

# What Is Trauma Bonding?

A comprehensive guide to understanding trauma bonding



domesticshelters.org

A service of Theresa's Fund

# Trauma bonding is a type of attachment that one can feel toward someone who's causing them trauma.

You feel bad for them—they had a rough childhood, are dealing with mental illness or addiction, or they're promising to change. What you're feeling may not be as much sympathy as it is something else experts in the field of domestic violence refer to as “trauma bonding.” You're not alone—it's common for victims of domestic violence to find themselves trapped with an abuser because of this.

This toolkit will provide you with these insights and more. Inside you'll find:

- Helpful Articles
- Recommended Books
- Lists
- In-Depth Videos
- Survey Results
- Support Communities
- How to Find Help



There are hundreds of articles on [DomesticShelters.org](https://www.DomesticShelters.org) covering the many facets of domestic violence. Here are links to those that will help you understand “What Is Trauma Bonding?”

[What Is Trauma Bonding?](#)

A comprehensive guide to understanding trauma bonding.

[Ask Amanda: Why Do I Keep Giving Him Another Chance?](#)

Trauma bonding is why some survivors feel an attachment to an abusive partner.

[Can DV Survivors Adopt Stockholm Syndrome?](#)

Sorting out feelings of empathy and compassion for one's abuser.

[Trauma-Related Guilt Is a Liar](#)

You didn't cause the abuse and you couldn't have stopped it.

### [When the Feelings Rush Back](#)

Triggers domestic violence survivors face, and how to get through them.

### [Putting Trauma Down in Words](#)

The ways journaling can help survivors.

### [A Deadly Cycle](#)

The four stages of abuse can happen over and over— until you reach out for help.

### [Modifying Memories](#)

A therapy called EMDR can help reprogram how you remember trauma.

### [Healthy vs. Unhealthy Coping Strategies](#)

Ignoring your feelings is going to get you nowhere fast.

### [Stages of Recovery After Trauma](#)

Every survivor's journey to healing is different and shouldn't be rushed.

### [When an Abuser Controls the Story](#)

Abusers lie about incidents before you have a chance to tell your side.

### [How to End Your Victim Mindset](#)

An important step to healing your psyche after escaping DV.

### What is Gaslighting?

This type of psychological abuse leaves survivors questioning every memory they have.

### Ask Amanda: I Feel Sorry For My Abuser. Am I Crazy?

Survivors can cycle through many emotions after leaving an abuser, even sympathy.

### How to Survive Gaslighting

Four tactics for learning to trust your intuition again.

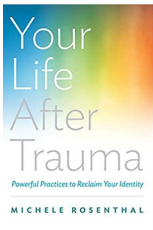
### Where Are Your Boundaries?

This type of psychological abuse leaves survivors questioning every memory they have.

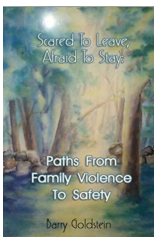


# Reading books can be a helpful way to understand trauma and PTSD.

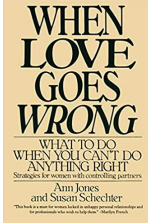
## Here are our recommended reads:



*Your Life After Trauma: Powerful Practices to Reclaim Your Identity.* Now a professional coach helping trauma victims rebuild their lives, Michele Rosenthal struggled with the effects of medically-induced post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) for over 25 years before reaching a full recovery. Today, she is 100% free of PTSD. She applies her personal experience and professional wisdom to offer readers an invaluable roadmap to overcoming their own trauma.

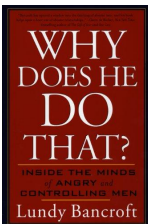


*Scared To Leave, Afraid To Stay: Paths From Family Violence To Safety.* This book presents stories of ten women as they fought the courts and their abusers to gain safety for themselves and their children. The author demonstrates how courts handle divorce, custody, visitation, support, child abuse, marital property, orders of protection and crimes when domestic violence erupts, and discusses the tactics abusers use to maintain control over their partners.

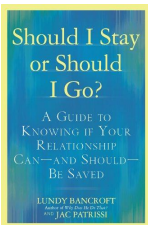


*When Love Goes Wrong: What to Do When You Can't Do Anything Right.*

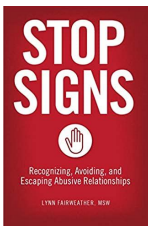
Too many women find themselves in abusive relationships and don't know what to do, or even what's wrong. She may feel anxious, inadequate, intimidated and on eggshells, and find herself trying harder without success. The authors bring their experience with survivors to offer an eyeopening analysis of controlling partners and empowering information for women seeking change.



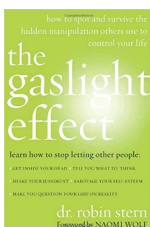
*Why Does He Do That?: Inside the Minds of Angry and Controlling Men.* From the perspective of the director of the first U.S. program for abusive men, the author offers early warning signs, ten abusive personality types, and the abusive mentality, and dispels 17 myths about abusive personalities, sheds light on the origin of the abuser's values and beliefs, which he believes is a better explanation of abusive behavior than reference to psychological problems.



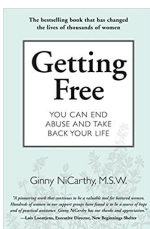
*Should I Stay or Should I Go?.* Women involved in frustrating relationships will learn to tell the difference between a healthy-yet-difficult relationship and one that is really not working, recognize the signs that their partner has a serious problem, stop waiting to see what happens and make their own growth the top priority, and prepare for life without their partner even as they keep trying to make the relationship work.



*Stop Signs: Recognizing, Avoiding, and Escaping Abusive Relationships* Familiarizes readers with intimate partner violence and explains how to develop self-esteem, preparation and assertive awareness that can protect you from involvement with abusive individuals; explores the minds of abusers, explains visible signs of danger in their attitudes and actions; and provides effective strategies for safe extraction when involved with an abuser.

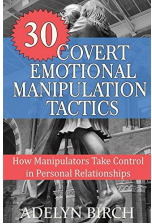


*The Gaslight Effect: How to Spot and Survive the Hidden Manipulation Others Use to Control Your Life*. Gaslighting is an insidious form of emotional abuse and manipulation that is hard to recognize and break free from. The book tells you how to detect gaslighting, recognize the stages and how to escape it in your relationships.



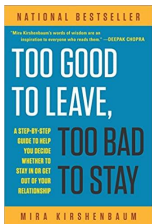
*Getting Free: You Can End Abuse and Take Back Your Life*. Getting Free has changed the lives of tens of thousands of women. Written in an accessible style, packed with practical information and answers, special exercises designed to help a woman recognize abuse, and several success stories.





*30 Covert Emotional Manipulation Tactics: How Manipulators Take Control In Personal Relationships.*

Learn the manipulator's game, so they can't play it with you. Identifying covert manipulation is tricky. This short but powerful 33-page book will teach you how to identify the 30 tactics manipulators use to get what they want. You'll also learn to spot the warning signs within yourself that expose covert manipulation is taking place, even if you can't identify the specific tactics being used.



*Too Good to Leave, Too Bad to Stay.*

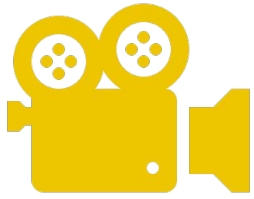
The author draws on years of counseling experience to lead readers through relationship ambivalence. A careful line of 36 questions and self-analysis techniques designed to get to the heart of relationship and marriage problems. Straightforward advice designed for newer and older relationships. Presents a plethora of information and experience in a clear, concise manner.



Sometimes lists are easier on the mind because they are uncluttered and to-the-point. If you'd rather read a few items versus articles or books, these lists are for you.

To view all list items at once, click the SEE ALL button located below the list text.

- [13 Signs of Trauma Bonding](#)
- [18 Things Abusers Do When They're Gaslighting](#)
- [18 Warning Signs That You're Being Gaslighted](#)
- [20 Things Abusers Say](#)
- [29 Types of Personal Boundaries You Can Set](#)



Click video thumbnail to watch

**Gaslighting:**

**Could You Be**

**Missing These**

**5 Signs?**





A lot of lessons can be taken from people who have been through it before. Check out the following survey results to learn from the experiences of others.

- [When you left your abuser, did you contemplate the decision for a while?](#)
- [Which of these at-home methods helped relieve your symptoms of trauma?](#)
- [Survivors: Did you feel like you had power to stop abuse?](#)
- [What barrier did you come up against when you thought about leaving your abuser?](#)



**Online forums and chats can help you connect with others who are in or have faced similar situations, and find support and ideas from the survivor community.**

[AfterSilence.org](https://www.aftersilence.org) aims to help victims become survivors and to communicate in the recovery of domestic and sexual violence. It offers an active message board and chat room for rape, sexual assault, sexual abuse, incest and molestation survivors. There are over 31,000 members and about 1,000,000 posts, including recent posts and many useful posts from days and months past.

[Pathways to Safety International](https://www.pathways.org/) If you're an American overseas, your situation is different than 99% of your fellow countryman, and this site will be a wonderful resource for you. Among the services is a 24-hour response to emails, as well as international phone options.

[DomesticShelters.org Facebook Page](#) offers one of the most active places where domestic violence survivors connect. You'll find conversation, past experiences and unvarnished stories, and occasionally advice from professionals who have joined in on a topic.

[DomesticShelters.org Facebook Group](#) is a private group designed to be a safe space for domestic abuse victims, survivors, advocates and others affected by abuse to support one another through meaningful dialogue and helpful insight.

[Fort Refuge](#) is a clever grassroots site run by survivors for fellow survivors as a safe place to come together and discuss their struggles and victories in healing from various types of abuse. Though the forum and chat do not boast the same numbers as some of the larger organizations, they are one of the more active conversation places on the internet currently. They also add new content to their site regularly.

Love is Respect - National Teen Dating Helpline focuses on teen relationships and can be accessed by phone, text or live chat. It offers real-time, one-on-one support by trained peer advocates who offer information and advocacy to those involved in dating abuse. They also offer support to parents, teachers, clergy, law enforcement, and service providers.

National Domestic Violence Hotline offers confidential, private, one-on-one chats with advocates every day 24/7.

OnYourMind.net is a safe and anonymous place for teens to get information and support from other teens in an online chat room, covering topics such as relationships, school, depression, stress, suicide, parents, cutting, identity and health.

Pandora's Aquarium is an online forum with around 2 million posts and over 70,000 members, and is run by Pandora's Project, which provides information, support and resources to rape and sexual abuse survivors and their friends and family.

When accessing hotlines, chats or forums from a computer, tablet, or smartphone, please remember to take the necessary precautions to keep your activities confidential from your abuser. Learn more about how to stay safe online [here](#).

Also, keep in mind that local shelters may offer in-person or virtual support groups. You can find shelters in your area at [DomesticShelters.org](https://www.DomesticShelters.org).





## Another way to determine if you're experiencing abuse is to contact a trained domestic violence advocate near you or through a national service.

To search for domestic violence program staffed with trained advocates, visit [DomesticShelters.org](https://www.DomesticShelters.org) and type either your city and state, or ZIP code, into the search bar at the top of the page. A list of organizations and contact numbers near you will be displayed. To reach an advocate, reach out directly by calling the phone number listed. Most are open 24/7.

To speak to an advocate at the National Domestic Violence Hotline, also 24 hours a day, seven days a week, call 800-799-SAFE (7233) or visit [thehotline.org](https://www.thehotline.org) to chat online.

It's important to know that your call is confidential and you can choose to remain anonymous when speaking with an advocate. To know what to expect when calling, read [this article](#).