

One simple thing: a restaurant meal

Good food and good company—a simple restaurant meal can provide so much pleasure to women who have been abused.

Chinese? Curry? Thai? For many of us, eating out is simply a nice treat at the end of a long day. But for some of the women supported by the charity Aanchal, eating at a restaurant can make the world of difference.

‘When I go to heaven, I’ll tell God I have been to a restaurant.’

Aanchal supports victims of domestic violence from the South Asian community. As part of its work, the charity runs a support group for elderly Asian women. The women are taken out to restaurants to give them a sense of what life can be like outside an abusive relationship, and to form friendships and share experiences.

Most of the women who attend the support group have experienced abuse over many years, at the hands of their husbands and sometimes at the hands of their sons. Some women had no freedom or social life when they were married and were never allowed out of the house on their own.

One elderly lady, who had never eaten in a restaurant during her marriage to her dominant, abusive husband, was so elated at being allowed to go out to eat that she told staff: ‘When I go to heaven, I’ll tell God I have been to a restaurant.’

Iona Miller

Aanchal is one charity featured in our recent report on violence against women, [Hard knock life](#).

