sister. I still don't believe it, can't accept that it's true. "People can't experience things like that." I would say. But they do,

regardless of whether I believe it. After finishing the group I immediately sent some of my relatives to KAMER. I told all of them, "You simply must participate. If it affected me this much, it will definitely affect you, too." They are really happy, too. They also experienced big changes...

Before joining KAMER, a group of us got together to form a women's group. We were going to help families in tough economic situations and also hold group meetings. We got together and filled a truck with bags of food to distribute. But when we came together to deliver the food, I was shocked at the sight of the other volunteers. The people living in the neighborhoods to which we were going hadn't seen very many other people. The women in our group were wearing things like fur and gold jewelry. I was really embarrassed by their behavior, because the people we were going to help weren't even going to come close to these women if they were dressed like that. We went anyway, and it was just as I expected. It didn't go well because the people who received our food aid felt worse about themselves for it. We tried to talk to them, but they wouldn't come close. They just took the packets, thanked us and left. To them you were so different...I brought this up at KAMER's first meeting. If you come to me like this, I won't want to talk to you, because I am not one of you. According to you, you are saved and you are trying to save me, "We are going to help you, and you are dependent on my help!" This was the message we gave people. Those people couldn't look us in the eyes; everyone tried to take their package and leave, to get out of there as quickly as they could.

There was a difference between our feminism and the feminism KAMER teaches. After understanding that difference I was deeply affected...Nilüfer asked us, "When you hear the word 'feminist,' what comes to mind?" To me, feminism was a bad thing. I mean, I didn't want to be a man-hater. That wasn't it, though. We knew it as that because all the feminists we knew personally were like that. We had met with a few of these hierarchical old ladies here; they had come from Istanbul. It was the same thing; they didn't listen to us and we didn't listen to them. They just talked amongst themselves or took us to tea; we went reluctantly. Later on they left us.

I call myself a feminist through KAMER's framework...feminism is different with KAMER, I think. In KAMER's feminism, we say, "Let's be together, let's walk next to each other." This is a great thing. In Kurdish

culture, for example, men tend to be the louder ones, and I have a strong reaction to this among people, usually our relatives. I say, it shouldn't be like this, in my opinion women are generally happy when I show a reaction. Because there is a language problem above all else, it's very serious, I'm trying to help them...

At KAMER, equality comes first. None of us might have top social status, but since seeing this equality, I can very comfortably express myself. In the first KAMER meeting we were told, "Ok, you all have the floor." This was really important. Ahh—I'm going to talk! Since we gained the right to speak, we haven't stopped talking.

We see KAMER as our home. We made it, we worked; this is why it's so great. We labored. Since we are the backbone of the foundation, we can't just say "our work is done." We can't, because we are attaining our goals. I want to stay at KAMER. I am already on the inside. Right now I can't be overly active because of my schooling, but hopefully we'll create another awareness group. If we don't form a group, that's not a problem either—I think I'll always keep talking. For one thing, everyone at KAMER does their own work. Someone doesn't prepare something and then put it in front of you. You do it yourself, and this is really good. This pushes you above all to not be lazy; you find and solve your own problems. You decide together. In some places there is a higher-up person who makes the decisions; you carry out what they decide. But KAMER is not like this. When we talk about problems, we ask, "What do you think we should do?" In saying "you" this implies direct responsibility to the person asked. At that time you really do things and feel responsible. At KAMER you don't just talk about a problem and then wash your hands of it and go home.

We are new here. When we follow the activities in Diyarbakir, when we see what they are doing there, we say, "Wow, KAMER does so much." When we at KAMER go into our group email chain, we say, "KAMER truly does amazing things." And in seeing this, we are inspired to try to do more. Above all, we want KAMER to be well-known here. There is already a bias against KAMER because it is based in Diyarbakir. What I want most is to lift this bias. What I want to say is, absolutely do not wait for the world to be saved. Do something for yourself. After that, whether or not you want, your neighbors' problems will pique your interest...

8- Tibelya

“You experience this much abuse, you have such a disgraceful life,
yet you still wait for him every night”

Where should I even begin? I can explain how I got from marriage to here, actually. Everything is related to my life change. Now, I married willingly to the man of my choice at age 17. I dropped out of high school when I got married. We really loved each other. My husband was a distant relative. I was a golden girl who was always receiving compliments—you know how celebrities are always being flattered and receiving attention? I always felt like that. Later my husband realized his feelings for me. Upon realizing this I didn't want to leave him—I had found my match. It started like that. I was in the seventh grade when I got involved in this relationship. Later his family immigrated to the Aegean. In my first year of high school, 1992, I got married. In 1992 I had my wedding. We moved straight to Aydın. We lived with my mother-in-law, of course.

The problems started on the first day and stemmed from my mother-in-law. The woman would openly say, “Actually, you will be *my* bride; you aren't a person to me but for my son...I love my son, and because I didn't want my son to be sad, I had to bring you here.” She would say this every day at any opportunity. My husband was aware of this, so he would console me and give me advice. We were six years apart in age. He would say, “My mother really loves me, she really values me; she brought me up like a girl, I'm her first love; just deal with it.” Whenever I fought with my mother-in-law, in every fight, every time we got upset, he tried to support her. Later on while living in Aydın we were exposed to a lot of discrimination for being Kurdish. Nationalism was widespread and we were not wanted there; we were forced to move back east. We settled into Siirt.

My first problem started like this. At one point, in order to get my high school diploma, my husband and I came to our home town. I took the tests remotely. My father-in-law also came and went to eat dinner with his own family's mother-in-law. It didn't occur to me to say "take care" as we parted ways. This was very bad for me; the return trip was really bad. First curses and abuse...My father-in-law didn't talk to me for four or five months after this instance; he rejected me. After that he put a stop to my family's visits to me and my visits to them. I wasn't allowed out of the house. My relations with my husband...My mother-in-law made her feelings of jealousy and dislike ever clearer by the day. After that we had to move towns again. There I had my first child. In 1994 my first baby, my daughter, was born.

Actually, during my first pregnancy, my mother-in-law was really good. She looked after my baby, she even gave her milk every night. She looked after her well, was affectionate with her, treated her as important. My husband's sister got married, and after that we became closer. Sometimes when there were problems, like when her daughter was unhappy, she started to blame me again, saying things like, "If you hadn't married my son, we wouldn't have come back to this town, and my daughter wouldn't have gotten together with this nobody." Again I was the root of all their problems. Every day she would say in some way, "You aren't worthy of my son. My son could have done better than you. He could have found someone better educated." She was always saying this. I was really sad, of course. After my daughter was born, she was thrust into the middle of this all.

To be quite honest, I couldn't look after my daughter. I mean that I didn't have motherly feelings. She would cry in the middle of the night and my mother-in-law would get up and give my daughter her own breast. She intervened; I couldn't hold or kiss my child. I couldn't put my arm around my daughter or help her use the bathroom when she I wanted, dress her like I wanted. Because my mother-in-law took all these things upon herself, she effectively staked her claims. I was just there to occasionally nurse her or change her diapers. My mother-in-law never let her go; she always got in between us. My relationship with my husband had already begun to deteriorate at that point. We had no private life. Even when I was pregnant, if I wanted something he would go out and get it in secret in the middle of the night.

Actually, if we look at our family life in the past, at our customs and traditions, this was always happening. I am not the first. There are many brides who have lived with a mother-in-law like mine, and there still are, but my mother-in-law was so jealous and would never leave us alone. Whenever she felt like it she would insult me, reject me. Because she was always insulting me and getting angry with me I would avoid the sitting room and the dinner table. She could always judge me for something. There was a family structure: when the woman got in a fight with you, she wouldn't talk. Because she wouldn't talk to you, the family wouldn't talk to you, my sister-in-law and brother-in-law included. You were completely excluded.

It was five people against one...it was very easy to experience discrimination there. Of course outside of that you didn't have the right to speak at home, you couldn't make tea when you wanted, or make coffee; you couldn't be with your husband when you wanted, or go outside when you wanted. I was really glad when the woman would go out for a while. I could at least breathe. When I stayed with my husband we could perhaps be alone for a little while together. I couldn't talk, couldn't chat with anyone. At night you have two hours between dinner and bed: you can chat, or you can go to bed, or you can do something else. In those two hours, what can you really do? Plus, pouring out my troubles was a bandage of sorts; I was always complaining. She could have said "stop" at some point, however right or wrong it would have been.

My daughter was one year old when I was beaten for no reason. It was my first beating. With my child in the cradle, I was beaten for absolutely no reason. This was again at my mother-in-law's provocation. Outside of this we really loved each other. My husband really loved me, really doted on me. Of course the woman couldn't stand this. Later when my daughter was four years old, we had to go to Adana. We went to Adana but my family didn't know this. They didn't give me permission to see my family at any time. They felt no need to, because to them it was a meaningless thing whether or not I got to see my family. My family learned about our move several months later.

In Adana we took my wedding gold and sold it. With it we bought some land and built a house. We were staying in a rental place. It was when we went to Adana that my relationship with my husband really unraveled.

We had had a connection, affection, for each other, and that disappeared too. I was totally on my own in Adana. I became pregnant with my second child and wanted to abort it. I was experiencing so much violence that I attempted suicide. I really experienced so much abuse. I even decided to jump from the fourth floor, and then tried to roll myself down the stairs, thinking it would kill the baby. When I went to sleep at night, I would think, "Tomorrow my mother-in-law will do this terrible thing to me." When I woke, it would come true. It was a sixth sense.

Later construction started and the house was built. My husband spent a lot of time at the site as construction sped up. I was completely alone at home. In addition to this, his mother became more abusive. For example, if she got annoyed with me, she would ban me from the kitchen. If she put something in front of you, you had to eat it, and you had no right to ask for anything else. You couldn't ask, anyway. Even if you wanted it you couldn't ask; you'd be too scared. To want was a terrible thing. Think about it: you live in a house, you are a part of a family, but you have to ask permission to eat or to use the bathroom. It was horrible. On top of that, I was eight months pregnant. I said to myself, "I'm so hungry, I might as well be fasting." I recall, at the time I fasted for 10 or 15 days. "If I'm going to be hungry all day, it might as well count as fasting." Sometimes I would go into the kitchen at night and get out some food. I would want to take some things out of the refrigerator but I would ask myself, "What if she counts the food? Will she realize I took something?" Then I'd close the refrigerator door and go back to bed. This was really a terrible feeling. It was so painful, worse than a beating even. Truly this feeling was worse than any physical violence I experienced.

Anyway, the day we moved was the day I gave birth. It was really heavy lifting, not a woman's job at all. When I began to go into labor, my mother-in-law was there and said, "You must be exaggerating, daughter—go away. You act as if this is your first birth or something." And with that, she brushed me off. They sent me to a nearby neighbor. I went on foot, and in that woman's house that the cramps began. But I was so hungry, the neighbor made me eggs and I ate them ravenously...I had labor pains and hunger pains all at the same time. I ate like I never thought I could; I didn't think about how the food would make me uncomfortable. At night the cramps intensified. My husband and in-laws were all at home; only I was at the neighbor's house. They didn't even ask: this woman is pregnant—

where is she and what happened? They were moving the house. At 11 PM I went home. My labor pains started. Unluckily for me, there was no midwife; actually there were a few midwives, but none wanted to come. At that time in Adana a midwife had been killed, so they were scared and didn't want to attend births. They would say they couldn't find a car, it was so late at night, etc....I started to feel terrible, and in the end they brought me to a clinic. I was by myself in the pre-labor room until five o'clock in the morning. I was abandoned. I didn't have anything with me, not even a change of clothes. I gave birth around 5 AM. The baby was stillborn. It was because in the last month the baby's twin had died and decayed in my womb; I hadn't been aware of it. When I told my mother-in-law that I was bleeding very heavily she just told me that I was being a wimp and sent me away. It seemed that the hemorrhaging was from her. My baby was born dead, but I was so happy that it was stillborn. Thanks be to God!

Later I got pregnant again. I couldn't be happy when that child was born. I knew that her life would be miserable like mine. And she was also a girl; I was done. Anyway, I gave birth and remained there for half an hour; the nurses didn't come near me. I felt really ill and there was a bad smell. Later they threw away my underwear and I was without any clothes. They brought me to the waiting room, and I had nothing to wear. I had only a letter, a sanitary pad and a blanket for the baby that I tied her up in. Somehow I managed until I got home.

The worst had only just begun. My mother-in-law became even worse and restricted me from using the bathroom. The family didn't look at me or my daughter. My husband didn't want me any more. Our bedroom stank because of me; I couldn't bathe myself or our daughter. Such a grave situation in a place like Adana...I just wanted to bathe my daughter, but I was afraid to. I didn't play a role in raising my older daughter at all. I don't even know how to bathe her. And she never came near me. For 20 or 25 days after the birth of my younger daughter, we were kept in our putrid state, not allowed to bathe. After that the abuse started to intensify. My mother-in-law had succeeded in slowly pulling my husband away from me. It started with his being in her room, then putting a separate bed in there, after that he stopped talking to me, then later he totally moved into her room. My mother-in-law started to sleep in the living room. She would sit there for hours waiting on my husband to go to bed, just like someone waits on an infant. When my husband went to sleep, then she would go as

well, just to be sure that he had gone to bed. She really did this. She also started to have my husband meet other women. He was going out in the evenings now and not even thinking of me. We were playing fox and hen. The husband was inside the house; I was waiting up for him wondering when he would come home, thinking that when he came through the door I'd catch him and talk to him. But I didn't have the chance. After the 1997 earthquake everyone built gazebos and slept outside, but I stayed inside, and no one came for me.

There was no life outside, no shopping, no relationships with anyone. I was inside those four walls 24 hours a day; my home was my prison. They don't make you do work when men are around so that it attracts their attention. It's when the men aren't at home that they make you work. But when my husband and father-in-law weren't at home they didn't make me work, to make me feel like I had no purpose at all in being there. As much as you want, you can't stand up for yourself. I wasn't in any position to defend myself.

If we don't know our rights—if we don't put words to the abuse in our lives—we can't struggle against it. Truly. A certain period of time later you begin to blame yourself. You say, "If I had been better, if I had been smarter, if I had been prettier, they wouldn't have done this to me." You come up with a bunch of reasons related to yourself. I had started to do that. I even began to provoke them into beating me; when they beat me it would calm me down. I was like an animal. A feeding at home...She would make a normal meal for everyone and they would all eat together. My food was left on the table like an animal's trough; it was thrown in front of me and she'd say "Eat this!" Whatever it was. She told me to never sit down at the table before she had gotten up. She said all sorts of horrible things. To her husband she would say, "Take her away, I already take care of both of her two children, let her leave and get out of our lives." During the day I would steal bread from the kitchen and hide it in the children's clothes, because sometimes I couldn't sleep from hunger. Sometimes I would toss and turn all night because I was so hungry. When I stole bread I could manage.

I'll never forget the day that she was gone; there was lunch, and I was sitting at home. I thought to myself that while she was gone, I should quickly feed Helin, my oldest daughter, before she came back. Just as I was feeding

Helin, she suddenly reappeared. As soon as she entered the room I put Helin down, saying, "You continue, I'll go." My younger daughter was just a baby. Normally one would use disposable diapers, but I was using cloth diapers, because they wouldn't buy me the disposable ones. In a place like Adana where we had a really nice house, to think I was outside stoking a fire and washing cloth diapers. I said, "Let the child eat, I'll go wash the diapers and hang them; I'll get everything ready, and after they eat I'll go and eat." It was one o'clock; I went and washed the diapers and dried them; the baby woke up and I fed her and put her back down; then it was three o'clock, then four. The family didn't come out of the kitchen. In July I was still breastfeeding my younger daughter; I was trembling from hunger. I waited and waited, but nothing. I went into the kitchen, and my sister-in-law had cleaned it, all the work was done...I wouldn't have let my father-in-law hear anything, because it was actually partially my fault. I never said anything. If I said anything I'd just be blamed. I waited for the man to leave, thinking that once my father-in-law left I could go in and ask for food so that he wouldn't hear. I thought he had left, so I went to my sister-in-law and asked if there was any food left. They said some horrible things to me. "What are you going to do," she asked, "did you not eat?" "Really," I said, "if I weren't breastfeeding I wouldn't be asking you, but since you know I am breastfeeding, I need to eat. If there is anything, please let me just have a little soup or something." I waited and said, "Well, ok then," and left.

My father-in-law had heard me. I went to my room and he followed me. His coming to my room meant a beating. "You brought shame on us," he said. "What kind of woman are you? Does someone ask for food in their home, does the member of a household do this, what kind of behavior is this? We couldn't break you in. You couldn't take this place on as your own. Could you not get used to living with us? What kind of behavior is this?" He continued this way. I didn't say anything while he cursed me and my parents. I didn't let out a peep. But after he left I composed myself. I said, "One minute, father, would you listen to me?" He turned his back to me. I said, "Father, you always say these things to me, but did you ever ask your wife once why I can't take this, why I can't get used to your family? Did you ever ask your wife once why I don't have freedom?" "What are you trying to say?" he asked. "I can't even go into the kitchen a drink a glass of water," I said. "In Adana's heat, for all of July, I have been drinking out of the tap. They mock me with their leftovers, saying, 'Look, she's gone to get watered.' The whole time I was pregnant I don't remember one single time

that I sat down and drank a tea or sat and watched a TV show, but you don't see any of this. Go and ask your wife," I said. "I also want that when my child is hungry I can prepare her something, or I can eat something myself." He stormed off in a rage to his wife and this time attacked her, saying, "Aren't you embarrassed of yourself? This is a pity. She's is our daughter too. If everyone shamed their daughters-in-law like this, no one would let their daughters marry. Why do you do this?" His wife started to yell, he got up to hit her; the children got in the middle of everything. Then the woman said, "It's either me or Tibelya. She goes or I do. I am not your wife. Either divorce me or send Tibelya away." Later between the two of them they made some arrangements and brought me here.

I came with my father-in-law to our home town to do some sightseeing. One day he told me, "Get your things ready, tomorrow you'll go see your parents." At the time I wasn't talking with my family at all. I wasn't allowed to use the phone. Because I couldn't leave the house my family didn't know anything about me at that point; they didn't know where I was or what I was doing. I hadn't communicated with them in a year and a half or two years. No, no—at one point I was doing really badly and begged them to let me call my father. I called him and told him to come and get me before all of this happened. He came and talked with the family. My father settled the matter and left me again.

After all this my father-in-law brought me back with the supposed aim of sightseeing. We didn't go as far as my home town. He delivered me to someone else, depositing me with one of his relatives, who brought me home the next day. My coming back in this way caused a huge stir in my family. One month passed, then two, three, four, and my in-laws didn't ask about me. No one called. Later the elders discussed and told me, "You're not going back there. They have divorced you without your knowledge; that's why they haven't come back to get you." My older brother called and said, "Come and get your children, stay as a guest for one or two months, but I can't put you up for six months." My husband said, "We were using this woman, you should use her for a little while too, what could happen?" I said, "I'm going. If words like that are going to come out of my husband's mouth, I'm leaving." Again I was forced to leave, and I left on my own.

This time things got really out of hand. Everyone got up in arms; nobody would talk to anyone. The same things started to go on. For the past eight

months I hadn't exchanged words with my husband. He wouldn't come into my room, into my bed. He wouldn't talk. Now there weren't any beatings; no one talked. My husband was seeing someone else. My sister-in-law and mother-in-law were looking for a woman for him non-stop. He would disappear for weeks on end. Living just to eat...it was a terrible life; it takes a lot of strength just to explain it all.

We had a neighbor to the back of our house. I motioned to the woman, "Can I talk to you a minute?" In my hand I had a gold ring, which I gave to the woman and said, "This is yours—can I make a phone call from your home?" The woman said, "Really? I'm aware of your situation. I can't believe it's going on." She had fed me through the window a number of times. "I keep my eye on you but I can't do anything for you."

My in-laws really loved my elder daughter. She had completely cut off relations to me. For example, when my in-laws would go out, my daughter would report to them on everything I did while they were gone. "My mother turned on the television, she did this, she did that." They made my daughter do that. But no matter how much you direct a child, they never leave their mothers. She was aware of some of what was going on. At one point I was going to attempt suicide. As you may know, in that area many people had problems with mice, so we were always putting mouse poison everywhere. It was the time of the 1997 earthquake. I took out the mouse poison, a lot of it. I kissed my daughter. She was five years old at that time. "Go," I said, "and don't come back in here." I put the baby down to sleep. I was swallowing the mouse poison, and as I was swallowing I got caught. My husband grabbed my hand, the hand with the poison, and hit it with the other hand. He didn't say, "You're killing yourself." He said, "You're getting us into trouble! Who do you think you are, killing yourself? Now we're going to have to deal with your death, too? What is your problem?" And then he started to beat me up.

I tried to talk to my husband, saying, "Let's talk and figure this out, why do you do this to me? What have I done to you?" He would say, "I don't want you, I don't want to be responsible for you any more. For so many years I carried you on my back; now it's my mother's turn. I can't cope with both of you." His mental health was also unstable at that point. He also said, "Either I'm going to leave or you are. If you want, go and save your life, start a new life on your own; or if you want, continue living like this

in this house, but I have no use for you. I can't act like a husband towards you because I don't want you any more—I don't love you."

After that I called my mother from the neighbor's house. My mother said, "Daughter, come to us, we have bread to feed you." When she said that, it was as if the sun started to shine. I felt like I'd been born again. Her words moved me. After she said that I completely collected myself and made my decision. I came home. I mean, I divorced my in-laws and surrendered myself. This was what they had wanted anyway, for me to surrender. I left my older daughter there. They wouldn't give her to me, and I had no chance anyway. Where I'm from, a woman with children can't come back. If you come back to your parents' home, you come back alone; you can't come back with your children. But I had to take my baby. Because my mother-in-law was threatening, "Either take her or I'll put her in an orphanage, because I don't love this child." Sometimes she would say, "Is she a bastard or what? I can't warm up to this child." She never loved her. At that time my mental health was really bad, I couldn't think clearly. I took my baby with me; and when my older brother came to get me, I left with him.

I came here and started a new life. If it could be called a life...It was really hard to struggle with the community, to make them accept you. Being divorced in this region is really tough, especially if you are young. Two years after getting divorced, a man came forward. He was a man my relatives had chosen, and his wife had recently died. He said, "I will take care of her daughter." Of course, after I came back to my parents' home I wasn't talking with my husband, and my family wouldn't let him interact with my younger daughter. We had completely cut off contact. They told me, "You are a widow with a child; nobody will want you; you have no job. This man's wife has died, he has two children, and he is at a good age for you." I was 23 years old and my ex-husband was 30. They said, "You can't marry a 30-year-old; marry a 40-year-old. If you don't marry a man with two children, you'll marry one with 10 children." At the time the status of being a divorcee was really negatively affecting my mental state. I said, "If he will look after my daughter, I'll marry him." The man promised he would take care of her. He said, "You'll look after my two children and I will look after your daughter." And I accepted his word. Before two months had passed, the man had thrown my daughter out of the house. She was four years old at the time. He then said, "I don't have to take care

of your daughter. I don't have to look after your bastard child." I said, "Yes, you do." He said, "No, I don't." We went back and forth. A month passed like this. My mother was obligated to take my daughter. She said, "Send the girl to me; I already cared for her for two years and I'll take care of her again; it's not a problem. It's enough that you don't have a second divorce staining your reputation."

Therein was my mistake. When I sent my daughter away, I was going to go too. I had no reason to stay in that man's house. It was just a terrible feeling to be a divorced woman yet again. It was terrible for the people around me, for my mother. They would say, "If she had been a good woman, a clean woman, her second husband wouldn't have divorced her." If people thought this, it would be terrible for me and for my family. Anyway, I sent my daughter to my mother but told the man, "I'm giving you a one year grace period. In one year you will come to trust me, your children will get used to me, and you will get used to my daughter." We still hadn't gone through with the formal marriage at that point; we couldn't because of a technical problem. In the mean time two or three months passed; all the while I was asking him to take care of our marriage license. He wouldn't do it. I wanted him to do it and he wouldn't. He also wasn't giving me permission to see my daughter. He wouldn't take me to my parents' home, saying that I'd get to see my daughter. When my daughter came back home, he made rude faces at her, abusing her even with his facial expressions so that she'd feel distant and go back. He threatened me after my daughter left. He would put a gun in his child's hand and tell them, "If she does anything to you, this is how you pull the trigger." One time they even accidentally shot a bullet right in front of my face; it was really a near miss. And that's how it was...It wasn't clear whether the man was a psychopath or just jealous or what. I would ask, "I never did anything to you, and I don't even know you. I married you because you said you were going to take care of my daughter—you promised. Why are you doing this?" After that the man prohibited me from having any sort of life outside the home. My uncle had a saying, "He's made you his mistress. Some people go to a brothel to find a woman and make her their mistress, and he's done this to you." Anyway, eight and then nine months passed. My family came over, including my father and my uncles. I had made my decision already. I said, "Look. I have been trying to be married to this man for eight months, but he won't get our marriage license; he doesn't trust me. He tells me, 'If you have a child I'll say it's not mine; if you don't have

any children with me, I'm still not going to get the marriage license but you have to look after my children.' I don't have to be anybody's servant. I don't even have my daughter by my side. I didn't leave my daughter with her father. I have been trying for eight or nine months here to be married because of you all, but he doesn't do anything for me. He doesn't get our marriage license, he won't bring my daughter back, and he won't give me a clean live with a good marriage. Whether you support it or not, I want to separate from him." My uncle accepted it. My father didn't say anything. They already knew what I was going through; my daughter was living with them. This is how I left. Again I went back to living with my parents.

Later on I got to know KAMER. Through a distant relative I found out about and joined one of KAMER's small awareness groups. I came to realize a lot of things. At first I was embarrassed of the abuse I'd sustained; I was afraid to tell anyone. I was afraid they would pity me. Because there are people out there that say, "You're not like that, how could you possibly have experienced so much violence?" I was embarrassed of the abuse I'd experienced. But now I participate in an awareness group. In the group there are women who have been abused, women who are applying to KAMER for help. I'm starting to feel like myself again.

I have overcome so much in my life. In the past, before I came to KAMER, I didn't have the energy to go to the doctor. I would think to myself, "If I get up and go to the doctor by myself, what will people say about me?" I would think about it for a long time, look at it a thousand ways, and in the end I'd decide not to go. But now I can go out on my own in comfort; I can go anywhere, because I can express myself. I know that I'm not accountable to anyone. I don't have to explain myself to anyone else.

Recently I was standing next to the governor, and then a manager came over and started to argue with me. "You are making women get divorced," he said. "You are the reason they are getting divorced; you are showing them the way to divorce." This was the manager of a foundation. Even while standing right next to the governor he felt comfortable saying these things to me. I said, "Actually, you should get to know our organization. If you had come and asked, if you had been curious, if you had gotten to know the goals of our work, I think you would have sent your wife to us yourself. Because women leave our groups able to participate in a

healthy marriage and lead a healthy life. They can express the things they experience. And of course they know their rights. Shouldn't your wife know her rights? Is this what you're afraid of?" We had given the governor a book. He extended it to the other man and said, "If you want, read this." The governor supported us in his own way, the municipality as well. Despite being an apolitical organization, we got them to accept us. We can bring them both together now.

I went to visit the Democratic Society Party office one day, because all the women were there. I brought our brochures and went in to visit the women's branch of the DSP. When I came in, they said, "We are very mad at you." "What on earth?" I asked. "Why are you angry?" They said, "You haven't joined a union, you direct women in different ways. We are struggling too, and you are blocking our path." I said, "You have been misinformed. When the subject in question is women, we can always work together. Let's put all this aside—we are perpetrating the worst of the violence to each other. We are also aware of abuse by women to other women. We are also struggling against this. Women's politics and the lack of women participating in politics is also our problem. You only perceive the problems of DSP members as your problem, and we don't agree with this." We continued like this for a while. And they still won't work with us!

I call myself a feminist because I don't want any judgment or authority hanging over me. I don't want to be crushed by the patriarchal system. I think I accept feminism because I don't want these things in my life. Because I have my own rights. I defend them, I work to defend women's rights, and because of that I can say 'yes, I am a feminist.'

In the beginning I wasn't able to easily discuss feminism. My perception of it was completely different. I was thinking of the old feminism, I mean, women who are against men, who don't accept them or fraternize with men. I thought of feminists as women whose ideas I couldn't wrap my head around at all.

Women have a hard time talking about the things they've experienced. For example, when I ask them, "What do you think incest is?" they don't know what to say. Suddenly it all comes out subconsciously, and I think this is a great thing. In my group there were three or four women who experienced incest as children and publicly expressed to us the harassment

to which they were subject by their families. They talked and talked. Some of them said they were still experiencing the effects of the incest, such as the woman who said, "Sometimes when I'm with my husband it comes to mind. But until today I couldn't speak my mind. I didn't even know it was incest; I didn't know the word for it." Her being able to express this was really great. But being the facilitator of a group like this is really hard. While running the group you really have to be in control of your emotions.

During the period in which I was married, I experienced a lot of emotional abuse. When I was there I'd say, "They can beat me all they want, but don't let them psychologically abuse me." But then you don't know what happened. If you knew, you would struggle against it and you wouldn't be afraid. The mother-in-law pressures you, other people pressure you, your new husband doesn't count you as anything, doesn't count you as a woman, and you still shed tears over it. I got really mad at myself for this. They pressured me this much, they didn't see me as a woman, pressured me as a woman, they pressured my children too, cheated on me right under my nose, didn't come to my bed for months. I still sit and say, "Let him just say my name once time, let him say "Tibelya," and I'll die." We shouldn't do this to ourselves, because they don't deserve it. Before two years were out my first husband remarried, he didn't give a damn. The woman he married is even worse off than I was, so she is experiencing worse than I did. They just make her serve them 24/7. The woman never gets a chance to rest.

Without being aware of what we are going through, without seeing what we experience, we drag our children along with us. This is why it is so important to be aware, to put words to what we experience, and not just the nice parts. I cried so much for that man, and those tears were so unfortunate because they weren't worth anything.

I lived in Adana for almost three years and never saw the center of town. I had no friends there. I was always at home. I had no one to see or talk to. They never took me out with their friends. When guests came over, I wasn't allowed to mingle with them and had to stay in my room for 24 hours, just lying there, sleeping. I became like a sheep. I think I became stupid, my mental health was so bad. I lost all contact with others; I didn't like others and forgot how to make conversation. And then there was the

hunger, pressing in on me. In the summer it was so humid there, and because my mother-in-law didn't let me into the bathroom, I couldn't bathe myself. I could shower once a month. I was afraid to bathe outside of that, because that woman got in my way every time. When she left home she would lock up the kitchen or another room, whichever one was most necessary. She would hide the telephones. Sometimes I would go into the bathroom and take off my clothes and wash my underarms and other areas so that I wouldn't stink.

I still wonder sometimes, why did she do that to me? I still haven't been able to figure out an answer. The reason I settled on was jealousy of her son. "My son is mine," she'd say. "Where did you come from? You came and turned everything upside down." She said terrible things to my daughter and to me. Of course, her mother-in-law must have done the same things to her. In our awareness groups we talk about abuse propagated by women, for example that between mother-in-law and bride. It happened to my mother-in-law: she couldn't express herself, she didn't fight it, it built up and built up, and now it was my turn as the new bride. If I had continued unaware, I would have done the same things to my future daughter-in-law. It's a cycle, actually. When I started to work with KAMER, all of these things became clear to me. As a result, as many women as we reach, the first thing is to stop this cycle of violence.

I always go back to those last eight months at my in-laws' house. Those eight months took away my entire life. I don't know how I got through those eight months. I would get into bed every night and dream: my husband's going to come, he's coming soon, he's waiting for his mother to go to bed, soon he'll come to me. The sun would rise and I'd still be having those thoughts. When morning came I would wait until evening and hope again...again the same thoughts and hopes: he'll come, he's just waiting for his mother to go to bed, just wait. You experience this much violence, you have such a disgraceful life, yet you still wait for him every night. This is how we demean ourselves. We don't value ourselves. We don't voice our experiences. I am important; I am a woman; I have feelings, too. Without thinking of this, despite my husband's having caused me so much suffering, I still say, "He'll come, maybe he'll still come." I get really mad at myself for this.

9- Havva

“One month ago I couldn’t go to the market
without my husband,
today I came to a meeting in Diyarbakır”

I am 48 years old. I attended university but dropped out halfway through. Then the September 12, 1980 coup happened, the country was under martial law...My husband and I were together in the armed struggle against the Turkish state. While the organizations stampeded through we had to protect and hide ourselves. This was how we started. Also, our families’ economic situations weren’t so great. We started our own lives. We always had to live with my husband’s family. We had to leave Istanbul and come settle down here. The money problems...

Since we were both active in the struggle, our marriage took on a student-teacher type of relationship. It was really negative for us. I felt really badly about myself. To come from a background like I did and then to suddenly be a house wife, to be in that position...for years I was depressed. I developed psoriasis. I had children and had to raise them. There was no such thing as “I.” Never. It was hard to come here—a different region, a different culture. And on top of it all, money problems.

My husband is originally from here but lived in Istanbul for years. Because of that, it was like he was a newcomer here, too. He always had to work outside the house to earn money; I had to manage at home. Later on I developed serious health problems: early stage ovarian cancer. At that time I thought to myself, “I’m dying, and I haven’t accomplished anything I wanted to in life.” I started off so well, but where am I now? This abuse, this pressure...maybe my husband did these things without realizing, but he forgot me, he completely forgot me. From time to time when I would

put up a fight, he would say, “What can I do? I don’t have a choice. Did I choose this life for us?” And of course the conditions...

For ten years we hid. My son was in the third grade and still didn’t have an ID card. We were going to register him, but then our location would be known. There were cases against us in Diyarbakır and Istanbul, and my husband was afraid. For ten years he was desperately afraid. I couldn’t even go out in the street. Whenever we saw a police car we flew into a panic.

Later when I became sick I thought, what has happened to me? There was no “I.” I had a life I’d never wanted with a thousand kinds of abuse. I’m experiencing so much violence—what am I supposed to do? Later my sister mentioned KAMER. Everyone in my family—my older sister, my younger brother, my younger sister, all of them—started to say, “Her situation is so bad, let’s save her, what can we do?” They helped us out financially and offered to take me with them on vacation, but no way! When other people take pity on you and try to rescue you, you just feel worse. As an adult, when someone does these things to help you, it feels terrible. Later my little sister said, “Just go to KAMER; I think it will be good for you.”

I went, and a lot of things changed. They really changed, even though it has only been a short while since I came to KAMER. For example, without informing my husband...he would say things like this, “You don’t know your way around here, you don’t know how my family is, they’ll use you, they’ll misunderstand you; don’t let this happen, don’t get together with them, don’t go out, they’ll never understand you.” Upon hearing this I would just pull back. Whatever I said, would they label me, call me dishonorable, or say I’m bad or stupid? With his fear I closed myself off even more. I couldn’t even go to the market without telling my husband. I would ask him, “Can I go to the market at this time?” It was as if we were living in space. I’d ask, “Can I go to such and such place?” If he said, “go,” I’d go; if he said “don’t go,” I wouldn’t. Later I thought that I had let him do this as well. I shouldn’t have been like that. There was no such thing as “I”! There was just the wife of my husband, the mother of my children.

My family said a lot of things, like, “Leave him and come back,” “This life isn’t for you,” “You’re finished and ruined, come back to us and you can live the life you want.” That wasn’t the solution, either. I didn’t want that.

I loved my husband and didn't want to leave him. I thought of him as my hero, my knight in shining armor...whatever the negatives, there were so many mistakes...

I always expected that one day my husband would wake up and realize what I was going through, because we didn't start out like this, he is a special person. One day he'd realize it, he'd realize how much he hurt me, and he'd turn back into a regular person. I always expected this. When I explained this to my KAMER group, the others laughed a lot. For example, I really love cake, and my husband brings it home from time to time. But he usually brings home chocolate cake, and I hate chocolate cakes. I never told him this. Never. He was always buying me chocolate cakes. I just recently told him this, can you believe it: "I don't like chocolate cake at all. I like jelly fruit cakes." When he asked, "Well, why didn't you ever tell me that before?", I said, "I was waiting for you to figure it out. One day you would realize it, you'd catch on by yourself." I just didn't make the effort to explain it to him. I always thought to myself, "He's so tired, he has so many responsibilities, he didn't deserve this. I shouldn't create problems; I should just shut up and deal with it. Due to the circumstances, this is just our life." It was always that way.

Later on as I worked with KAMER I began to realize many things, but it was even worse, because you can't carry out changes. You don't have the strength or the energy. Later, though, I began to really admire two women at KAMER. They were ordinary housewives but had overcome many obstacles. They founded KAMER and labored intensively. I learned a lot from them. I said to myself, "I should do that, too. I should be a part of that work. I should take on some responsibility. Now I should be 'me.'"

While one month ago I couldn't even go to the market without my husband's permission, today I came to a meeting in Diyarbakir. It was a long trip. I had to return a day late. He called, and I was able to say, "No, the meetings are still going on. I'll come back tomorrow." Would this have been possible in the past? And leaving at such an hour...If I needed to be home by five, at five o'clock my telephone would ring and he would ask, "Are you home yet?" This was the environment I came from.

I am the kind of person who has an education in psychology—despite dropping out of university—and who reads the newspaper every day, who

follows the events going on in the world. I know these things, but in my life I could never find solutions to my problems, could never find a way out. Were problems covered up or just ignored? It made it easier on myself to just give in. It didn't seem right to just throw away the choice in front of me, or maybe I just couldn't find the strength. In that case, I didn't think of it as giving in.

There were also the effects of the political environment from which I came. There were many; I still experience the pain of this. They would criticize me often, telling me I dressed too trendily. Even today I have a hard time applying makeup or dressing in a feminine way. "Revolutionaries don't do that; no, you need to be really militant, you shouldn't make your feelings apparent." I still feel the effects of this. After such a long time of living like that, it is so hard to have to live the life of an ordinary woman.

KAMER is really different than the political environment from which I came. There you should fit inside a rigid mold. You can't break out of it. You think hard even when taking a step, because for the slightest mishap you could be completely alienated from the group. "Ok, we're done with you," they'd say. Of course, you don't want to be on the outside. You have beliefs, they represent those beliefs, and to be thrown out from the group would be the worst thing in the world. You are always tense. What will they say next? What will they criticize? Did I do it right? You have to overcome yourself, develop yourself, but how? At the same time you are completely alone there. Here it is totally different. It's a place where you can be yourself. You are important, you are valuable, you are an individual, your opinions are important. There it's not like that. There, the organization is the most important; whatever they say, you do it; you have no right to object. You either accept it or you're out. The worst punishment is to be ostracized.

At KAMER we try to create awareness. We try to bring out everyone's individual strengths and support them in this process. Do we save them? In a sense yes, in a sense no. Let's just say that to succeed, people need to save themselves. It all starts with ourselves. This was a big start for me. When I went to the market, I was afraid of cars. I was severely depressed. If you had just left a bird in the room with me and closed the window, I would be afraid of what would happen. It might hit its head on something. Yes, there was a problem. You see it, and that it needs to be fixed. You

know this, but how? At KAMER I learned this. For the first time I could express the foods I liked and things I preferred.

I have been at KAMER for about four months now, and I believe I've succeeded at a lot of things. For example, I had psoriasis, and the doctor said, "There is no cure. You'll never recover." But I beat it, and they were so surprised. I don't have psoriasis any more. I'm not that weak actually; I realized this. These were things I already knew, but I wasn't brave enough or willing to put the energy into applying them. But now I'm working hard. My husband and children all say, "It's so late mother, you're 48 years old, you'll wear yourself out, this isn't the life for you, rest already." I just say, "My child, at least I will die happy." If I'm going to die, at least I'll do it for myself. I'm doing something for myself and this makes me really happy. I could die tomorrow—we never know—but know that for the period I've been working with KAMER, I'll die happy. If I die at home it will be very bad for me. But today I feel really good about myself, really happy. I feel like I can do a lot of things.

When I told my older son I was going into KAMER, he said, "Mother, are you abused? I'll come with you, I'll solve the problems. You're experiencing violence and I don't even know about it?" The only kind of abuse he understood was physical abuse. I explained a few things to him, and in the end he said, "Well, it's up to you." But my middle son's reaction was very different. My husband is always saying, "You'll get tired, you'll wear yourself out. I know civil society organizations, and they require a lot of dedication. You'll get overwhelmed." I would tell my middle son, "Your father thinks this," and he would say, "Father doesn't understand you at all, mother. I understand you, and that place is really good for you. Your eyes are shining. I am beside you, and I will always be beside you. KAMER is really good for you."

Even my mother supports me. She says, "Go over there, daughter, at least be with people you can talk to." My mother is illiterate, but she says, "I am guessing it's a good place. It doesn't matter what your husband thinks, go if you feel like it."

Before meeting KAMER, if someone had asked me how old I was, I would have told them I felt like I was 60 years old. But now I feel like I'm 30.

10- Heyyam

“You are in this kind of relationship
and you try to be a part of the women’s movement”

I was a university student when I first participated in KAMER’s awareness group. I had a boyfriend that I’d been together with since the fifth grade. I could say that I broke up with him after coming to KAMER, but actually he left me. This period of time was really valuable to me, and now I am much better off; I made the right decision. I also think it was the right decision for him, because he led a very traditional life. I loved to sing and wanted to be a folk singer. He would never have allowed that. Every chance he got he would remark on how much I needed to leave behind music and my other hobbies.

To be totally honest, he also caused problems for me when I would go to KAMER. He said, “First we should save ourselves.” I would also say, “We work first on ourselves,” but he didn’t get it. I would say, “For us it’s not an issue of saving or being saved,” but he just didn’t hear me. He was perhaps the only person in my life that I couldn’t express myself to. He was also the person who dominated most aspects of my life. I’m still trying to figure out how this happened, but haven’t found an answer.

When I came to KAMER, we had been together for 11 years or so. I had gotten interested in music a year or two before that. Both of these took place as parallel processes. Neither wanted the other. After getting into music I began to be interested in feminism, and things changed for the worse. To my boyfriend, ‘feminism’ was a really terrifying term. All of a sudden, he perceived me as someone who was out to destroy the world, to burn it down, as someone who was against everyone else. At that time, to tell you the truth, I didn’t know much about feminism either. While at

university, after joining KAMER I began to realize that there were different kinds of feminism. After a certain point, a voice inside me began to say, "I am a feminist." But I couldn't look at it as if I had learned everything and my work was done. There are a lot of things to learn, to research and to listen to, but I believe that I have the building blocks. I'm trying to use these in my life. Absorbing all of this is a long process.

Anyway, my boyfriend was really, really afraid of feminism. I came running to him and excitedly told him I'd become a feminist. He was scared to death of me. Later one day while we were sitting together, he said, "So you're a feminist." "Yes," I said happily. "And later, you're going to be a musician," he said. "Yes," I said. I was answering all his questions, thinking that he had understood me at last. "So although you're studying accounting, you are not going to be an accountant. Is that right?" "Right." I said. He said, "I could never marry a woman like that." I said, "Really? Well then." In that moment, I understood that there was no point in trying to win him over. Later we broke up. It was good that we did. If we had gotten married, it would have been soon after that. Our families had met, and we had seriously discussed marriage. When I think about it now, I realize it would have been horrible if we'd gotten married.

Breaking up was hard, of course. We had grown up together. We knew everything about each other. Together we learned to drink tea, to eat food; we visited the best places together first. My phone plan was under his name. He was the phone. He was the letter. His sudden disappearance from my life turned everything upside down; I lost sight of myself for a while. I felt like my whole future had been stolen from me. All our plans had been together...We had planned up until the end. This time I started to think of what I myself wanted, but I hit rock bottom. I crashed, fell apart, and later put myself back together. I'm not regretful, not at all. It's good that it happened, because I am so, so happy now. We clearly weren't meant for each other!

During the breakup I sought refuge in KAMER. I couldn't completely share what I was going through with my friends at KAMER; they never totally knew what was going on inside. In truth I was afraid to tell them; sometimes I was embarrassed of what I'd gone through.

Very few people know it, but I was exposed to extreme physical abuse at the hands of my boyfriend. It lasted for three or four years. I couldn't

take the risk of leaving him because as I said, my dependence on him had turned me into a prisoner. I was also afraid. I didn't know how I was going to tell people about this. I kept asking myself, "Why does this happen?", but there was no discernible reason that I had been subjected to this, no reason at all. However, I continued to search for the reason within myself. I was the guilty one. Why? In that period of time I was too introspective.

My boyfriend's state of mental health back then was really bad because he had just been released from prison. He was locked up for political reasons, and after he got out, it was as if he had solved women's problems. He had lived in the political prisoners' ward, and when he went in, he was given a topic for an essay: "women." A feudal man emerged in front of me who said he had solved womens' five thousand-year-old problems. He was in prison for about 8 months. It was enough. If only he had gotten out after two or three months—he was a completely different person afterwards. Before that, even if he didn't understand my view on something, he could at least sensitively discuss it with me. When I would say, "I want to make music," it only took one tear from me to win him over. Tears are the weapons of all women...But afterwards I felt abandoned by him; I couldn't cry on anyone's shoulder. He had to listen to me. After my boyfriend left prison he began to be an expert on every subject. He would say things like, "I solved the female problem. Women have all these weaknesses..." and he would list women's vices and problems. After that we could never have a discussion about anything. We started to live in the way that a politician does. We had been so young, we loved each other from such a young age; we had gone around hand in hand, gone out together, gone to the movies and the theater. We lived the lives of any boyfriend and girlfriend. After he got out of prison, that all stopped. For example, for the eleven months after getting out, he would only address me by my name. He used to call me "honey," "my one and only," and all of a sudden I was just Heyyam. He didn't hold my hand any more. While we were apart our situation changed so much.

A lot of our friends witnessed what was going on. They saw the changes as well. Beforehand I was the center of his world. Everyone was really envious of our relationship. Our friends said, "Look, he went to prison and he's mentally unstable now. This isn't our Ahmet, but he'll definitely come back to himself. Don't you know him?" When I would tell them that I thought we should break up, they would say, "Are you going to leave

him in his most difficult time?” Whenever we had a problem, they’d yell at me, “If you’re not at his side today, when will you ever be?” After that I would give in. How could I abandon him in his darkest hour? He was my childhood friend, too. I began to calculate it that way. If I left him at that time, I was going to feel like a terrible person. I also didn’t have anyone else to lean on at that moment. All of my friends had to be his friends, too. In university whenever I met a new person, he would meet them soon after and tell me whether or not he liked them.

This was a really problematic time for me. I was being intensely abused. He tried to strangle me many times. I went to KAMER a lot during this time. I joined an awareness group, but I couldn’t share these things with the group. It was so hard. Being inside this relationship was really tough for me. Can you imagine, being in this kind of relationship and trying to be a part of the women’s movement? Everyone else is baring all and you can’t explain the abuse you’re experiencing. You can’t face your own reality. Maybe also because I overcame this problem without sharing it, it took me this long to be able to talk about it. I got through it without telling anyone.

While listening to others I would think of everything I’d gone through. During the group, a woman would share the experience she’d gone through and how she had resolved it. Their solutions were really fundamental to me. I tried to use these analyses on myself and tried to overcome that way. To be totally honest, I’m not totally over everything. It’s a heavy weight that I bear.

After that you start to make mistakes. What you can’t get from him you look for in someone else...I also come from a loveless family. I know I am from a family in which I am much loved and in which everyone loves each other, and we all have a tight bond, but we never express it. I really felt the effect of that during this time. I was thinking, “My boyfriend hasn’t loved me for the past 14 years, my mother doesn’t love me, my father doesn’t either, neither do the people at school.” As such I declared myself a person who wasn’t loved by anyone. During that period I went to my mother and told her I loved her. This was really important for me. Hayriye also said this, “Why should we put off showing our affection? Today, send a message to your most beloved friend, or send them flowers.” I also called my mother that day and for the first time told her I loved her. She also started crying. She said, “I would give my life for you, my daughter—I love you, too.” But

we were both a little bit embarrassed for having expressed those emotions. Later I spoke with my dad. My dad and I never talked on the phone; he never called me. I also called my father and we talked. I said, "I'm good dad, I'm here and very happy." He said, "I'm really glad, my daughter. I really trust you," and then he told me some things he'd never said to me before. "You know, whenever you need, us we are here. We neglect you, but don't forget that you are our family." After that I thought to myself that my family did love me after all.

At the same point I was having problems with my older sister. Since she had gone to Istanbul for school, we hadn't lived in the same place for many years. I felt like I didn't know her at all. She would come home on holidays and stay for a short period of time, or when she came she would bring other friends with her, and she wouldn't spend any time with us. All of a sudden my sister came home to live with us. She made me really uncomfortable and started to stick her nose into my business. My relationship with my boyfriend was already going really badly, and I was fighting a lot with my sister. One day I took her out and told her, "You can't be my older sister; I have needed an older sister for so long...but if you want you can be my friend. For that we need to get to know each other. I can't accept this behavior, though." We both cried. It was KAMER that taught me to be confrontational and honest with people. It's only now that I realize this. One by one I transformed my relationships with my mother, my father, my boyfriend, and my sister.

I also realized this: I had always started sentences with, "After my older sister settles down...", as if before today she had been living a nomadic life and after today was going to go and settle down with a family. It was tough, really tough, to accept this. Later on my sister and I decided to be friends. I told her later, "If you become my older sister one day, I'll tell you." Now I can say that she is my sister.

While explaining this all to you, I realize more than ever that I have turned my life around. I really have.

11- Rojin

**"I am here,
and there are things I can do"**

I used to think of KAMER as a place that was opened for women who were terribly abused, for oppressed women who could come there to stand up on their own two feet. However, after getting on the inside and seeing KAMER's work, I finally understood. I came to know KAMER through joining the first awareness group conducted here. I was really excited when I joined. Until then I thought I was the happiest person in the world, like some sort of Pollyanna. I was well, my family was well, everyone was well, our financial situation was good; according to me all of our living standards were good.

It started with a group ice-breaker, and every week we discussed a different topic. In every section I became aware of something I hadn't been before. I realized that I hadn't ever expressed myself in communication; I had had no voice, actually...I had never before said, "I want this," or "I think this, I have this idea." It was always, "Uh huh, ok, that's fine," I was always saying 'that's fine.' The topic slowly turned to abuse. Although I had never experienced physical abuse at the hands of my family, I had experienced discrimination simply by virtue of being female. My parents were very affectionate people who raised their children lovingly, but I still experienced discrimination. I married very early, at 16. I became a mother at 19. Did I want to get married at that age? It probably couldn't be said that I protested, I know. I developed fairly quickly in a physical sense. I was in school through the fifth grade. I married, and the first two years of marriage were really great. I mean, to me they were. My husband cherished me. We lived with his family. I was a good bride—that is to say, I behaved how a good bride should according to tradition. Just like everyone else...

We started to have problems in the second year of our marriage. I basically raised our children alone. Here the men only bring home the bread; they don't concern themselves with the particular needs of children. My husband didn't get involved with the children at all. Even the parental guardian listed on their school forms was me. I had already taken on a lot of responsibility from a young age; I lived with his family and had many responsibilities as a result. In his family, there was no physical violence. They don't tell you "do this" or "do that," but you know your role; you're already performing it. You entertain the guests; you cater to your mother-and father-in-law. For us, respect comes before all other values. The first issue that I had with my husband was as a result of living with his family. Then our daughter was born. After her, my second daughter and son. I said, "Our children need to grow up in their own environment." At that point we got our own separate home. I've experienced a bit of what everyone has, actually.

We were on good terms for a while after moving into our new home. Then problems started again. When I was in the KAMER group, at first I was saying, "I'm doing great." Later on I began to realize the violence I was experiencing. In the end I decided that whatever happened didn't matter; I was going to be myself, behave as I liked, and he would respect me. And I began to do as I pleased. At first I was afraid of my husband, as if he would kill me for saying what I wanted. I told my husband, "I can't be a robot like you want any more. I'm not at your beck and call." He asked, "What is that supposed to mean?" I said, "You can't say things like 'do this, be like this, serve me, wash my socks, get into bed,' anymore." I set up a separate bed. "I lost my self-respect," I said, "and I'm not going to do that anymore." Of course he came close to violence. He confronted me a few times on the topic of sleeping in the same bed, but I always rejected him. I was disgusted by sexuality.

For a while we were at the point of getting divorced. Later he started to change, little by little. He started helping out with the children and being very polite to me. Recently I've seen major changes. Before, he had wanted to divorce and seemed like he was laying the foundation for that. I didn't want to divorce. Slowly he began to have respect for me. For example, I can now say, "I'm going to Urfa," and he says, "Ok." He wasn't the kind of man to say this. My behavior enabled him to stop and examine himself.

One friend of mine told me I was a very cowardly person. I couldn't get that out of my head; it was as if the comment was seared into my brain. Was I afraid? It was true, I was! I was frightened when my husband raised his hand to me. Now he saw that I wasn't afraid when he lifted his hand at me. Or for example, when he would talk to me before, he would raise his voice. When he did, I began to as well. "The neighbors will hear!" he said. I said, "Let them hear. If we're going to talk, we should both talk at the same volume." He began to correct the tone of his voice around me. Not being able to do as I wished was not the only problem here. We needed to do things together, to share. Little by little we are starting to do this.

KAMER is the place where I created myself. After all this time I can't go to university; I don't have that kind of background. Around here education is the measuring stick, both within the family and in society. If you have an education, you're something, and if you don't, you're nothing. There is no respect for work within the home. Being a housewife is seen as a degrading position. In the past a woman would ask another woman, "Do you work?" The other woman would respond, "Yes, I work at home." Everyone found that really amusing...this goes to show that language has begun to develop.

Women's policies...as of today, no one has ever asked us what we want as women. There was no such thing as a women's project. These were also a policy ploy: policies to reach women, policies to help women prove themselves, policies to bring women forward. I know politics. In the meetings, women are in front, but at home, they are in the back seat. The discrimination continues. Some of those who defend democracy abuse women at home. I first thought KAMER was aligned with a political party. Later I understood that it was independent, and I liked that.

With KAMER I became aware of myself, discovered myself. In KAMER's awareness group I realized communication, discrimination, and abuse; I realized that I had been abused by society and I realized what I wanted. Today I can express what I want. When I came into the group, the communication and discrimination sections really affected me. I learned to say, "I", to form mutual communication, to express myself, to be a part of society. At one point my husband said, "This is enough!" I had started to have an opinion on every topic, and he didn't like that.

I remember the discrimination I experienced as a little girl. When children play house, girls look after the house and talk about how the

men provide you with money and do the shopping. While playing house we acted out our future roles. This is a form of discrimination. While discussing communication, I realized that I wanted what everyone else wanted; I couldn't express myself in society. Why? Because others always spoke in my place. I also realized that I had experienced emotional abuse. I hadn't been physically abused, but I had been harassed. One day when I was a child, my family went to a wedding. My family was in front of me, and behind me there was an older boy. I realized he was coming close to me; I felt his breath. I still recall the fear I felt in that moment. I don't recall how I got away. It has been so long since that happened...I remember how much that affected me.

I started at KAMER. My struggle started, and it's not over yet. It takes time for the things a person realizes to take effect, to be internalized. I still have a hard time in some areas...I tell everyone, "It's going to hurt—you start working and it doesn't stop." If a person can say, "I am here," their combatant side comes out. If you can say, "I am here," you can also say the negative form of the same sentence. In the end, we were brought up with both correct and incorrect methods. Our doing the wrong thing is so normal!

I dream of so many things. I can't imagine sitting at home...I have an adventurous character. I love to fly. If I had wings, I would fly—I say this although the people here would stop me. It is necessary to stay here, to struggle, to do some things. I will do them. Making a decision is very important. So is the desire. I learned to decide and to desire from Nebahat. She told me, "There is no such thing as 'I can't.'" To decide and to desire are very important." She is a very resolute, faithful person who believes in her work. Everyone at KAMER is very different. I love Naime in a different way, and I love Nilgün in a different way. I see a bit of myself in Nilgün. She's a little crazy as well.

I am a feminist. I am here, and there are things I can do. I have my own rights, human rights, and just like everyone else I have the right to use them. I say I am a feminist and I also talk about feminism. A lot of people say, "Feminists generally ostracize men, they're all lesbians." I explain feminism to everyone. We don't ostracize men; we defend human rights; we are all people; we want to have the right to live like everyone else. It's as if feminism has a bit of an elite perspective. In fact, women working in

the field can be feminists, just as women working as civil servants can. I'm raising each of my children to be feminists...

12- Papatya

“There are very few things left for me to overcome,
I’m making time for those, too”

A friend suggested that I join KAMER. She was participating in the awareness group and told me about it. She explained that she saw a big difference in herself now. For example, she told me that before KAMER, she couldn’t talk in front of a group, and that her husband constantly put her down. After the group, these things didn’t happen anymore. In the beginning the idea wasn’t very attractive to me. I felt like a self-made woman. I made myself, so I had no need for these people. When she insisted multiple times, I decided to go. But this time I had a problem with my husband.

I was in a difficult marriage. I married at the age of 19. It was an arranged marriage. At that time I was preparing for university, living in Izmit with my older sister while looking after her child. My husband’s aunt saw me at my sister’s office and liked me. Since I was going to get married, there was no need for me to take the university entrance exam, and we came here. They seemed like a good family, cultured and knowledgeable, but when I got married I saw that it wasn’t like that. All of a sudden I was under a lot of pressure. Nothing was like they said or like it had seemed while engaged. I understood all of this during the first week we were married. My husband was a good man, but he had very clear rules and was very jealous. For example, I wasn’t allowed to go out on the balcony for five years. I had no idea who lived across from us, or even what was out there. It was just not possible for me to go out there—someone might see me from a nearby building or from the street. For the first couple of years we

were always fighting. I grew up freely and couldn't accept this treatment in the beginning. I got really bored and would ask to go to the market and walk around. He would say, "For what reason? Why would you go there?" and again we'd fight. He would say, "You looked around, you touched a man, you looked in the shop windows," and we would fight about all these things.

I thought about it, and I had no social security. What could I do? I never thought of returning to my parents' home. I said, "I can't go back like this." In five years we still didn't have any children. That period was a nightmare for me. I wondered how long we could go like this, fighting nonstop. I couldn't go on with this marriage, but I couldn't leave, either. I had to get out of this, we couldn't go on fighting. In the end I decided that the best thing would just be to do what he wants and continue that way. Five years passed like this. After five years things improved a bit. The same problems were going on, actually, but I was finally able to go out onto the balcony. I really wanted a job, but had never been able to work before. Later on day I told my husband, "I'm going to KAMER." He said, "You can't go! What is KAMER? Where are you going? What are you going to do? Stay at home. You have children to look after." He continually protested, but I still went.

After coming to KAMER I became aware of a lot of things. Before I would always say, "I know everything." There was no need to go. I had gone everywhere, seen everything; I had finished high school. But after I got there I saw it wasn't like that. I got to know myself, started to use the word "I" regularly. Never before had I said "I," never—before it was always about pleasing those around me. Always sacrificing myself, always giving of myself. I learned a lot and applied those things at home without hurting my relationships. We have overcome a lot of our problems. The thing I changed the most was my relationship with him.

When we were first married...my father-in-law said we would go to his home, to Istanbul, and I was wearing long skirts, thinking that if I wore something short my legs would show and he'd kill me. My mother-in-law said, "Daughter, wear pants," and I responded, "I don't own any!" She told me they would buy me some. "We're going to Istanbul. We'll be on the road and you'll be more comfortable in pants." And she bought me a pair. When we came back from Izmit, everyone was angry. My husband said, "Even if my mother told you to wear pants, you should have told her that

you don't look good in them." I took the pants and threw them away. How could I have worn pants and gone to Istanbul? The incident afterwards lasted a year—I couldn't wear pants at the time that I went to KAMER.

In the beginning this is how I talked to my husband...didn't he go outside? Before I would always say, "Ok, I won't go out; please don't get mad." He saw that I adapted to his rules. It would go on like that. Now I say, "Do you not trust me? In that case I shouldn't go out. But if you don't trust me, let's not drag out this marriage. If you don't have any trust for me, after you go off to work, I'll do as I please and no one will be any the wiser. Don't force me to do this. I'll do most things secretly. After you leave for work I'll go out all the time but tell you that I was at home. You'll never know. When I do this, of course the children will realize and say, "Mother did this during the day, what will father think?" And the children will grow up this way, with mental health problems. We are raising three children. We have been married for 19 years. Have you seen me err even once?" "No," he responded. "Well, leave it then," I said. "I was younger then. I could put up with it then, but I can't now. I've gotten to know myself and I can do some things." I thoroughly explained to my husband the things I'd seen. "These things have to change. If you continue to behave like this, you'll lose me." Before I was afraid and had no self-confidence; if my husband had thrown me out I would have gone to my father's house. I couldn't take that any more. Because of that I always resigned myself to the status quo. But now, I can say, "Know this: I am not submitting to you any more. When something like this comes up, I am going to find a solution. Look, I have a job offer and I can work. I know this. Let me not sit idle, let me take care of myself as well as the kids, and I'll have a better life. But I don't want us to get into this situation." My husband saw the facts. Now no one has to surrender. Sometimes he now says, "I won't mess with you—you would beat me up."

I learned to raise my children at KAMER as well. For example, where I come from, people really smother children. I didn't want my daughters doing certain things—I knew it was wrong to hold them back but couldn't change my behavior. My husband was a good husband and a good father. How was he a good father? He didn't have any bad habits; he brought home his earnings and fed us. We didn't want for anything; that was all. I saw him as a model father. "What else can we expect," I thought. "This is his temperament." Now I don't say that anymore. In the past he was

really unbalanced. If he came home angry he would yell at the children for no reason. After they were asleep, he would take one of the children and be affectionate with them, but still no one felt relieved. My oldest daughter is extremely introverted. Why? Her father always said, "She's a girl; she shouldn't go there, she shouldn't go over to her friend's house or to the market. Because she's a girl, don't let her do these things." I say, "Go to school, my daughter." When we got to the school I would say, "Be extremely careful on the way. Come home immediately, because I'm afraid something will happen to you. If something happens, what will I tell your father?" Nothing was actually going to happen, but through putting her under all that pressure it came to mind that, "She'll go to school and something bad will happen, what am I going to tell my husband?" That was always in the back of my mind. My daughter was pressured in this way. She is very introverted and puts her energy into her classes. Later I brought her to a psychologist. The psychologist said, "I got to know you and you have no problem, but I'd like to meet this child's father." I said, "No, you have no need to meet him; he's a very good father. You got to know us? He's a much better person than I am." I think what motivated me to say those things was guilt; it looked as if I was ashamed. How wrong it was, and I hid it. I also cautioned my daughter not to bad-mouth her father. How could I have directed her in this way? It was really shameful when I look back.

At KAMER I came to my senses. It supposedly wasn't shameful. Why was it supposedly shameful? While saying I should praise my husband, how many people are we hurting? We are going back to the psychologist this year. When I talked, I said very comfortably, "Her father can't find a balance." I also said, "I hid this before, but that is why my daughter is like this. Her father is either loving or for no reason he gets angry and shouts. That is the reason she is this way." The psychologist asked what we were going to do. I said, "I want to try to cure my husband." I thought that I shouldn't treat my husband before my child, thinking that it would reflect on my child. If she continued on this way, she wouldn't develop confidence or social skills or do well in school. I made sure my husband understood this. I also got through to my children. There is no different treatment for being a girl now. I send most of them to the psychologist in secret; we are trying to overcome a lot of things one-by-one. Usually I send them with my friends. Later, even when my husband is home I will send them. I am letting the kids develop some self-confidence first.

I succeeded in becoming a friend to my daughter. I sat with her and said, "We will definitely give you any and all opportunities. Make an effort and study hard. You're going to ask why: I never went to school and am a housewife. If your father throws me out of the house today, I will be in a real bind. But if I had an education, I wouldn't have had to submit to bad treatment. I'm lucky that I married a man like your father. Despite his flaws, he has a lot of positive qualities. We manage well this way. But maybe you won't be as lucky. You absolutely must study." I got to know my daughter, and I am raising her well. We can talk about anything. "Look, my daughter," I said. "Someday you'll have a boyfriend; I had one, too." It would be silly for me not to accept this; I had a boyfriend and she will as well. My mother died when I was young, and my older sisters would always say, "Come straight home." I had a boyfriend but always hid it from them. But that was a mistake. I was wrong to do that. "It is very normal to have a boyfriend, you'll see that. Maybe one day you'll be sitting together at a bakery, but just let me know so you don't make a mistake. I should know where you are." Now if she gets a bad grade in school, she tells me. She has really come around; she is doing better in school, and with me she is like a friend. I told her father, "Tomorrow or the day after tomorrow, your children are going to have problems. Can you deal with that? This will be the end of them. Leave them alone." He calmed down a bit. I went to the psychologist and told him what she had told me. I said, "The psychologist is going to come and find you. She told me, 'Let's invite the child's father.' I said you wouldn't come, and she said, 'Let's go to him,' so I gave her your work address. Either you go see her or she's going to come to your workplace and investigate you. Take care of the situation before it comes to that."

Other than that, last night I told my husband I was going to start driving lessons. "No," he said. "What business do you have in a driving lesson? I will teach you to drive. Police never ask women for their driver's license anyway." "No," I said. "You can't teach me. If they ask for my license and I don't have it, I'll be punished. I am not going to get into that situation. If you send me, send me. If you don't send me, I am definitely going to study. I can go on my own." He couldn't make a sound. At KAMER we organize activities. While at home in the evenings I would never even go over to a neighbor's home. While my husband was at home, I couldn't. It wasn't possible. One month ago we organized an evening event. Many of my friends were going, but I wasn't going to be able to get permission to

go; I knew he wouldn't let me. He listened when I talked on the phone... My friend asked, "So, are you going?" and I said, "No, I'm not going to go." I had to use the right methods. "Ah," my friend said. "You can't get permission to go out at night." "No, my dear," I responded. "But you worked so hard on this, you should go." I didn't know what to do. I couldn't even contemplate going. That night, he told me to go, and that he would look after the children at home. This was a huge development. My husband is also aware of the changes. I sat down and explained everything in a reasonable way to him; we talked about it together. To convince him, as I said I started with trust.

I also improved my sex life. Everyone in the group thought the same way: it is shameful, very shameful, and one's sex life is not to be discussed with others. It would happen when my husband wanted; at some point it was over. That is your task. They would always say, "What use is there? He wants it every day, a few days a week." But we learned that this was normal, just like the need to eat and drink. It was our need also. However, supposedly this was a normal need, and to respond to it was natural, too. This was our need, too. We saw what problems arose when those needs weren't met. We are experiencing some physical changes. Later, after learning the truth of the matter, we started to put these things into effect. They say this is normal. I've participated in two groups now, and in each of them there wasn't one single woman who didn't say, "I want to." How can this be shameful? Maybe, "I don't want to, but my husband wants to, so I'm obligated." But that wasn't it. It's normal to want to have sex. Eventually our changed attitudes towards sex surprised our husbands and pleased them. How nice that is. My husband, for example, is really happy with this development. He says, "It's great that you went to KAMER." At the beginning I got angry, but he said, "If I had known this before I would have sent you there myself. Go, and don't lose your connection to this place. If this is how you are going to change, if you are going to come across good things, continue going to KAMER."

Now I am a lot more reasonable with my family. My family is also better off. My mother died when I was very young, so I have always worried about my father and older sisters. I have a sister who is single and still at home; there is our stepmother there as well, I always think of her. She's under a lot of pressure. I have a sister in Izmit; her husband died very young. I always think of her; I couldn't have lived on my own. But now

I realize that getting depressed about the situation doesn't help anything. Sitting around worrying about them, my life was slipping away. Struggling with my husband, the children, the family; in the interest of not stepping on anyone's toes, I was completely worn down. Because of KAMER, I began to feel like an individual. The men bring the money and can do everything—women can do everything that they do. I can do it; I can do more than you. And I've done it. When my husband was having a tough time financially I looked for ways to make money and earned some. Through that income I provided my husband with money for cigarettes and supported my family. I did these things and proved myself to my husband. Look, I can do it too!

Sometimes my husband asks me, "How's it going?" "Good," I say. Then he asks, "Didn't you go to KAMER?" This is a huge change. My sister-in-law and father-in-law both say, "You are really lucky; Emre has changed so much, he's really shaped up." It's not luck, though—I set him straight. For example, on my first wedding anniversary, my mother-in-law gave me some money and told me to go buy a nice outfit; it was her anniversary present to me. I went out with her and bought a v-neck shirt. We couldn't go out to dinner that evening. I came home and my husband said, "You have misbehaved." I didn't understand what he meant. "No," he said. "You think this shirt is appropriate? The neck is totally open, the sleeves are only this long—you have been disobedient to me. I can't be with you. You don't obey my rules. Go, just go away." He took me to the door. I was so ashamed: if someone saw me sitting on the stairs, what would I tell them? How was I going to absorb the fact that he had just thrown me out? If the same thing happened now, I would say ok, I'll go. This isn't my disgrace; this is yours. He didn't want me any more and kicked me out; I am not to blame. But at the time someone was coming from downstairs; I pretended like I was going somewhere. God rest her soul, my mother-in-law was in the bathroom at that moment; I rang the doorbell and she didn't open it. She came out of the bathroom and said, "Where are you coming from?" I explained, "He threw me out." She asked me why and I told her. Over time I agreed not to wear a lot of things...it was always like that. In the past two years, however, I've started to wear shirts with open necks, miniskirts as well. I wear pants all the time already.

Last year I was able to take my children and go unaccompanied to Urfa. My husband was busy with work and couldn't take time off; we took the intercity bus to Urfa. We went to Izmit, saw my brother-in-law in

Istanbul; we went to Yalova to see my sister and her family. We go every year. If a problem came up there I would behave like a child. I didn't want them to say, "She went to her sister and came back; she left me alone in the kitchen." I couldn't talk to my sister. This year when I was going to Izmit I said, "I'm going to my sister's home to stay for a while." And I got onto the bus. My sister said, "Where is Emre? Why didn't he come?" I said, "Let him miss us; it's better for us and for him that he didn't come." My sister said, "Bravo, coming here all this way alone on the bus, well done." I overcame these things. Before we would never have gone to a restaurant to eat. My husband would say, "How can I bring you to a restaurant? The men there would see you. If a friend of mine sees you, what will he say? He'll go around saying, 'This guy brought his wife out to a restaurant.' Never. I'll bring home the food and we'll eat there." Now he comes home and says, "Don't set the table; get up and let's go to dinner." And so now we go out and walk around together.

Before, having a boy was really important. A boy child was something different...My father-in-law had three grandchildren, all girls. But he loves boys. He discriminates between girls and boys. He really wanted a grandchild but didn't tell me directly; my sister-in-law sent the news. Or he would say, "If one of these children were a boy, what a great grandchild it would have been." "Why, father?" I asked. "What are you going to do with a grandson?" My husband, brother-in-law, they were all there. "Daughter, our family lineage would have been carried on. A woman marries and leaves, what of that? Women are always the cause of grief," he said. "Why do you think that?" I responded. "Look, Mother has been dead 16 years, and who takes care of you? Your daughter sacrificed her own life and sits with you. You have two sons—aside from occasionally calling you, what do they do? If you hadn't had a daughter, would your sons have been able to look after you? Maybe we would have cared for you, but again, that involves women. Your two sons could have fed you, done your ironing, met all your needs—but they haven't. Thank God you had a daughter, or you could never have lived this long." He said, "She's right. This daughter of mine is really smart." Through explaining in this way I show them; I've showed them.

Just think: a person who couldn't even go out on their own balcony for five years now gets up every morning and comes to KAMER. I can't stop. The day I don't come... For the last two days I had guests. I sat with

them and gave them tea, but my mind was with KAMER. If everyone can change like I did, it means everyone has changed. Good thing I came here and didn't live out the rest of my life as it was before. I'm happy when I come home from KAMER. I know what I'll do, how I'll treat my children and my husband. I realized everything regarding life. I had been living unaware before. Before I said I knew everything; now I say I don't know anything. Here I learned to let go of discrimination, I learned about mother-child relationships, husband-wife relationships, the word "I", our rights—all of it I learned here.

We should develop more places like KAMER. Because the need is there. Out of 50 women, one is different. In the end no one can reveal themselves, because it is "shameful." We grew up under this pressure. Everything is shameful. Because we were girls and then women, everything was shameful. Because of that I even look at the psychologist, and even though I bring the children to her, I get in the way of the therapy. Why? Don't let them find out that my husband does that, because it's 'shameful,' 'we shouldn't be open with others,' 'no one should know.' We suppress and hide everything. And while hiding these things what have we done? We have compromised ourselves, worn ourselves out. But does anyone appreciate it? My husband said, "You have managed things well," without thanking me. Now I have a much higher value. He realized it too. I made him realize the things I am now aware of. He grew as well. It also falls to women to change the men. To share the things we learn with both women and men...We should make the men aware because they are the ones from whom everything—violence, discrimination—stems. In the end it starts with men. Now I can come and go as I please from KAMER, wear pants, go outside at any hour. Take care of anything. For example, I pay the bills, buy the children's supplies at the market, and take the children to school. All this from a woman who formerly couldn't go out on the balcony. There are very few things left to overcome, but I'm leaving time for those, too. With time we will overcome everything.

13- Bermal

“Somehow we experience violence,
we are the source of violence,
and we resort to violent measures”

I was born in 1980 and am the youngest of 9 siblings. I was an accident, an unwanted child...because I was the youngest, I was also the most loved and protected. My father is a certified interpreter, and his work took him all over Anatolia. My mother is a housewife.

I am a high school graduate. I am currently remotely pursuing my university degree. When my mother passed away in 2002 I was a first-year university student in the Business Management department. I was unable to pull myself together afterwards and I dropped out of school. I didn't want to go back later; Business Management had been hard for me. If I even just hear the phrase “Business Management,” it takes me back to that period of time. Two years of my life were lost. It was really hard to collect myself. It was just me and my father left at home. And being the youngest, a momma's girl...Two years after my mother died, something must have happened, I was the responsible one at home; when my siblings came back home, the place everyone thought of as home base, I was the one responsible for taking care of everyone. I was the master of the house. I needed to stay inside all the time and do all the house work. At the same time, I needed to prevent my father from seeing how sad I was. Later on my family thought that to get over my mother's death I needed to get out of the house, and they decided that the best way to do this was for me to work. We had a travel agency, and I began to work there. I am actually a quick learner, but despite having computer skills I found it tough to get a hang of the work during the first two months. Through starting to work,

though, I started to open back up, see my old friends again, and create a new environment for myself. This did me a lot of good.

I worked for two and a half years. But because all my older siblings went to university, I was conscious of my lack of a university degree. Whenever I went somewhere, people would ask, “Which department did you graduate from?” or “Where do you work?” I wasn’t sure if I was being overly sensitive or if it seemed like everyone needed to have graduated from university. It was because of this that I got carried away, and with my uncle’s help registered myself for some courses last year. But I soon realized that I wasn’t as good a student as I used to be. I would open a book, read it, close it, and then immediately forget what I’d read. You don’t think there is such a thing as a full brain—you think there is a lot of space in there—but it’s true. I took the test. I did well in the class and in the courses in general; I ranked quite high against my peers. I went into the final test on my own. I had problems with my father at the time; we have always had problems and still do. I went into the test having conditioned myself to think “I have to get away from here,” but nothing happened. I did really badly in the test. I wrote to the remote learning school, but I couldn’t stay there that summer because I had already gone to my course and hadn’t passed it. Everyone, including myself, had expected me to pass. My family didn’t make an issue out of it, but I avoided my extended family. I didn’t want them saying “She went back to school but couldn’t cut it.” I only told those at home—my father and my sisters to whom I was close. I hadn’t told anyone I failed my course, but I couldn’t stay at home that summer. One of my sisters and her family had moved to a new city; they had been transferred there. When they moved, they couldn’t bring their oldest son because there wasn’t anyone to look after him. Because I felt the lack of a mother, I would have gone with my nephew there, but he was going to be cared for by his paternal grandmother here. My heart wouldn’t allow me to do otherwise, so I took him. I stayed with them for two months. When the test results came out, I was expecting failure but still felt really terrible. I said, “I’ll never take another test again.” I believe in God, and even that belief was shaken in that moment as I was so badly affected.

One time when I was talking on the phone with a friend from the course I’d taken, she mentioned KAMER to me. She was going to KAMER but hadn’t quite understood it yet. I asked her, “So, what do you do there? What do you make of it? Are you a feminist?” At the time I didn’t understand

feminism. The only things I thought I knew were that it was hard to say “I am a feminist,” and that being a feminist meant being a man-hater. My friend couldn’t explain exactly, but said, “No, that’s not how it is.” When I returned home, I joined an awareness group. It piqued my interest because within me there were points of conflict. At home they thought of me as someone who did what she wanted. Probably because we had so many women in the family, we all have that tendency. “We weren’t pressured,” I thought. “We never experienced domestic abuse.” Later on I realized that abuse isn’t just beating someone, or screaming at them and belittling them. Somehow we experience violence, we are the source of violence, and we resort to violent measures. This was what I realized.

Before joining the group I had thought, “I speak very easily with others. I have no problems.” I also was not an advocate of violence...Also before KAMER I thought, “There shouldn’t be any violence. In the name of humanity, no one should offend anyone else.” But through saying “no one should offend anyone,” I was actually applying a kind of abuse. When I realized this, I said that before I hadn’t thought I was like this, but it turns out that I am. Through experiencing these things, I felt depressed, I cried. Later, however, I said, “It doesn’t matter, I’m not like that. Why am I tiring myself out? Keep living your life.” But you can’t just go back. You’ve become aware of too many things to do that.

For this reason, the abuse and discrimination sections of the awareness group affected me the most. There was always a distance between my father and myself. We could never talk comfortably. The reason for this is that ever since I was little, my father has always wanted me to be covered, to wear a head scarf. There are seven girls in my family, and only two of us don’t wear a head scarf. Those other two were even covered through high school. When they weren’t covered, they apparently asked my father, “Father, we are thinking of covering, of wearing a headscarf. What do you think?” My father supposedly said, “Actually there is no need to, but it’s up to you.” He wasn’t promoting it. But later, after we moved here, my father’s surroundings changed, and the people around us started in on him. My father was a certified Ottoman-Arabic translator, and due to his work people started calling him “Teacher.” With time my father started fitting that mold. He started to say things like, “My children should be covered. My daughters shouldn’t go around without a head scarf.” I was in middle school at the time, and this was only something I experienced after

moving here. This happened right as I was going through puberty. Prior to that I had imitated my sisters, saying, "When I go to university I will wear a head scarf" and performing my prayers. It was something inside me, I believed it. You believe something and you want to do it, but when you are pressured, you abandon it despite your belief. You become stubborn. For that reason I resisted. It was sheer obstinacy.

Actually what affected me was this: I started high school. I needed to buy a school uniform, and to do that needed to go out with my father. Normally I did all my shopping with my older sister, but when she wasn't available I needed to go with my father. There was only one week until school started. He told me, "Let's go and get your uniform," and the whole thing snapped there. He said, "If you don't cover your head I can't take you out with me; if the teachers see you, what will they say to me?" Everything exploded. If I didn't want to, I didn't have to cover. The stubbornness was kicking in. I know I have a stubborn streak; I accept that. I resisted it for a while. My mother always put herself between my father and me. I feel that sadness. She had problems with my father because of me. My sisters didn't pressure my father, but I maneuvered him into accepting me. This is how I am. I made the neighbors accept me, too. I went to them and said, "This is how I am. If there is a problem with this, a dishonor, is it so important?" If I want, I will cover. I believe, I pray, I fast. This is something between me and God. I can't understand my father. Sometimes, with the goal of trying my father, as it came towards Ramadan I would say, "I'm not going to fast this year." He would say, "It's up to you. That is something between you and God, and I'm not going to get involved." But when it came to the head scarf issue it wasn't like that. I had to cover. He was affected by the pressure from around him. He's not a narrow-minded person, either. I understand this, but I want him to get over it. For example he says to me, "If you wear a head scarf, I will leave the family's entire inheritance to you. You and I will go out to a restaurant for dinner." I then say, "Leave the inheritance to me, then, and don't meddle with the rest." Now there is less tension than before, but the relationship is dysfunctional. We can't just chat or talk openly. Much of the time days pass at home without our exchanging words.

During the discrimination discussions I realized this: in the case of religion, I was telling myself that I didn't discriminate, but in fact I did. I had united the concepts of discrimination and abuse. So I was both abusing and discriminating. For example, an Alevi boy proposed to me,

and I didn't accept solely because he was Alevi. I am a Sunni. I can be good friends with an Alevi, gallivant all around town with one, but I could never marry one. After KAMER I began to question myself. "Why couldn't I have married him?" Exactly the points we touched on in the discrimination section...We need to look at everyone as another human. I mean, why couldn't I marry him? Did I feel something inside? Yes, I felt it. But only because of his religion did I set myself apart from him. I even said to him, "If we get married and have children, how will they grow up? You should behave exactly as I do towards the children. Even if you don't fast during Ramadan, you will act like you are so that I can raise the children as I want to." I don't think this way anymore. We could have found middle ground. That boy had feelings for me, and through invoking religion I perpetrated a kind of violence against him. It's a terrible thing to have your feelings hurt like that. I realized this, and it really moved me.

There was an Alevi woman in our group. I thought, as I did before, that I could be good friends with an Alevi, we could do things together, even live together, and I would have no problems with them. There was no "If I tell my story, will the women take it the wrong way?" I was the same person I am inside or at home. I still thought, "I could never have an Alevi husband." Now I don't think like that at all. Now it is possible. Forget the child. I would fast, he wouldn't, he would watch the children, whatever he chooses. My previous thought had been 'I need to raise an individual to be exactly like myself,' but I don't think like that anymore. If I resisted the way my father raised me...I realized this as well. I have resisted my father, and I'm not going to do to my children what my father has done to me. I don't get angry with my father any more—I don't have that anger inside of me. Because maybe he was raised that way, he sees the effects of it, he wasn't able to realize these things. Maybe it's inside of him but he can't put it into practice. Sometimes I talk with him and see that he thinks the same way, but can't carry it out.

Together with these topics, the communication unit also deeply affected me. The feeling and language of "I"...After the first communication group I became aware that when I explained things, I wasn't saying "This is my opinion, what do you think?" When I started to do this, the people around me said, "You used to be stubborn, but you've really softened up and calmed down." It would be a lie to say I have totally changed the way I speak, but with time I believe everything will sink in.

For me, most striking thing while participating in the group was this: I actually thought that other people weren't experiencing these issues. You know those TV shows aimed at women. "No way," I'd say. "That's a lie. If that had actually happened, how could she sit there and tell everyone? If it did happen, she shouldn't let anyone know." But I experienced these things and others did as well—I see this in the applications for help we receive at KAMER. There are living examples in front of me, and when they explain what happened to them, I feel it; it really happened. When you watch something on TV, there is a layer of glass between you and the person on the other side. Maybe you can't feel it then, but when someone is in front of you, you can just feel it. These problems exist, people experience them, and we aren't even aware of it. I've started to say, "It could happen to me, too." My experiences have started to come out. I wavered for a long time; I broke down and was shaken. I was a savior, I had to save them, that sensation in me started to awake, but you can't save them all; you can't suddenly save everyone, you can't do it all at once. Nebahat says, "We don't have a magic wand that we can use to fix everything with one touch!" For a long time I couldn't accept that. This has got to stop, this sadness has to pass; everything I've lived over a lifetime should be over in one moment. A great new life has got to start. My brain needs to immediately fix itself, my mental health, too. But it can't be like that, because your brain is sorting everything out. I can think the things I said to her on my own, but can I live them inside of me so that this is fixed right away?

I also just realized this: in the past I would say, "I will never at any point do such-and-such." Those very things I mentioned, I do very comfortably now. I didn't realize I was saying these things in the past, but it all came out in the group. Because other women are going through the same thing, and when you share with them, they say, "Exactly, I thought like that too, but now I do it." It all comes out, one by one. Sharing is very important; through sharing the things you have shut off come out, the things you concealed and hid away. When other women tell their stories, the things they share also come out of you. This is the hardest part of the group. You start to examine yourself much more closely than others; you get to know yourself again; in one moment you break down, then you build yourself back up again. Sometimes when you rebuild yourself there are things you don't want to see, and you leave out a brick in the building process. Again you break down and you try again to rebuild. In the end, through continuing with the group, you will certainly put back every

brick. Because you can't leave it out. You only experience it once—you can't leave a stone unturned...

14- Nilgün

“We are always taking,
I am giving what we took”

I am 35 years old. I was born here, though I spent my childhood and adolescence elsewhere. When my now-husband and I were engaged we came here. At that time I brought him to my village and he loved it, he really admired it. He immediately called up his father, who had instilled him since childhood with wistful thoughts like “In the future we’ll start a farm, I’ll retire, we’ll buy animals and care for them.” “Father,” he said, “this is a fantastic place for raising animals. We should definitely buy some farm animals and start a farm here.” His father said, “I am behind you. Do whatever you want.” We married and later moved to a village near here. I have been living here since 1996. We are trying to do animal husbandry. We are not as experienced as the people here; we haven’t thrived in the work; we don’t know all the techniques. We are always learning, sharing with them, talking with them. We ask about everything. You should see my husband; he’ll ask even a seven-year-old child, “How should this be? What should I do? Is this right? I’m doing this.” He asks everyone’s opinion, even the 80-year-old men. My husband is really curious about farming and enjoys being zealous in his work.

We started with one animal. We bought a cow. Our real goal was to feed a male cow. We would care for it for eight months, then sell it and take a one or two-month break. Then again we were going to buy new ones and do the same thing. Until we found them, we would manage with one cow, getting all of our milk and yoghurt from it. We bought a couple of chickens and ate the eggs. We were like people imitating the village lifestyle, trying to make it real. We started with one cow, and that one turned into 11. They grew, gave birth, and multiplied. Now we have five.

I named one of the cows Shakira. Generally I name the animals. Among the ones we sold was Tanita. When Tanita came to us she was just a calf. She had two daughters—the older one Eylem and the younger Elif. Then Baycan. Baycan was the first son of Bore, the first cow we bought.

At this point I found KAMER through my friend Halide. When Halide mentioned KAMER, I had never heard of the organization. There was a fair in Elazığ called “The Purple Bazaar.” “Will you join us?” she asked. “There will be a project there; people are coming from all over the region, from Mardin, Diyarbakır, Bingöl, Adıyaman, Malatya.” I said of course I would come. I first got to know KAMER there. Having associated KAMER with young people, I asked, “What is KAMER?” They said the name stood for “women’s center.” Actually at first I wasn’t that interested; women’s organizations seemed like a remote concept to me. I thought, “None of them have done anything anyway. What good have they done?” I thought women’s organizations generally just organized events for fun. I wasn’t open to the idea. I had never been a member of the women’s branch of a political party, nor had I thought to join one. Before getting to know KAMER, I had gone to AK Party’s March 8 women’s tea. Because the mayor was a relative and had won for AK Party, his wife had called to invite me. And so I went. AK Party is really distant from the people here; it’s purely the ruling power. No one here advocates that...I didn’t feel anything for the party itself, I just went because my friends were there.

After the Purple Bazaar I came back here and talked with Halide. I asked her, “What is KAMER? How do you find them to be? How did you get involved with them?” She explained a few things to me. “We do awareness groups, we talk about these various things; do you want to come?” I said I would. For the first time I am on the inside of an organization like this, and I have truly become a volunteer. I really am. I love my work from the bottom of my heart.

I think KAMER’s principle of independence really suits me. I like the fact that it is not affiliated with a political party or any other organization or person. I really like KAMER’s independent structure. This comes up even more in our group. I am aware of it during our talks, when people open up.

I participated in Nilüfer’s second awareness group. Nilüfer and I started to become close. On the first day we electrified each other. Later I started

to come every week. I couldn't wait for the weekly meetings. I was different from the others. Where I lived was 25 kilometers from the city center. Sometimes getting back home was problematic for me...In the winter, public transport would only run until 4 PM to the area where we live. I was getting on the road one or two hours before that. I came earlier than everyone else and left after them as well. Or if Nilüfer was going to stay that night, then I didn't want to go home. I would call my husband and tell him I was taking the morning bus home. I had never felt like this before. This was a first but I really enjoyed it. I really looked forward to the meetings and would leave as early as possible. Sometimes they would call me and tell me that we weren't having our meeting and that it was postponed, and it would be a really big disappointment for me. I would get so sad, when it was postponed I couldn't find words to speak...

Particularly hard for me personally were the meetings focusing on topics of abuse and discrimination. When discussing abuse, I relived the times I saw my mother beaten in front of me. I couldn't tell anyone about it, but it was always on my mind. Then there was the sexual pressure. When you're explaining there, you understand it better. You can say, "Yes, I experienced that"...It's as if everything you experience all of a sudden comes to mind. You say, "Yes, I experienced that" without ever having realized it before... Maybe you didn't want to remember, or maybe you just didn't want to think about it. With discrimination, the things our teachers say to us come to mind. I am Alevi, and in school they were always asking me, "Are you Alevi?" I would always deny it. "Are you a qizilbash?" I would ask, "What is that? I don't know what that is." I always denied it. But from where I stand now, I wish I hadn't. Yes, I am an Alevi. At home we talked about the things that others said about Alevis. I was afraid. It was difficult, and I was a child of 13 or 14. I was always forced to hide my identity.

I changed during and after KAMER. I was always judging people and giving the answers to their problems. "Do this, behave like this, you should say this..." I thought I was doing a good thing. However, in our group we discussed the topic of solving others' problems. I said to Nilüfer, "Really? How can I not say what I'm thinking? I should say, 'What if you do this? Do this or do that'." We discussed this for a long time. I have finally been convinced that this doesn't do people any good. I was judgmental. For example, I judged 'covered' women. There are some others as well; I've fixed these things. Now I'm more careful. When people are explaining

something to me or gossiping, I try not to do too much analysis. "Maybe you understood wrong," I say. Because the other person isn't there, I try to be balanced and protect them as well. "They probably didn't mean it like that. You probably misunderstood. He/she isn't like that." These things changed. Whereas before I would have agreed and said, "Yeah, he/she would have done/said that." I had some hang-ups, but I've straightened them out.

Later, I realized I had propagated violence against some people...for example, I started to have a better dialogue with my nephew. I have a two and a half year old nephew. Now he doesn't listen to his mother or father. The two of us sit and talk like adults, and he listens really well. I give his mother KAMER's books on children and advise her to read them. Before when he did something wrong, we would hit his hand or his bottom. I have stopped doing this, and when his mother does it, I warn her, "Through talking with your child you should explain everything; he understands and knows." These things were really good for me.

I will develop myself even more. Sometimes something happens and I again engage in violence. I can yell at my husband or give a sharp answer, treat someone unkindly, get angry. Sometimes I can't control myself, but later I regret it. For example, one time I couldn't prevent myself from suddenly getting mad at my husband. I am working on restraining myself. In the past I could scream really abusively; now I just raise my voice. When I'm that angry, in order to not yell I either go into another room or go outside. That's how I deal with that...

My relationship with my husband has also changed. Before KAMER he would tell me, "Bring me a tea, fill it up." Now he says, "Dear, would you bring me tea?" We also look after the animals together. He reproaches me a lot; my coming and going to KAMER and leaving him alone on the farm is difficult for him. For example, I told him to learn to milk the cow. He said, "If I learn, you'll just leave me here on my own more. You'll never come home." He has developed this anxiety. He wants me to have responsibility, I should be forced to milk the cow, I should always be at home, always at his side, at least that is what he wants. He hasn't learned how to milk the cow, and he won't. He's afraid. But hopefully I'll teach him.

We did one of the awareness groups in a big village nearby. We started there with a friend, but some problems, some obstacles, came up. We went

for three or four weeks but always had a problem with the village headman over our meeting place. There was a women's clubhouse there which had been constructed by the government (or more correctly by the military). We wanted to use that space and even held our first meeting there. After that, the headman told us we didn't have permission to use it, and that we needed to get permission forms from the governor's office and the gendarmerie. It took us about a month, but we wrote the petitions and filled out the necessary applications to get their permission. We came back to the village headman with the documents, and he said, "I can't meet with you; I'm very busy." He had a minibus that he used to drive for work. "It won't work; I come home at 7 or 8 PM; we won't be able to meet." "What are we supposed to do?" I asked. Anyway, one day while returning from the village, we came across him and came down to the bridge below. We explained to the headman that we had gotten the permission forms and wanted to start. But he still didn't want to give us the space. The women coming to the group had really wanted to hold meetings there. We had started to want it as well. The women criticized the headman, saying, "He opens up this space to others. He opens it to his own private guests. The military commanders' wives prepare meals here for fun, and it's open to them. Then we should go and help; we are working for guests. Why won't he open it for us?" The headman still wouldn't give in and said, "If you want someplace else, we'll arrange it for you. There is a country house; there's no furniture in there but you can bring your own." In the end we couldn't get him to concede. We experienced a lot of difficulty in that period. I was so stressed out that I stopped getting my monthly period. In the last group meeting, we gathered all the women and invited them to participate in a panel-style conversation. That way we agreed...

The women in the village I live in asked, "What is it? What do you achieve with KAMER? What does KAMER give you? It's futile." There is one woman who really seems like a feminist; she's a widow. Later you realize that because she is a widow, she is afraid of those around her and of male pressure, and she's going crazy. She seems tough, she screams and yells... "Nothing," she says, "That is what it gets you. What does it give you? Why do you go there?" I say, "I love it there." I explain what it's like to come together with the other women. Their problems are things like what price to sell the butter for, how much the cheese would go for this year, their cow won't do anything or give birth. But they are extremely hard-working women; they do many things on their own. I want to organize a group with them but I predict that it's going to be very hard indeed.

I want to continue running the awareness groups. Because we are always taking—we are giving what we took, and the groups always continue like this. I go home and think about the things the women have experienced. I mean, some of it I have experienced; some of it my mother experienced; some of them because of my father...Hearing stories of abuse especially wears one down. They weigh on me. During the groups we laugh so that women can take off some of that weight. Then it starts again at home. You think about it when you go to bed...it's rough. The things you have gone through come to mind, and you truly understand what others have experienced!

15- Canan

“The words are different, the language is the same:
Suffering”

I am the oldest of six girls. My mother is 46 years old. She had me when she was 15. I studied through the seventh grade. I was a successful student. Unfortunately, I attracted too much attention; I was plump, with dark eyes and brows, and they took me out of school because of this. My parents both wanted to educate me, but there was too much pressure from others. My father told me not to be upset; he would send me back to school. But then my grandmother died, and my mother became totally depressed. Faced with this situation at home, I got very antsy and left. Sitting at home wasn't my style. I was sick of being a girl. It was really hard at that age. At the age of 12, all I wanted was to study, go out to different places, earn some money and support my family. I was consumed with this. I wanted them to say, “This girl is educated and looks after her family.”

I was 12 when my youngest sister was born. I had my first fight with my father in that moment. My mother had hid her pregnancy for eight months; she didn't tell any of us. I understood. Near birth my mother was very sad. My father tried to be supportive, “Don't worry, it'll be ok, you've done this before.” My mother was crying in the other room. It was because the baby was a girl. It really hurt me. I told my father, “This means that you have no children.” He said, “Don't be ridiculous.” My father was really devoted to us and said, “What kind of empty talk is this?” I said, “The fact that you still want a boy means that we aren't good enough.” Then and there I fought with my father for the first and last time.

My dream was to study, and I couldn't. After leaving middle school I went to a few vocational courses. For one entire year I took the courses.

I bought an embroidering machine. I loved embroidering but found other handicrafts to be more attractive. The next year I again registered for handicrafts courses. The teacher really insisted, "Come, let's get you into this high school. We'll make you a teacher." This time I had very high hopes. I dreamed of finishing school. At that point, my husband-to-be entered the scene. Within six months of his asking for my hand we married. He received a tearful bride. I hadn't wanted to marry at all, because for me my life ended on my wedding day. In the mixed environment I grew up in, boys seemed just like my girl friends. I had no idea what a man was, the goal had always been something else.

Within a period of 40 days, I was spotted by a match-maker, engaged and married. I would say I was very closed off within my own family, but I moved into to such a home that I craved my old one. We lived with my mother-in-law for two years. My husband was always going out of town; since middle school he had been a professional folklorist and football player. He didn't find it strange that he was always going to seminars all over the place. Under pressure from his family, they made me cover. My husband even said, "It's fine if she's not covered, too—it's enough for her to marry me." Then they made me wear long, button-up coats. I told my husband, "I can't wear those." He approved of what I said and didn't say anything about my decision. He was very polite, I can truly say that.

I cried a lot in the beginning, but later I began to love my husband because he never upset me. He never hurt me. He opened the car door for me, complimented my clothing...He was the type that liked to go out and have fun. He liked to bring me to dinner and to meet his friends. He went out and did these things, but my mother-in-law was not pleased. My husband was a very sincere person; he was open-minded and also wealthy. He had guests coming to our home from different places. I would tie on a light cotton head scarf and while wearing a skirt shake hands with everyone, welcome them and chat for a long time with the group. My mother-in-law was really peeved by this and bickered with my husband. "What is this woman doing? Where did you take her out to eat? Where did you get into the car and go on vacation?" We had some problems with her.

I became a mother at the age of 19, when I gave birth to my daughter. After I had my daughter my husband fell into a depression. At the same time, he ran out of money. He was conned and lost a huge amount of

money. His family began to ostracize him because they didn't want me anymore. My crimes were these: I talked, and I read books. My mixing with the guests and treating them kindly meant I was not living by their customs and traditions. But what I wanted was to study; this desire had never left me. I would cry even when I saw elementary school students on their way to school. Sometimes my mother-in-law would get angry and say, "Are you still hanging onto that ambition?" I didn't abandon my dream. Whatever happened, I would find a way to study. I wasn't just sitting around, either. I was making handicrafts at home. I made small trinkets. I am the kind of person who attributes a lot of importance to gifts, and I like to give the kinds of gifts to others that I would like to receive. I tried to decorate them nicely.

My husband and I moved out of his mother's home after two years of living with her. Now we were out of her way and in our own home. Even then money problems continued to plague us. My husband hid this from me for two or three years. He would come home in the wee hours and sleep on the sofa to avoid me; when I'd get up in the morning I would see that his pillow was wet. One day I just went up to him and told him, "I'm not stupid. If there is someone else, or if there is something going on in your life, just tell me. Based on that, I can plan my life around those circumstances." He explained how bad things were. This time he started to struggle. In trying not to let anyone find out, I suffered as well.

One day he came to me and told me, "I registered you for high school classes so that you can get your degree from home." For me, this was the best gift in the world. I have continued my education and am currently in the equivalent of the last year of high school. I worked very hard at home to secure our finances. I struggled to hide our situation while borrowing machines from the neighbors to continue working. I paid a ton of money to cover my husband's debts and to ensure that no one knew what was going on. This year is the fifth year of my career. My meeting KAMER was fate. For eight years I had been a wife and a mother. To have a career was my dream; I had missed working. I say it's been five years, but actually I am a woman who has been working for many years. I really struggled to get us back on solid financial ground.

After my husband got into drinking, he also started gambling. His greed for winning cost him his friends. The house used to be full of guests; now

almost no one came. I did things to try to save my husband, but now that I think about it a year later, I actually did him a disservice. It's really strange because I am always examining myself. I so completely devoted myself to our financial problems in order to prevent people from knowing what was going on, that I never found time to just talk with my husband. I overlooked the opportunity to provide emotional support to him. He was also searching at that point. He grew up in a big, fatherless household. I was his everything, and I was growing distant to him. As time went on, he faded. He's still here, but only physically. He is angry with everyone, with the world. This really wears me down.

This is how I started my working life. My aunt was an academic. She told me that a women's organization was looking for a handicrafts teacher. At the time I was busy with my courses. She called me and said, "You have two certificates; maybe they'll hire you." "Auntie," I said, "it's impossible. I'm sure they require a high school diploma." She said, "Well, go and ask them." I told my husband about the job, and he told me to forget about it. When I asked why, he said, "Please don't press me on this. Our economic situation is so bad, people are going to say 'this guy makes a living by putting his wife to work.' This really hurts me. Just wait, things will get better. I promise you that then you can do whatever you want." I continued to insist, and in the end he said, "Fine, go." Truthfully he sent me thinking that it wouldn't work out. I didn't even have five cents in my pocket, and I went on foot. We lived in the suburbs, and it was a 40 minute walk. I had a first interview. I told them where I came from and about our economic problems. They took me on for a one-month trial. After that first month, they said, "Go and get your ID. We're going to Diyarbakır to sign the contract." That was the second biggest news I'd received in my life. I started there.

It had been ten years since I had been to the city center. But that magnificent period was to come to an end. When I got there, the women's center was about to shut down; student numbers were very low. Sometimes I doubted myself, thinking that it was I who caused the business to dry up. I was very disappointed. My designs were very much liked, but we didn't have the necessary supplies. I had to use things sparingly, and it was really tiring me out. I had been saved from home, but just to come to this drab workplace. We were in a really tight spot. I worked there for two years.

After those two years I came across KAMER. It was totally by chance. I had a friend who was going to KAMER. One day after work we stopped by together. We met with Naime, and I decided to join an awareness group that met on the weekends. At that time my job wasn't going well at all, and it was really getting to me. Every day I earned ten lira. I couldn't believe they were paying me ten, because I didn't deserve it. I would just sit there all day. I needed to deserve that money. I was really depressed; the center was going to close. But what could I do? Truly I saw KAMER as a kind of sanctuary. I confess that I thought, "I'll go there and find work, I'll do it." I came to KAMER and found it very different than I'd expected. I could call it 'the best mistake of my life.' In the beginning it was a big mistake on my part. When I got to KAMER, there was nothing there. I was expecting a table where I could teach embroidery, but there was nothing—no students, no thread or needles. "My God, what am I going to do?" I asked myself. On the third day Nebahat came, and we got to know her. She asked if travel for work would be an issue for me. I said it wouldn't. We chatted for a little while and then she said, "Tomorrow we have a regional meeting in Tunceli. Hurry up and get ready—you're coming with us."

When I went into the regional meeting, my world temporarily darkened. For a whole week I couldn't come to my senses. Why? Because it was so transparent. The makeup of everything was so transparent, the seating arrangement, everything... I came from a hierarchical place, although there was hierarchy everywhere. Here I heard words I'd never felt or hoped for before... "My God, what am I going to do?" I thought. In the beginning I was afraid. Because these things were really blunt. Do you know what KAMER showed me? The things I silently thought were the things KAMER said out loud. It was as if they had put a megaphone inside me, as if they had secretly listened to my thoughts and were broadcasting them. It was a cry out loud. It was the outer cry of my inner voice. For years I had asked myself, "Is what I think totally stupid?" Because the people around me told me I was being unreasonable. I began to think, "The problem probably lies with me, because I can't fit in." You have to blend in with the rest or you are ostracized. Being shunned by others kicked off a period of time when I accepted that I had problems. Later I said, "If 40 or 45 women can say this, and those women go forward ten years, it seems like I was thinking the right things. But I had been talking in the wrong places; I couldn't make myself heard." I discovered this at KAMER. At KAMER I learned to look in the mirror and question myself. I put in a lot of effort

but now my days are very full. Good things have happened, and this makes me happy. At the other center many people were coming from suburban areas. I really enjoyed listening to them, but at the same time I was sad that I couldn't do anything. I listened to them one by one, though. At that time I was receiving applications for help, I wasn't aware.

Every woman is a different world. I would go home and think about this. Each woman opened up a new world for me. Sometimes I felt like thanking God, sometimes I felt like going out into the street with a red flag and shouting at the top of my lungs. I have lived all aspects of womanhood. I have lived the issues of women from everywhere. I was forced to get married as a young girl; I know what it is like to enter the marital bedroom the night of the wedding and wonder how bad the pain is going to be. I know how it is to live in a strained household under constant pressure from your mother-in-law. I was a housewife for eight years; I know how to conduct neighborly dialogue. I have seen women who while the days away doing nothing. I have experienced motherhood, at a young age no less. I have entered the work force; I have seen femininity in the workplace. I have worked in a poor, suburban area, and I have also worked in a wealthy, central area. We speak the same language with everyone but the words are different, the language is the same: suffering.

Ever since middle school I have said, "A woman has no name." I was surprised to discover later that Duygu Asena's book had the same title. It seemed that someone else had had the same thought as I had. Since middle school I have asked myself, is it so hard to be a woman in Eastern Turkey? It hurt me deeply when my father would ask my mother, "Is there not another son? What will you do with girls?" This cut me deeply. I prayed to God that I would have a daughter. I didn't tell my mother I was pregnant until my eighth month because she was going through a personal crisis. I was sad to learn that she herself would be hospitalized while I was giving birth. However, I was very pleased that my baby was a girl. I realized something at KAMER: I promised myself not to make the same mistakes with my daughter that my mother had made with me. Without even realizing it, we cement these societal rules. Some time after joining KAMER I paused and took a look in the mirror, and realized that I was unintentionally making some of the same errors my mother did. This really hurt me. I cried for days. In the midst of trying to be totally self-sacrificing, I was doing exactly what I didn't want. I couldn't look my

daughter in the eye; I couldn't look anyone in the eye for that matter. I realized I was doing damaging things to my daughter and my husband.

This past year was tough for me. I was really overwhelmed. If it hadn't been for KAMER, I would have completely collapsed. Thank goodness for Nilüfer, who was right there beside me, persevering the whole time. I fell apart when I lost my father; I really wanted to prove myself to him. For everywhere I went and everything I did, my father was really proud of me. He'd say, "What'd you do at work?" or "I saw your names come up on TV." He really enjoyed it and was proud of me; hearing this from my family strengthened me. You may grow up, but your inner self stays young; my father brought out the child in me. He would come in and say things like "Don't mess with my daughter." I got a kick out of that. Not hearing those words anymore really pains me.

For a while I wasn't doing so well, but when I go online and read what women from different regions have written about their own experiences, I feel much better. When all the women come together at KAMER's regional meetings, that also really influences me. At these meetings I feel I am really strong. Because we speak the same language. This really pleases me. I feel really happy that when talking with Nilgün and her team, Mehtap and her team, or women from the other regional offices. They say the things I feel but have a hard time discussing fluidly. It's like I have a huge house behind me. After my father passed away, all of the KAMER women called me to express their condolences. "Wow," I thought, "I'm not alone in the world!" This made me really happy.

If I hadn't experienced the pain that I did, I probably wouldn't be this productive today. For me, every woman is a world. The same pain, the same sorrow. Some try not to let anyone know, but we are the same on the inside. On top of that suffering there is a cover.

I experienced this as the facilitator of an awareness group. It was my first group, and it was in a difficult region. There I met a woman. She had been in prison; she was someone who had fallen on hard times. She really scared me. It was as if she had written the book. It was as if she had just come to supervise me. I thought, "If she says something to me, what will I do?" But the woman taught me a lot. I conducted the group with the same eye contact she made with me. At the end of the group meetings, she cried.

She had suffered so much yet hadn't cried then, and now she started to cry. She explained some very personal things and said that I was the woman who made her cry. She really showed me a lot. Her father was killed when she was very young; her mother wore a skirt and never removed the dark scarf from her head. The thing she said which affected me the most was this: "I struggled so much with men; the apple didn't fall far from the tree, so to speak. I fell down because of the pain of my mother's being forced to wear that skirt. I picked the wrong battle to fight. However, it is necessary to put my efforts into this struggle here, and for this I should congratulate KAMER. I lost myself in my mother's fight. But here, you are all showing that you are fighting this war without losing yourselves to it. I didn't stop to think and look in the mirror; I didn't pull out a pen once. I didn't apply lipstick once." Her sharing this with me really moved me.

Through running these awareness groups, you begin to understand women by looking into their eyes. At one of the regional meetings, Nebahat was going around one by one and getting everyone's opinion. I couldn't stand it and said, "You put a mirror in front of me. You told me, take off your headscarf. Open your shirt. Take off your bra. Take off your tights. Then you said, 'Now explain yourself.'" It was really difficult for me. For the first time I had learned to look at my own body, at myself. You know how when a goldsmith or a jeweler look at gold, they can immediately tell how many carats it is? We've become that way with women. At first glance I can tell how she feels and what demons she's fighting inside. What she's experienced, what she's going to say...After talking for a certain amount of time she'll give herself up. It really pleases me to see what women can do.

It's been a year since I started working at KAMER, and I have now led four awareness groups. I think we learn everything at KAMER. When I come here I feel like I've come home. When I stay with my friends from KAMER, I feel like I'm staying in my own house. Because we speak the same language. You know that she understands you, that what you say stays between you two, that she doesn't judge you, that she will listen to you. You can't find that anywhere else. I have adopted this place so much that sometimes I mix up my refrigerator at home and the one at KAMER. One time my husband asked me on the phone what we needed, and I said, "We're just fine; there is eggplant and stuff, I'll fry something up. We have everything we need, just please bring some bread home." I got home and looked in the fridge, and it was empty. To my surprise, I had

been visualizing KAMER's fridge the whole time. Sometimes I get too absorbed in things. Sometimes I fuss so much over the cleaning of the office, like making sure there is no dust whatsoever, that the other women say, "Enough!" and I truly feel at home.

It makes me happy to see every person walk through the door. It is not important whether I am there. It is important to me that KAMER is open and that people can come and go. There is no rule that everyone has to stay at KAMER all the time. Anything could happen at any moment. Even if I were to leave now, this place will have been really valuable to me. It generated so much awareness in me. It increased my self-confidence. It enabled me to raise my voice. I learned to sometimes quickly knock on the door and pass into the other room. I learned to yell at the top of my lungs, "This is my right, too." Through learning some things sink in even more. Later on when you apply it to real life, it comes up again. If my husband were still the man I first married, my God how well we could live! But I learned well how important it is to wipe the slate clean. You can't live in the past. My neighbor says, "Are you going to go out at 7 or at 9? It's never clear." But I know my daughter is going to live very comfortably. And her child will even have a better life...

KAMER PUBLICATIONS

Fark Ederek Çoğalmak – KAMER’in Şiddet İçin Çalışma Yöntemleri
Diyarbakır, 2007

On “Honor” Killings:

Based on the results of our ongoing projects, which aim to develop sustainable methods for the struggle against killings under the guise of honor in eastern and southeastern Anatolia, and in order to support women at risk of being a victim of such killings, we have produced one report in the form of a book every year since 2003. The books listed below have been shared with domestic and international women’s organizations, government agencies, civil society organizations, and print and visual media sources.

Alışmayacağız: “Namus” Adına İşlenen Cinayetler, 2003 Raporu
We Will Not Get Used To It! Killings in the Name of “Honor”, 2003 Report
Diyarbakır, 2004

“Keşke” Dememek İçin: “Namus” Adına İşlenen Cinayetler, 2004 Raporu
No More “if only’s”: Killings in the Name of “Honor”, 2004 Report
Diyarbakır, 2005

“Suçlu Kim?”: “Namus” Adına İşlenen Cinayetler, 2005 Raporu
“Who’s to Blame?”: Killings Committed in the Name of “Honor”, 2005 Report
Diyarbakır, 2006

İstersek Biter: “Namus” Adına İşlenen Cinayetler, 2006 Raporu
We Can Stop This: Killings Committed in the Name of “Honor”, 2006
Report
Diyarbakır, 2007

Life for Children Publications:

The “Life for Children Project” is currently being carried out with the understanding that early childhood is the most fundamental period for the struggle against abuse and discrimination. We carried out exercises in active homes for children in line with the institutional principles on language, behavior and implementation. In order to propagate best practices and increase their effectiveness, we have printed our reports in book form. All of these publications both examine traditional child-raising practices to emphasize their harmful aspects and offer suggestions for methods to be applied based on our experiences. Children are not just our tomorrow – they are the drops of water which blend today and tomorrow. Let’s say “life for today’s children” for a world free of abuse and discrimination.

Fotoğraflarla Çocuk Hakları Sözleşmesi
Diyarbakır, 2002

Kreş Açarken İlk Adımlar
Diyarbakır, 2004

Tuvalet Eğitimi
Diyarbakır, 2005

Kız Olmak, Oğlan Olmak: Toplumsal Cinsiyet Roller
Diyarbakır, 2006

How Can I Contact KAMER?¹

Adıyaman KAMER

Tel: 0 416 214 44 53

Adres: Atatürk Bulvarı SGK Karşısı Arçelik Bayii Üstü Kat: 1 / 1 ADIYAMAN
d.kamer@superonline.com

Ağrı KAMER

Tel: 0 472 215 10 15

Adres: Cumhuriyet Cad. Yavuz Mah. Bulut İş Merkezi Kat : 3 No : 6 AĞRI
d.kamer@superonline.com

Ardahan KAMER

Tel: 0 478 211 22 03

Adres: Kaptan Paşa Mah. Cumhuriyet Cad. Mehtap Sok. Yolcu Apt. 5 / 2
ARDAHAN
d.kamer@superonline.com

Batman KAMER

Tel: 0 488 213 96 77

Adres: Kültür Mah. 206 Evler 2607 Sok. No : 54 BATMAN
d.kamer@superonline.com

Bingöl KAMER

Tel: 0426 214 50 01

Adres: Saray Mah. İşören Otomotiv yanı Temel yapı karşısı Düzağaç / BİNGÖL
d.kamer@superonline.com

Bitlis KAMER

Tel: 0 434 827 96 96

Adres: Aydınlar Mah. Ufuk Cad. Nur – San İş Merkezi Kat : 3 No: 34 BİTLİS
d.kamer@superonline.com

1- For more information, you can reach us on the web at www.kamer.org.tr

Diyarbakır KAMER

Tel: 0 412 228 10 53

Faks: 0412 224 23 19

Adres: Ali Emiri 3. Sok. Es-Şal Apt.1 / 1 Yenişehir / DİYARBAKIR

d.kamer@superonline.com

Elazığ KAMER

Tel: 0 424 237 85 51

Adres: Şehit İlhanlar Cad. İzzet Paşa Mah. Şehit Teğmen Namık Ozan Sok.

Sarsılmaz Apt.18 / 2 ELAZIĞ

d.kamer@superonline.com

Erzincan KAMER

Tel: 0 446 223 46 96

Adres: Atatürk Mah. 353. Sok. Kat:1 Daire : 2 No : 6 ERZİNCAN

d.kamer@superonline.com

Erzurum KAMER

Tel: 0 442 213 00 33

Adres: Topçuoğlu Mah. Tohumcu Sok. Işık Apt. No : 9 Kat : 1 ERZURUM

d.kamer@superonline.com

Gaziantep KAMER

Tel: 0 342 220 83 36

Adres: Alleben Mah. Şair Nabi Sok. Kaya Apt. 1 / 6 Gaziantep Lisesi Karşısı

Şahinbey / GAZİANTEP

Hakkari KAMER

Tel: 0 438 211 00 07

Adres: Gazi Mah. Avukat Muhsin Zeydanoğlu Sok. İbrahim İlter Apt. Kat : 2 No : 1 HAKKARİ

d.kamer@superonline.com

Iğdır KAMER

Tel: 0 476 227 19 94

Adres: Topçular Mah.Hürriyet Cad. Akın Apt. No : 20 Kat : 2 Cezaevi Karşısı

IĞDIR

d.kamer@superonline.com

Kilis KAMER

Adres: Büyük Kütah Mah. İslambey Cad. No : 2 / 2

d.kamer@superonline.com

Kars KAMER

Tel: 0 474 212 80 59

Adres: Yusufpaşa Mah. Halit Paşa Cad.Yeni Vakıfbank Karşısı No : 221 KARS

d.kamer@superonline.com

Siirt KAMER

Tel: 0 484 224 34 94

Adres: Yeni Mah. Cengiz Topel Cad. Polat Center Arkası Kapı No : 5 SİİRT
d.kamer@superonline.com

Şırnak KAMER

Tel: 0 486 216 50 70

Adres: Dicle Mah. Şafak Sok. İlçi Apt. 2 / 3 ŞIRNAK
d.kamer@superonline.com

Malatya KAMER

Tel: 0422 324 05 67

Adres: İsmetiye Mah. Bölükemin 2. Sok. Yaşar Kardeşler İş Merkezi 4/40
d.kamer@superonline.com

Mardin KAMER

Tel: 0 482 212 23 53

Adres : Yeni Yol Kavşağı Sağlık Müdürlüğü Karşısı Alkanoglu Apt. B / Blok Kat :
1 No : 3
d.kamer@superonline.com

Muş KAMER

Tel: 0 436 212 33 14

Adres: İstasyon Cad. Fırat Center İşhanı Kat : 4 No : 13 MUŞ
d.kamer@superonline.com

Şanlıurfa KAMER

Tel: 0 414 313 95 56

Adres : 2. Toner Mah. Cengiz Topel Cad.103. Sok. Kayalar Apt. Bahçelievler
Anaokulu Karşısı Bahçelievler / ŞANLIURFA
d.kamer@superonline.com

Tunceli KAMER

Tel: 0 428 212 44 31

Adres: Moğoltay Mah. Kıbrıs Sok. Kur Apt. 2/4
d.kamer@superonline.com

Van KAMER

Tel : 0 432 212 16 65

Adres: Hastane Cad. Kupik İş Merkezi Kat : 4 No : 22 VAN
d.kamer@superonline.com

