



# TRAUMA BONDING

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**Trauma bonding is a cycle of physical or emotional abuse that creates a strong attachment between an abused person and their abuser, reinforced by periods of love and affection and then periods of devaluation and emotional abuse.**

## 7 STAGES OF TRAUMA BONDING

1. **Love Bombing:** They shower you with excess love, flattery and appreciation in order to gain your affection.
2. **Trust and Dependency:** Try to do everything to win your trust and make you depend on them heavily for love and validation.
3. **Criticism:** They gradually start criticizing you. They blame you for things and become more demanding.
4. **Gaslighting:** When things go wrong they tell you that it is your fault. They make you doubt your own opinions and perceptions and make you believe their way of seeing the situation.
5. **Resigning to Control:** You no longer know what to believe but your only way of experiencing the good feelings of Stage I is by giving in and doing things their way.
6. **Loss of Self:** When you fight back, things get worse. You settle for anything to have some peace and make the fights stop. You lose all your confidence.
7. **Addiction:** You get addicted to the highs and lows. Your body is on a constant cortisol high (stress) and craves dopamine (pleasure). This creates a cycle of dependency that feels a lot like a drug addiction.

## SIGNS OF BEING IN A TRAUMA BOND WITH SOMEONE

- A pattern of non-performance: the person constantly promises you things and constantly lets you down.
- You feel that you don't even like or trust the person anymore but you cannot leave.
- Your friends and family have advised against the relationships but you stay.
- Others seem disturbed by things that happen to you but you brush it off.
- You have tried to leave, but it makes you feel physically ill, like you will die or your life will be destroyed if you do.
- You know the person is "sometimes" abusive and destructive, but you focus on the "good" in them.
- You feel protective about the person because of their "difficult past" or "childhood" and find yourself caring for them despite their abusive behavior.
- You know you are being manipulated, but you're often in denial and block out or quickly forget bad things.
- The relationship is intense and inconsistent. You do everything to please them and are unconditionally loyal while getting nothing but heartbreak in return.
- They say things you want to hear to resolve issues temporally – "I have learnt my lesson," "I will prove my love for you everyday," "Life is impossible without you."
- You are driven to the point of self-destruction and often harbor thoughts of self-harm.

## RECOVERY DO'S AND DON'TS CHECKLIST

- \_\_\_ I will trust my gut
- \_\_\_ I will no longer partake in "impossible situations"
- \_\_\_ I will take it one day at a time
- \_\_\_ When I'm feeling anxious, I will not panic myself with negative thoughts. I will encourage myself with positive thoughts instead.
- \_\_\_ I will manage my emotions rather than having them control me.
- \_\_\_ I will take back my power.
- \_\_\_ I will believe in myself.
- \_\_\_ If I feel emotionally unstable, I will not try to connect with the object of my obsession.
- \_\_\_ I will have compassion for myself and pay attention to my feelings.
- \_\_\_ I will make it a goal to build a brand new "toxicity free" life for myself.
- \_\_\_ I will enjoy the rest of my life. I will remind myself that no matter what I've been through, life can be good.



## AFFIRMATIONS TO REPEAT TO YOURSELF:

1. I have no more energy to give to people who harm me.
2. My emotional health is more important than supplying power to someone else's ego.
3. My newfound clarity will guide me.
4. I'm becoming rational and logical, which is why I am seeking support to begin with.
5. I am worthy of happiness.

## WRAP SUPPORTS SURVIVORS IN 19 WEST TN COUNTIES:

- Advocates located throughout our 19 county area are here to listen, offer resources, information and advocacy
- 24/7 crisis line at 800-273-8712
- Assistance with filing orders of protection and connection to other legal assistance
- Safety planning
- Safe homes and emergency safe refuge
- Relocation assistance
- Therapeutic support

