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Surviving a Breakup with Someone Suffering with Borderline Personality Disorder

Staff Article, BPDFamily.com

The beginnings of a relationship with a person with Borderline Personality Disorder (BPD) can be intoxicating when your partner is brimming with jubilation because you are in their life. Then inexplicable dark moments of resentment begin breaking through the infatuation and your partner acts in cold and even cruel ways. These extreme highs and lows are commonplace in “Borderline” relationships.

In the most troubled relationships, it is not uncommon for a BPD partner to unexpectedly abandon the relationship or do something so hurtful that one cannot continue. Your partner may emotionally discard you or become abusive - leaving you to feel oppressed and broken. Or you have invested yourself in the relationship and all the latest communication and relationship tools, but the relationship has eroded and you have no more to give.

So they leave you - or you break up with them – or one of you finally decides not to reconcile, yet again. If any of this is you, read on.

Disengaging can be difficult. Rationally, you understand that leaving is the healthiest thing you can do now, yet your emotional attachment is undeniable. This conflict confuses and intensifies your struggle as you feel hopelessly trapped by your desires to rekindle a relationship that you know it isn't healthy – and may, in fact, not even be available to you.

Often we obsess and ruminate over what our BPD partner might be doing or feeling, or who they might be seeing. We wonder if they ever really loved us and how we could be so easily discarded. Our emotions range between hurt, disbelief, and anger.

This guide explores the struggles of breaking away from a partner with borderline personality disorder and offers suggestions on how you can make it easier on yourself and your partner.

BREAKING UP WAS NEVER THIS HARD

Is it because they are so special? Sure they are special and this is a very significant loss for you - but the depth of your struggles has a lot more to do with the complexity of the relationship bond than the person.

In some important way this relationship saved or rejuvenated you. The way your BP partner hung on your every word, looked at you with admiring eyes and wanted you, filled an empty void.

Or, your BPD partner may have been insecure and needy and their problems inspired your sympathy and determination to resolve. Doing this made you feel exceptional, heroic, valuable.

As a result, you were willing to tolerate behavior beyond what you've known to be acceptable. You've felt certain that your BPD depended on you and that they would never leave. However challenging, you have been committed to see it through.

Unknown to you, your BPD partner was on a complex journey that started long before the relationship began. You were their “*knight in shining armor*”, you were their hope, and the answer to disappointments that they have struggled with most of their life.

Together, this made for an incredibly “loaded” relationship bond between the two of you.

TEN BELIEFS THAT CAN GET YOU STUCK

Breaking up with a BPD partner is often difficult because we do not have a valid understanding of the disorder or our relationship bond. As a result we often misinterpret their actions and some of our own. Many of us struggle with some of the following false beliefs.

1) **Belief that this person holds the key to your happiness**

We often believe that our BPD partner is the master of our joy and the keeper of our sorrow. You may feel that they have touched the very depths of your soul. As hard as this is to believe right now, your perspective on this is likely a bit off.

Idealization is a powerful “drug” – and it came along at a time in your life when you were very receptive to it. In time, you will come to realize that your partner’s idealization of you, no matter how sincere, was a courting ritual and an overstatement of the real emotions at the time. You were *special* – but not that *special*.

You will also come to realize that a lot of your elation was due to your own receptivity and openness and your hopes.

You will also come to realize that someone coming out of an extended traumatic relationship is often depressed and can not see things clearly in the end. You may feel anxious, confused, and you may be ruminating about your BPD partner. All of this distorts your perception reality. You may even be indulging in substance abuse to cope.

2) **Belief that your BPD partner feels the same way that you feel**

If you believe that your BPD partner was experiencing the relationship in the same way that you were or that they are feeling the same way you do right now, don’t count on it. This will only serve to confuse you and make it harder to understand what is really happening.

When any relationship breaks down, it’s often because the partners are on a different “page” – but much more so when

your partner suffers from borderline personality disorder.



“She wouldn’t try to harm me intentionally”

Unknown to you, there were likely significant periods of shame, fear, disappointment, resentment, and anger rising from below the surface during the entire relationship. What you have seen lately is not new - rather it’s a culmination of feelings that often arise later in the relationship.

3) **Belief that the relationship problems are caused by you or some circumstance**

You concede that there are problems, and have pledged to do your part to resolve them.

Because there have been periods of extreme openness, honesty, humanity and thoughtfulness during the relationship, and even during the break-ups, your BPD partner’s concerns are very credible in your eyes. But your BPD partner also has the rather unique ability to distort facts, details, and play on your insecurities to a point where fabrications are believable to you.

It's a complex defense mechanism, a type of denial, and a common characteristic of the disorder.

As a result, both of you come to believe that you are the problem; that you are inadequate; that you need to change; even that you deserve to be punished or left behind.

This is largely why you have accepted punishing behaviors; why you try to make amends and try to please; why you feel responsible.



4) **Belief that love can prevail**

Once these relationships seriously rupture, they are harder to repair than most – so many wounds from the past have been opened. Of course you have much invested in the relationship and your partner has been an integral part of your dreams and hopes - but there are greater forces at play now.

For you, significant emotional wounds have been inflicted upon an already wounded soul. To revitalize the relationship, you would need to recover from being a wounded victim and emerge as an informed and loving caretaker – it's not a

simple journey. You need compassion and validation to heal - something your BPD partner most likely won't understand - you'd be on your own to find it.

For your partner, there are longstanding and painful abandonment fears, trust issues, and resentments that have been triggered. They are coping by blaming much of it on you. For your partner, it is often much easier and safer to move on than to face all of the issues above.

5) **Belief that things will return to "the way they used to be"**

The idealization stages of a relationship with a BPD partner can be intoxicating and wonderful. But, as in any relationship, the "honeymoon" stage passes.

The idealization that one or both of you would like to return to isn't sustainable. It never was. The loss of this dream (or the inability to transition in to a healthy next phase of love) may be what triggered the demise of the relationship to begin with.

BPD mood swings and cycles may have you conditioned to think that, even after a bad period, you can return to the "idealization". Your BPD partner may believe this too.

A more realistic representation of your relationship is the one you have recently experienced.

6) **Clinging to the words that were said**

We often cling to the positive words and promises that were voiced and ignore or minimize the negative actions.

"But she said she would love me forever"

Many wonderful and expressive things may have been said during the course of the relationship, but people suffering from BPD are dreamers, they can be fickle, and they over express emotions like young children – often with little thought for long term implications.

You must let go of the words. It may break your heart to do so. But the fact is, the actions - all of them - are your truth.

7) **Belief that if you say it louder you will be heard**

We often feel if we explain our point better, put it in writing, or find the right words....

People with BPD hear and read very well. But when emotions are flared, the ability to understand diminishes greatly.

Most of what you are saying is being interpreted as dogmatic and hurtful. And the more insistent you become - the more hurtful it is - the less your partner feels "heard" - and the more communications break down.

Your BPD partner will not likely validate or even acknowledge what you have said. It may be denial, it may be the inability to get past what they feel and want to say, or it may even be payback.

This is one of the most difficult aspects of breaking up - there is no closure.

8) **Belief that absence makes the heart grow fonder**

We often think that by holding back or depriving our BPD partner of "our love" - that they will "see the light". We base this on all the times our partner expressed a fear that we would leave and how they needed us.

During an actual breakup it is different. Distancing triggers all kinds of abandonment and trust issues for the BPD partner (as described in #4).

People with BPD also have real object constancy issues - "out of sight is out of mind". They may feel, after two weeks of separation, the same way you would feel after six.

Absence generally makes the heart grow colder.



9) **Belief that you need to stay to help them.**

You might want to stay to help your partner. Possibly to disclose to them that they have borderline personality disorder and help them get into therapy. Maybe you want to help in other ways while still maintaining a "friendship".

The fact is, you are no longer in a position to be the caretaker and support person for your BPD partner - no matter how well intentioned.

Understand that you have become the trigger for your BPD partner's bad feelings and bad behavior. Sure, you do not deliberately cause these feelings, but your presence is now triggering them. This is a complex defense mechanism that is often seen with borderline personality disorder when a relationship sours. It's roots emanate from the deep central wounds of the disorder. You can't begin to answer to this.

You also need to question your own motives and your expectations for wanting to help. Is this kindness or a type “well intentioned” manipulation on your part - an attempt to change them to better serve the relationship as opposed to addressing the lifelong wounds from which they suffer?

More importantly, what does this suggest about your own survival instincts – you’re injured, in ways you may not fully even grasp, and it’s important to attend to your own wounds before you are capable of helping anyone else.

You are damaged. Right now, your primary responsibility really needs to be to yourself – your own emotional survival.

If they try to lean on you, it’s a greater kindness that you step away. Difficult, no doubt, but more responsible.

10) **Belief that they have seen the light**

Your partner may suddenly be on their best behavior or appearing very needy and trying to entice you back into the relationship. You, hoping that they are finally seeing things your way or really needing you, may venture back in – or you may struggle mightily to stay away.

What is this all about?

Well, at the end of any relationship there can be a series of breakups and make-ups – disengaging is often a process, not an event.

However when this process becomes protracted, it becomes toxic. At the end of a BP relationship, this can happen. The emotional needs that fueled the relationship bond initially, are now fueling a convoluted disengagement as one or both partners struggle against their deep enmeshment with the other and their internal conflicts about the break up.

Either partner may go to extremes to reunite - even use the threat of suicide to get attention and evoke sympathies.

Make no mistake about what is happening. Don’t be lulled into believing that the relationship is surviving or going through a phase. At this point, there are no rules. There are no clear loyalties. Each successive breakup increases the dysfunction of relationship and the dysfunction of the partners individually - and opens the door for very hurtful things to happen.

PREPARE FOR YOUR DEPARTURE

Probably the greatest cause of failed departures is a lack of planning and mental preparation.

Take the time to plan.

Consult a therapist

Consult a therapist about your situation. Therapy will help you deal with the emotional aspects of leaving. It will help you interpret your partner’s actions. It can also help with depression or other issues.

Seek a therapist with knowledge of Borderline Personality Disorder. Few community therapists have meaningful experience with this disorder – so be prepared to do some investigating.

If your partner is in therapy, tell their therapist about your intention to leave. An ethical therapist will not tell your partner of your intent, but can help prepare them for the event, easing not only your departure, but also your partner’s reaction to the change.

Consult a lawyer

There are many legal ramifications of leaving your own home, or forcing an abusive partner to leave a shared home. If you are not legally married, you may not have the normal court protections. Lawyers are also useful in discussing such issues as possible restraining orders.

If you are planning a divorce it is very important that you make legal moves carefully before you make your intentions known to your partner. Since laws vary from state to state, and country to country, and you may find conflicting advice

from friends and family over these laws, give full weight to your lawyer's advice.

Take all your personal possessions with you when you leave

You do not want to be "held hostage" to personal items that you may want to retrieve later; you may even find them missing or destroyed. Once again, consult a lawyer over the legal ramifications of abandoning or taking mutual property. Instead of taking everything at once, you may decide to move individual items one at a time, especially personal items, or those useful in an independent living situation or "sudden exit".

Be careful, however, not to tip off your partner of your intention of leaving by removing everything at once, or obvious items that suggest you are leaving.

As people with BPD are very sensitive to being abandoned, they may increase their strange or abusive behavior beforehand or afterwards, and even exhibit symptoms you have not yet seen, such as suicidal gestures or threats against your person or belongings.

Be aware - Risks are heightened during the act of leaving or in the immediate time afterward.

Do not prematurely tell the BPD partner that you are leaving

It may backfire and catalyze extreme reactions. When leaving, do it suddenly, previously unannounced, and, preferably, in the presence of strangers. People with Borderline Personality Disorder tend to "act out" their disorder more around people they know, you will be inhibiting that behavior by having strangers around you.

Friends may volunteer their help, but you are better off paying for a moving company to aid you -- this not only makes the move happen quickly, it also furnishes strangers who can witness any bad actions. A BPD partner caught off-guard, in the presence of strangers, and during a sudden, quickly-occurring move, is safer than a BPD partner who has had time to prepare their response.

Avoid giving a BPD partner a valid legal issue to use against you

Even if they are having an affair, do not have an affair yourself – it could be used against you in a divorce, a custody battle, a smear campaign, etc.

You may find their reaction much greater than you anticipated (especially from one who is indulging in the same behavior).

False accusations of physical abuse can also be a concern, so be prepared by never allowing yourself to be alone with them. Try to always keep neutral witnesses with you or only meet in very public places.

NOW THAT YOU ARE SEPARATED

Put some distance between you

Disengaging is hard. Whether you were together for a long time or the relationship was very intense, your dreams, values, and emotions are tied to the other person – that's normal. If you were have some co-dependent or narcissistic traits, or are insecure – then you are even more entwined. This is why it is hard to let go.

The longer you stay connected, the longer it will take to disengage, heal, and move forward.

Initially, it is best to end all "personal" discussions – stay away from comments like "how do you feel", "what are you doing" or making any value statements like "you really should see a therapist".

Conduct your business and move along. Do not meet alone, bring an outside observer, or meet in a very public place. Keep the conversations strictly on the topic (e.g., exchanging the children, making a business decision, etc) and if the former partner gets personal, end the conversation. The same advice goes for e-mail, if it gets personal, don't respond. Send personal mail back unopened (e.g., cards, etc) with no note. Do not do anything that could be interpreted as a message.

All this will help you disconnect.

Your BPD partner may beg to return at the time of leaving or afterwards.

This is not unusual... especially if you have a history of splitting up and getting back together.

Be prepared for it. Discourage it at the start by not engaging in the conversation – no matter how curious you are or how validating you may think it would be.

Encountering the "smear" campaign

An abandoned BPD partner may try retaliating. This can be avoided or mediated somewhat by paying careful attention to the *"Prepare for your Departure"* section. If your BPD partner degraded previous partners, you should assume that they will "bad-mouth" you. Anticipate how you may be smeared and 'nip it in the bud'. Speed is important. Some smears can get ugly.

Put yourself above blame, be an adult, don't get defensive - get on with your life.

Disturbed dreams, ruminations, doubt

A healthy person processes events through their dreaming, so your dreams may continue to be about the situation or the BP for some time. These dreams may go away, only to crop up later. Know that this is normal; use dreams as useful tools to analyze your reaction to the stressful events that triggered them. You may even gauge your progress by how quickly the bad dreams are fading.

You may also ruminate about your partner – go over it all day long, day after day. There are ways to manage ruminations - use them.

Feelings of doubt. Did you do the right thing? How is the person with Borderline Personality Disorder doing? Am I BPD too? Remember that you may have acquired such BPD traits as projection by merely being in contact with the disorder; a therapist will help you straighten out any feelings of doubt about these issues. Remember - your partner functioned without you before you met them -- as did you -- so relearn how to concentrate on your own needs and priorities again.

Loneliness

You may find yourself feeling isolated in your new surroundings and without a support group. You may feel that you do not have the energy left to make new friends, or even to reconnect with old ones. You may not want to go anywhere; you may also feel depressed. So treat yourself: go for a walk. Go to a coffee shop and be open to conversation. If you have hobbies, like painting, writing, reading, etc., use this new-found time -- when you are no longer dealing constantly with BPD issues – to pursue your interests. Go back to school. Look upon this as a new beginning. You will also find during this period that having your familiar things around you helps.

AN IMPORTANT PART OF HEALING IS MOURNING, SELF-EXAMINATION, AND ACCEPTANCE

Mourn the relationship.

The end of a relationship is a "death" of sorts and it is important to grieve. You will likely go through the stages of grief characterized by Dr. Kübler-Ross - Denial, Anger, Bargaining, Depression, Acceptance. These don't happen overnight, so be kind to yourself and give yourself time.

Focus on settling in to your new life, making new friends, telling family members and others about your transition, etc. - and most importantly, start setting new goals.

You may experience a period of anxiety and tension from the experience, and it may be overwhelming. You may feel exhausted, with drawn, unmotivated, confused. You may experience depression or other stresses (e.g., PTSD). Be aware that these feelings will slowly subside; seek therapy as needed.

Self-examination

"Why" did you get into the relationship in the first place? This is a good time to examine your family background and see what blinded you to the fact that the BP was trouble (it is true that people with BPD are sometimes very good at hiding their illness, but in retrospect you will see that some early signs were there). You may have doubts or fears about making new friends or dating because you are afraid that you will once again choose a BPD partner. Keep in mind

that you are now an expert on recognizing BPD symptoms, and so practice looking for these signs and deciding if your fears are real or not.

Continue therapy. Self-awareness is actually one of the "gifts" received from having been in an abusive situation; with enough work, you may actually come out of the experience as a stronger person. Be warned again, however, about rushing into any new relationships before you have fully processed the previous bad one.



Acceptance

While it is easy to be mad at either the person with BPD or the illness itself, personal recovery is greatly facilitated by acceptance and understanding on your part.

Borderline Personality Disorder is a real illness, not just a bad attitude and/or stubbornness. Find out as much as you can about BPD - this will help you to better understand what transpired – and what was (and was not) contributed by you.

This will also improve your ability to recognize unhealthy symptoms in other people and increase your social confidence and safety.

Give yourself time to heal

How long does it take to really recover from an abusive BPD relationship? Count on the first several months to process the dreams, anxiety, doubts, exhaustion, etc. You will need more to rationalize what happened and feel open to others. Be careful not to prematurely proclaim yourself as healed. Use others to gauge your progress.

Resist rebounding into another relationship – it might feel good, but it may just set up another "loaded" relationship bond.

In the end, you will be amazed that you even allowed yourself to stay in such a relationship -- and even more amazed to find that you now have the inner strength and awareness to avoid repeating it in the future.

This is a point of view article written by the volunteer staff at BPDFamily.com. The opinions expressed are those of the authors and based on personal experience, an informal monitoring of 750,000 comments posted on the BPDFamily support group message board, as well as review of the books and article published in the field. The authors are volunteers with careers in health care, education, and small business. This is not the product of licensed healthcare professionals nor it is not based on clinical findings. This article is intended to augment, not to replace the relationship between patient and their physician.

Skip, JoannaK, United for Now, Elphaba, Patty, PDQuick, and Steph

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AT ANY COST: Saving your Life after Loving a Borderline.

By Shari Schreiber, M.A.
www.GettinBetter.com

You're hurting. You've never felt this excruciating pain before, and you need it to **stop**. Perhaps she's left you for another--or just abruptly left, and this terrible lack of *closure* has you confounded. You're constantly replaying each moment of this relationship in your mind, to comprehend why she's suddenly gone--and you keep blaming *yourself*. It's hard to make sense of these awful feelings, because there could have been times **you thought of leaving**--but you've patiently hung on, hoping it would get better. Your emotional roller-coaster ride has finally ended, but all you can *think* about is having her back.

When you're involved with a borderline disordered female, you feel fantastic when things are "good" between you, and *miserable* when they're not. **You might think of her like a drug you can't live without, because you've felt alive and buoyant when she was attentive, available and loving, and tortured and empty when she was indifferent, detached or cruel.** During frequent breakups or periods of distancing, you may have desperately longed for her return, and resorted to elaborate means to re-engage her.

In the *wake* of this involvement, you're probably obsessing about what she's feeling or doing, who she's screwing, and wondering if she's thinking *at all* about you. Your emotionally treacherous dance with a borderline girlfriend or wife may be over--but if your feelings of regret, shame and emptiness are so unbearable, that you want her back *at any cost*, this was written for You.

Every man's ego takes a *jab* when a woman leaves--but a **Borderline** leaves you feeling guilty, ashamed, castrated, unlovable, emasculated, worthless, etc. You start believing that if she returns, you'll be able to get rid of these horrible sensations, and feel okay again. Once in awhile, your *rational* mind recalls the torment of that affair, and you're not certain you want *that* part of it again--but **anything** must be better than this!

This conflict between what you need and want, confuses and intensifies your struggle, because you're hopelessly trapped in yearning for a woman you've *sensed* isn't healthy for you. Your ambivalence is completely normal--but it adds to your feelings of *shame* about being out of control and a little 'crazy.'

Heaven knows, you're not perfect--but you've overlooked an awful lot, just to keep this woman *caring* enough to stick around. There have been times that taking care of *her* feelings and needs was a full time job--but you've gladly taken it on, and tirelessly kept trying to get a few crumbs of loving attention along the way. If you disappointed or let her down in any manner, the character assaults and twisted perceptions of you as an inconsiderate or "selfish" man, made you feel just *terrible* about yourself. These comments usually came on the heels of the *good* times, so you began to **believe** them, which made you try even harder to please her!

Borderlines can leave solid, long-term attachments/marriages very suddenly. You'll be feeling shocked and bewildered by this--particularly when she cites frustrations or problems you were never made aware of, to *justify* her abrupt departure. You might vacillate between numbness and tormenting confusion, but what's even worse, is she'll have you thinking *you're* responsible for this outcome! When you've done virtually **everything** to keep her satisfied and happy throughout this relationship (which has included putting your personal needs and desires aside to accommodate *hers*), you're left only with a sense of sheer exhaustion, painful craving and deep betrayal.

Borderlines are narcissistic--but you've also observed *other* problems, like; desperate attempts to gain attention, intense/irrational abandonment fears, lack of empathy, extreme jealousy, lying, poor impulse control, extramarital affairs, drug/alcohol abuse, hypersexuality, 'crazy-making' interactions, low self-esteem, rebound relationships, passive-aggression, cognitive distortion, self-harming behaviors, eating disorders, suicidal ideation, stalking, etc.

You might have perceived a bit of 'craziness' early on, when she'd become disproportionately *volatile* about minor issues that were troublesome to her. When she shared stories about (vilified) former boyfriends or lovers, you felt honored to be privy to these intimate revelations, while assuring yourself it would be *different* with you; why not--**you're** one of the 'good guys!' During these storytellings, you were made to feel exceptional, heroic and uniquely *unlike* all the others. The way she hung on your every word, gazed into your eyes, touched you and *wanted* you, was beyond anything you'd experienced before--and you felt *privileged* to have found her. Basically, you were *on top of the world*, and could never have imagined falling off.

Your Borderline might have been so insecure and needy, and felt reasonably certain that they would never leave you. Their problems inspired your sympathy and determination to protect. For the most part, your relationship oved along pretty smoothly, until you tried to express any real concerns or needs.

If you've dabbled in drugs, loving a Borderline is like chasing after your first hit of Cocaine, and trying to recapture that initial 'rush' the rest of the night. In the *early* stages of this relationship (the honeymoon), you felt hopelessly captivated, and intrigued with her intensity. A novel sense of contentment, wholeness or 'finally arriving,' became part of your everyday experience. The sensations she engendered in you, had only existed in vague fantasies--no matter *how* many close encounters there had been with other females. This might be the first time you'd gotten really intimate with someone, and felt like you were *worthy* of such a prize--especially if you struggled with self-esteem issues, earlier in life.

Self-worth difficulties could have drawn you to this type of woman, and kept you ensnared beyond all instinct and reason. They could have allowed you to tolerate/accept her abusive or distancing behaviors, *way* beyond what you've known was reasonable or *right* for you. She's irresistibly seductive, and may be the most exquisitely beautiful creature you have ever been with--so any notion of *walking away* when the going got tough, seemed inconceivable. If you're relatively inexperienced in the realm of ongoing, intimate relations, you might naturally assume "*all women are like that*," but they're not!

Given that most Borderlines are exceptionally bright, they're usually capable of convincing you that it's **your** fault or shortcoming, which has ruptured this relationship. Did you ever buy into this--even when overwhelming evidence was stacked against her argument, and you were unequivocally certain she was wrong? Her brilliant (but twisted) logic and verbal dexterity could distort facts and details, to where her perceptions often *made sense*--even if she completely contradicted herself, from one hour to the next! You might have doubted yourself at these times, and questioned if you were going **insane**. These feelings were *directly* related to spending time with someone whose psychic/emotional balance was profoundly unstable, to say the least.

Once she's kicked you out or you've managed to leave, her attempts to lure you back again, could become pitifully desperate/hysterical--she might even threaten to **KILL herself**, if you don't return! This is the **ultimate** emotional blackmail, which could be used to influence your behavior--but resist feeling flattered. These frantic measures are very *primitive reflexes* that are being triggered by overwhelming needs, which have nothing to do with **you!** If your chaos has reached this point, urge her to see a mental health professional.

Your Borderline might have been so insecure and needy, you felt reasonably certain she would never leave you--but *at times*, secretly hoped she would. Her physical ailments inspired your sympathy and determination to protect her, but you often marveled at how someone so *young* could be so sickly! For the most part, your relationship moved along pretty smoothly, until you tried to express any real concerns or needs. The [Borderline Waif](#) can't handle that--after all, it's clearly been **your job** to take care of *her*. The minute *you* had a need, she either made you wrong for it, punished you or left.

Having a serious adult conversation with a Borderline, is like trying to get a *three year old* to comprehend, and rationally respond to the issues at hand. Just when you've worked up the courage to approach a sensitive topic, she deftly *diverts* the dialogue by starting a fight, or accusing you of not loving her, caring about her feelings, wanting her, etc. At this point, tremendous time and energy is spent consoling/reassuring her, and reinforcing how much you really care! The inevitable upshot? Your original concern is successfully *deflected*, and any hope for resolution is abandoned.

Regardless of how proficient or successful she is in her *professional* sphere, issues of an emotional nature make you feel like you're dealing with a little girl, who's living inside a woman's body--and this continually perplexes you! Just know that your perceptions are *extremely* accurate, and developmental arrest is the culprit behind this odd incongruity.

Giving love and affection to a Borderline is like trying to fill a well that has a huge fracture at the bottom; she simply can't hold it. In truth, you've had to constantly assure her of your devotion all along--but no matter how much you have, she just can't seem to integrate it. A three year old sees his/her world in a black or white sort of way. They think that you either love them or hate them, based on your facial expressions, tone of voice and behaviors. As they haven't yet developed the capacity for mood regulation, they'll react to the slightest frustration or disappointment, by hating you! As soon as their immediate upset passes, they revert to loving you again. Their feelings and perceptions of you can shift on a dime; within the vernacular of **borderline pathology**, this *love you/hate you* phenomenon is referred to as 'splitting.'

I'm now going to debunk some **myths** about Borderlines.

First, they will not all behave *identically*. You might presume that certain patterns you've heard or read about can be anticipated with *every* Borderline--but it just isn't true. For one; after an upset or breakup, her *return* is not chiseled in stone! It's likely she'll come around when she wants or needs something from you, but this is only when it suits *her*--which could take weeks, months or years.

Second, Borderlines *can* make tangible progress with solid therapeutic help, but you may have a better shot at flying to the moon strapped to a banana, than keeping them in treatment long enough, to accomplish any real growth or healing. Don't forget--they're terrified of attaching, and *relying* on anyone for their care. They'll act-out by devaluing the therapist, acting belligerent or picking fights, being non-compliant and/or seductive, missing appointments, lying, etc., in effort to *control* the therapeutic relationship.

Third, no matter how much you try to please her or *love her better*, you're in for a rocky ride. Borderlines can be attracted to narcissistic or abusive men, because of poor self-image and attachment fears: What could be *safer*, than trying to get someone to love you, who's incapable of loving? The more you demonstrate that she's lovable, the more disdain she feels toward you. It's kind of like that old saying; "*I wouldn't want to join a club that would have me as a member*," holds true here. You can't be someone you're not, just to keep this woman interested in you--but your need to be who **she** needs you to be, is [deeply rooted in boyhood](#).

Fourth, when you're imagining that she's feeling exactly like *you* are, stop it! There are times you'll show up on her radar, and times you won't--no matter *how* much history you've shared. An individual who lives with *psychosis* does not have the same feelings or emotional responses as you. To presume that they do, is unrealistic thinking, narcissistic and potentially very dangerous.

Fifth, if you're thinking you need her to suffer like **you** have--and that being seen with someone new will make her *want* you again, watch your back! This is an extremely hazardous game you're about to play, *regardless* of whether or not she's left you for a rebound relationship. Dating a new woman? Keep a low profile, and put your car in the garage! Is this fair? No, but it's **safer**.

Sixth, if you're reflexively making yourself "*wrong*" for conjuring up all sorts of terrible fates befalling her, *ease-up* on yourself. Your anger is appropriate under these circumstances, *and* it's an activating emotion--which gives you temporary respite from this dreadful depression. Rage is a normal aspect of your healing process, but try to hold these feelings *without* self-judgement, rather than **acting** on them (unless you wanna do some push-ups). In other words, express this energy in ways that won't harm you, or anyone else!

Seventh, if she calls or "checks in" to see how you're doing in the aftermath of this relationship, it's **never** about you! Your needs didn't matter while she was *with* you, and they don't matter now. You may feel grateful she seems to care enough to keep the connection alive--but her sole purpose is keeping you around to meet **her** needs (no matter *what* she says to the contrary). A three year old hasn't developed any capacity for [empathy](#) (that comes much later on), so don't presume that she's calling for *your* sake.

Eighth, no matter who left whom, emotional cut-off is *second nature* to this woman. It's natural for you to wonder if she ever *really* loved you, or meant the things she said while you were together--particularly if she's diminishing you or your importance to her, **now**. Was she "faking it?" No, but you *must* understand, this is part of that *splitting* reflex described above, and just one of the survival tools she's carried since infancy. **You cannot fix this**.

Ninth, the *minute* you make contact with her, you're giving away your power. No matter *what* you think you need to say to this female, these dialogues will leave you feeling **worse**, not better. You may compulsively replay these conversations in your head afterwards, and think you did a really good job--but it won't be long before you're doubting it, and torturing yourself. Do not intercept her calls; if you *decide* to return them, do it when you're feeling more centered, and it's easy/convenient **for you**. Don't reply to any emails or text messages, and *do not* respond to her "emergencies!" It *won't* win her back, or make her think more highly of you.

Tenth, Borderlines don't *change*, because they don't have to! Her great looks and captivating charms continually allow her to *seduce* men, which feeds her narcissism. Your ego's taken a serious beating, so you probably can't believe this right now--but you deserve better.

Eleventh, if you're fairly certain she's *rebounding* with someone who's better looking, wealthier, brighter, taller, more loving, etc., in **most** instances, this is a totally erroneous assumption! It's unlikely you'll accept this at present, but she's more prone to choosing an *easier* mark the next time around--even if it's a fellow who feels stuck in an unfulfilling marriage. In truth, most men are utterly *shocked* when they finally discover who she's deserted them for. This relentless preoccupation with **who** the other guy is, taps into childhood deficits that undermined your self-worth. If you grew up with a dad who was narcissistic, tyrannical, weak/sickly--or wasn't around much, there's a strong likelihood that *his* needs superceded yours--at least, where your **mom** was concerned. In short, you've had to *compete* for a woman's attention and love your entire life. It is *this* aspect that allows you to take her back, after each sexual betrayal with another man--regardless of how castrating it feels.

Twelfth, stop assuming that this female is the **keeper** of your pleasure and pain! You are the sole proprietor of these sensations; in short, they belong **entirely** to you, not to her. You might be inclined to credit her for bringing these intense feelings into your life, but they've been inside you all along, since you were born--she's simply *awakened* them.

Thirteenth, and perhaps **most** important: There will be moments where she'll seem rational and lucid--both while you're with her, and after the break-up. These episodes have insidiously *kept* you in this destructive relationship, by fueling your capacity to overlook, trivialize *or* *normalize* **abnormal** behaviors.

Fourteenth, Borderlines lacked a healthy symbiotic bond in infancy with their birth mothers, which is the **core** of this difficulty. You may have sensed that she's wanted/needed you to be a *mind reader* or *Mommy*, when these primal needs got *displaced* onto you--but no male on God's green earth is equipped to *take on* these roles, or heal the archaic issues that drive her demands.

Hundreds of men have asked me why Borderlines are "*so darned seductive*." Are you by any chance, a fisherman? Have you ever experienced a time when you were successful at fishing, **without** baiting the hook?

Given that most Borderlines are exceptionally bright, they're usually capable of convincing you that it's your fault or shortcoming, which has ruptured this relationship. Did you ever buy into this--even when overwhelming evidence was stacked against her argument, and you were unequivocally certain she was wrong? Her brilliant (but twisted) logic and verbal dexterity could distort facts and details, to where her perceptions often made sense--even if she completely contradicted herself, from one hour to the next! You might have doubted yourself at these times, and questioned if you were going insane. These feelings were directly related to spending time with someone whose psychic/emotional balance was profoundly unstable, to say the least.

Once she's kicked you out or you've managed to leave, her attempts to lure you back again, could become pitifully desperate/hysterical--she might even threaten to KILL herself, if you don't return! This is the ultimate emotional blackmail, which could be used to influence your behavior--but resist feeling flattered. These frantic measures are very primitive reflexes that are being triggered by overwhelming needs, which have nothing to do with you! If your chaos has reached this point, urge her to see a mental health professional.

Borderlines have been torturing men, probably since time began. If you're a fan of 'Oldies' music, you might remember this song from the late sixties; **Build Me Up Buttercup**, by The Foundations. It was upbeat and fun, but the *lyrics* say it all. It could cheer you a bit, so take a moment and [listen](#) (just hit the 'back' button on your internet browser afterward, to return here).

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