



Behind The Wall – Tracy Chapman – Notes



- **Activity types:** Inventing a story, vocabulary (opposites), listening for specific words, gap fill, text analysis, discussion, reading texts, Internet search
- **Level:** Intermediate/Post-Intermediate
- **Language:** Talking about women's rights and violence against women; reading, summarizing, telling stories, comparing, reporting and discussing news.
- **Notes:** The 25th November is the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women (see www.endviolenceagainstwomen.org.uk and http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/International_Day_for_the_Elimination_of_Violence_against_Women)
"The Stop Violence Against Women campaign focuses on ending violence against women in the family and in conflict/post conflict situations: two of the most dangerous environments for women globally. Our ultimate goal is basic human rights for women and girls everywhere". (from www.amnesty.org.uk)
Tracy Chapman's tale of domestic violence was released on her 1988 self-titled debut album.

1. Write the words **VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN** on the board and ask students to give examples of different kinds of violence against women. Write their answers on the board as a spidergram.
Possible answers: physical – sexual – economic – emotional – domestic – cultural
2. Introduce the Amnesty International campaign "Stop Violence Against Women". (see notes above). Students can search for more information about the campaign on English websites, such as www.amnesty.org and www.amnesty.org.uk
3. Write the following words on the board. Divide students into groups and ask them to invent a story about domestic violence using all or most of them (10-15 minutes)
man – wife – police – wall – door – screaming – tears – ambulance – silence

A student from each group tells the story. Compare the stories, helping students to underline similar and different aspects of each. (It would be interesting to note who the abuser and the victim are in all the stories).
4. Write the following words on the board. Ask students to find their opposites alone or in pairs.
behind – day – come – disperse – early – good – here – husband – last – leave – loud – never – peace – up – woman

KEY: (at this stage any correct opposite is acceptable):
ahead/in front of – night – go – gather/assemble – late – bad/evil – there – wife – next/first – arrive – low – always – war – down – husband
5. Play the song. Ask students to listen for the opposites from the previous activity, correcting if necessary, and numbering them in the order they hear them in any form. If they appear more than once, refer to the first time.
KEY: 1. last - 2. night - 3. loud - 4. behind - 5. good - 6. always - 7. come - 8. late - 9. arrive - 10. man - 11. wife - 12. up - 13. here - 14. peace - 15. disperse
6. Feedback, then give each student a copy of the worksheet and ask them to fill in the gaps with the missing words, based on their answers to the previous activity and context.
7. Play the song again. Students check their answers in pairs or in groups, then correct in open class and sing together!
8. **Follow up: A)** Students can compare their stories to the song.
B) Focusing on the lyrics students find elements describing the neighbour, the wife, the husband, the police, the crowd and the effect of violence on each of them.
9. **Focus on violence against women in the family.** Students can search for definitions of *domestic violence* and other related expressions such as *spousal abuse*. Then, elicit different kinds of domestic violence against women. Ask students to report local, national or international news about domestic violence. You can provide some newspaper articles or news downloaded from the web for students to read, summarize and report. Alternatively, students can search for news on the web and report their findings.



Behind The Wall – Tracy Chapman



_____ I heard the screaming
 _____ voices _____ the wall
 Another sleepless _____ for me

It won't do no _____ to call
 The police _____
 If they _____ at all

_____ I heard the screaming
 _____ voices _____ the wall
 Another sleepless _____ for me

It won't do no _____ to call
 The police _____
 If they _____ at all

And when they _____
 They say they can't interfere
 With domestic affairs

Between a _____ and his _____
 And as they walk out the door
 The tears well _____ in her eyes

_____ I heard the screaming
 Then a silence that chilled my soul
 Prayed that I was dreaming
 When I saw the ambulance in the road

And the policeman said,
 "I'm _____ to keep the _____
 Will the crowd _____,
 I think we all could use some sleep".

_____ I heard the screaming
 _____ voices _____ the wall
 Another sleepless _____ for me

It won't do no _____ to call
 The police _____
 If they _____ at all.





Last night I heard the screaming
Loud voices **behind** the wall
Another sleepless **night** for me

It won't do no **good** to call
The police **always come late**
If they **come** at all

Last night I heard the screaming
Loud voices **behind** the wall
Another sleepless **night** for me

It won't do no **good** to call
The police **always come late**
If they **come** at all

And when they **arrive**
They say they can't interfere
With domestic affairs

Between a **man** and his **wife**
And as they walk out the door
The tears well **up** in her eyes

Last night I heard the screaming
Then a silence that chilled my soul
Prayed that I was dreaming
When I saw the ambulance in the road

And the policeman said,
"I'm **here** to keep the **peace**
Will the crowd **disperse**,
I think we all could use some sleep".

Last night I heard the screaming
Loud voices **behind** the wall
Another sleepless **night** for me

It won't do no **good** to call
The police **always come late**
If they **come** at all.