

Ticked off!

Women who handled anger well...

Rosa Parks refused to sit at the back of a Montgomery, Alabama, bus in 1955, violating segregation laws. Her defiance sparked the Civil Rights movement.

Sarah Brady saw her husband James, press secretary to President Ronald Reagan, shot down in 1981. Several years later, she became an activist for gun control. In 1993, President Clinton signed into law the Brady Bill, requiring a five-day waiting period and a background check on handgun buyers. Sarah Brady now chairs Handgun Control, Inc.

Sheri Poe was raped at age 19 but suffered in silence. At 34, she designed aerobics shoes called Rykă, and 7 percent of the profits go to the ROSE Fund to help end violence against women.

Lorraine Pace of West Islip, Long Island, discovered she had breast cancer, but having none of the usual risk factors, she was determined to find out why. Pace conducted her own neighborhood survey and found that of 350 women with breast cancer many lived on streets where water did not circulate well through city plumbing. Though the cause of their cancer has not yet been identified, her survey method has been replicated around the world.

And women who didn't

Jean Harris shot and killed her estranged lover, Scarsdale Diet doctor Herman Tarnower, M.D., in Westchester County, New York in 1984 and spent the next thirteen years in Bedford Hills prison.

Lorena Bobbitt cut off her husband's penis with a knife in 1993, claiming she suffered from his physical and emotional abuse. She was acquitted following a much-publicized trial.

Zsa Zsa Gabor slapped a California Highway Patrol officer as he was about to ticket her for speeding, and spent three days in the El Segundo, California, city jail.

Lynette "Squeaky" Fromme, Charles Manson follower, attempted to assassinate President Gerald Ford in 1975 because she was angry that Manson had been denied parole. She ended up getting a life sentence in Federal Prison Camp in Alderson, West Virginia.

Eileen Stevens' son, Chuck Stenzel, a 20-year-old college sophomore, died during a fraternity-hazing incident in 1978. Angry at the university officials who refused to act, Stevens worked with New York legislators to pass an antihazing law; similar laws have been passed in 40 other states.

Margaret Sanger watched her mother die because of illness related to her 11 pregnancies. Sanger opened the first birth control clinic in Brooklyn, New York, in 1916, to help free women from unwanted pregnancy and economic dependency. Her efforts led to the founding of Planned Parenthood Federation of America.

— Danielle Sherwood



Margaret Sanger



Rosa Parks



Sheri Poe



Sarah Brady