

OK! ENUFF WITH THE VICTIM BLAMING! HOW TO SPOT A BETRAYAL BOND

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How a Betrayal Bond Works- *And boy, do I wish it didn't!*

Emotionally intact people don't just walk-out on love partners when they're hurt by them. To onlookers, that behavior can seem very odd. A victim's choice to remain in a toxic, harmful relationship can result from the chemistry of human bonding.

People often ask, "Yes but..... where's the victim's "agency?" Aren't they responsible for themselves and the choices they make?"

Hmmm.... The puppy featured above would be a bit slower at running for safety than one who wasn't weighted down. He might get there eventually, but it would take him a lot longer. If his attacker was going for his jugular, he'd be dead before he reached higher ground. And that's what happens with many victims who are abused, and are ultimately killed while they're in denial.

The chemistry of attachment

Unfortunately, until very recently, the therapeutic community didn't understand the impacts of love's hormones on attachments. In fact, it's still a field that's being highly researched.



An October 4th, 2015, article from *Mint*, On Sunday, [The Sex Instinct](#), hit the nail on the head concerning this topic:

Sex can set in motion a

cascade of neurochemical processes in the brain that lead to love. Neurotransmitters released during sex include oxytocin, vasopressin and dopamine. They make you bond with your partner even if you don't want that to happen. And the more you have sex with that person, the stronger that bond grows.

The difference between these chemicals, and ones that affect our brain when we swallow or inject alcohol or drugs is that we're not conscious of their presence. People addicted to alcohol know they reached for a drink. But people struggling through an abusive relationship rarely grasp that they're addicted to the person who's harming them.



We don't analyze our thoughts, responses, and feelings while they're happening. We simply feel them. And a person who's capable of feeling *love*, and feels *love*, does not feel it as *addiction*.

Without the brain chemistry of attachment, homo sapiens would not remain mated to raise our dependent children for very long. It's the chemicals in our brain that make us feel compelled to forgive, love and trust. Some people have too little. They're

called psychopaths. Some people have too much, and are easily embroiled in harmful relationships.

Betrayal Bonds- How they keep us attached

The exploitation of trust can cause a *Betrayal Bond*. When a person is faced with cruel behavior, their brain chemistry can kick into high gear, causing them to fight forcefully to retain the relationship. It's that person's totally unconscious auto-response to betrayal. In fact, the more harmful the trauma they experience from their romantic partner, the more intensely their brain's chemistry will work to keep them attached.

When betrayal creates *bad* choices

When we experience a deep emotional wound, particularly one that undermines our value system and sense of self-worth, we unknowingly enter a state of denial in order to maintain the relationship.... a betrayal bond. It can be triggered by either physical or emotional cruelty.

People who fail to understand the workings of a betrayal bond blame the victim for remaining in harm's way. "You knew (s)he lied, but you stayed. You deserved what you got!" or "You should have walked out the first time (s)he hit you." Betrayal bonds can affect both men and women.

The hormonal and chemical activity of the brain will fight, unbeknownst to the conscious mind, to prevent shattering the victim's beliefs. Just like shock prevents a victim from experiencing physical pain, a betrayal bond will prevent a person from experiencing emotional pain. And a betrayal bond can last for years, until something radical changes it.

I married a man, who lied to me about everything under the sun, long after I learned the truth about him

I can recall the many times I wanted to walk away. But I can also recall a compelling force that I recognized as "love," preventing me from doing so. It wasn't until I became concerned for my unborn baby's safety, a child whose importance was every bit as critical to me as my then-husband was, if not more so, that I could break the bond tying me to this dreadfully, harmful relationship.

Once extricated, I could look back and see the damage he'd caused. But while we were together, my betrayal bonded brain justified all of his behaviors.

Had I recognized *love* as a form of *addiction*, and understood the mechanics of a betrayal bond, I would have been better able to extract myself long before I did. I would have talked myself into reality in the same mind-over-matter mindset that ended my addiction to cigarettes, cold turkey, while losing 15 pounds in the process. I'm not a person who lacks strong will power. But my will power, when it came to love, cemented me in, rather than propelling me out, of a painfully toxic relationship.

As an advocate, I've worked with countless people who've struggled through relationship withdrawal from a sociopath.

If you have a conscience, it's very difficult to grasp that others simply don't. So we're constantly listening to their excuses, accusations, and justifying their actions. We even heap blame on ourselves for their bad acts. We chalk it up to misunderstanding and try to move on from there. I didn't know my ex had no conscience until his psychiatrist actually told me so.

Some victims have an easier time breaking free from loving bonds than others. And, as their advocate, I'm thankful when that happens. But when it doesn't, I know that they have a very core addiction problem that keeps drawing them back to a place of denial.

At some point, there was an acute incident that initially enabled them to recognize there was an issue, and caused them to seek help. Refocusing them on that point, returning them consistently to that awareness, can help release them from the quicksand of the betrayal bond that tries to suck them back in.

[The Betrayal Bond, Breaking free from exploitive relationships](#), by Patrick Carnes, PhD., is an informative source of enlightenment about this condition. It truly helped me find the path to recovery. I highly recommend it!

This post has been repeated from an October 10, 2015 posting on this site.

<https://consentawareness.net/2018/12/23/ok-enuff-with-the-victim-blaming-how-to-spot-a-betrayal-bond/>