

About Betrayal Bonds (Trauma Bonds)

Based on the book "The Betrayal Bond: Breaking Free of Exploitive Relationships," by Patrick J. Carnes Phd.

1. Betrayal is a breach of trust, a form of abandonment (abandonment is the core of addiction.) What you thought was true is now revealed to be untrue. When there was just enough truth to make the lies believable.
2. Betrayal Trauma specifically examines the complexities in which we, particularly children, cannot break from those who have betrayed us as it would be contrary to the drive for survival. This creates an excruciating bind, setting up the potential for a lifetime of challenges in differentiating safe and nurturing relationships from those that prove to be dangerous or harmful. "*A traumatic experience of love can occur when a child's experience of love, caring and affection collides with an on-going experience of abuse and betrayal. The union of love, trust and safety become Fractured, while notions of love and betrayal become linked in a tragic partnership.*" (Freyd 1996)
3. The closer and more necessary the relationship for the child the greater is the degree of betrayal. "*The ability to detect betrayal may need to be stifled for the greater goal of survival.*"
4. A child who distrusts his or her parents risks alienating the parents further, and thus becomes subject to more abuse and less love or care. "*The child faces a formidable developmental task: to find a way to form primary attachments to caretakers who are either dangerous or negligent. She must find a way to develop a sense of basic trust and safety with caretakers who are untrustworthy and unsafe.*"
5. Betrayal bonds occur when a victim bonds with someone who is destructive to him or her. The hostage become the champion of the hostage taker, the incest victim covers for the parent, and the exploited employee fails to expose the wrongdoing of the boss.
6. Loyalty to that which does not work, or worse, to a person who is toxic, exploitive, or destructive to you is a form of insanity.
7. Signs of betrayal bonding include misplaced loyalty, inability to detach and self-destructive denial.
8. Gestures of caring mixed with exploitation intensifies the bond.
9. Highly addictive attachments to the people who have hurt you can undermine your ability to have secure attachments and respond with resiliency to life's challenges. (try to convert the abuser into a non-abuser, blame yourself, distrust your own judgement, distort your reality)
10. PTED (Post-traumatic embitterment disorder) - causes residual anger and rage that accumulates with betrayal.
11. PTSD (Post-traumatic stress disorder) - causes anxiety, flashbacks etc.
12. "Bait and switch" - common tactic in betrayal where the victimizer offers a reward to the victim for completing a task, when the task is complete the victim does not receive the full reward and instead is baited into another task in order to FINALLY receive the full reward.

Betrayal bonds are most common in these areas:

- Domestic violence
- Dysfunctional marriages
- Exploitation in the workplace
- Clergy exploitation
- Litigation
- Kidnapping
- Hostage situations
- Cults
- Addictions (alcohol, drugs, gambling, sex, eating, high-risk behavior)
- Incest
- Physical abuse
- emotional/verbal/psychological abuse
- Sexual abuse
- Sibling relationship struggles
- Online exploitation

Kinds of Betrayal

Betrayal by Seduction -

Seduction is high warmth with low intention. The lack of intention covers for the risks. There are four different kinds of relationships with different warmth and intention levels.

High Warmth and High Intention:

These relationships are committed and involved
Agreements are clear and rewarding
Feelings are excited and enthusiastic
Trust is high
Rewards are immediate or concrete
Risk is mutually shared

Low Warmth and High Intention:

Relationships are goal-oriented rather than people-oriented
Agreements are clear but emotionally detached
Feelings are disconnected or unemotional

There is trustworthiness
Rewards are specified and reliable
Risk is minimal

High Warmth and Low Intention:

Relationships are manipulative and exploitive
Agreements are ill-defined, unclear, or tentative
Feelings are anxious and intense
Trust depends often on exaggerated or unreal promises
Rewards are in the future and often conditional
Risk is often one-sided

Low Warmth and Low Intention:

Relationships are inscrutable and disengaged
Agreements are short term and difficult to negotiate
Feelings are absent
There is high distrust
Rewards are minimal
There is no risk since little is asked

Betrayal by Terror -

If the abuser cannot achieve their goals by seduction, there is always Terror.

Fear immobilizes and deepens attachment. It escalates attraction and arousal. It provides addictive intensity and obsession.

Terror works even better when coupled with seduction.

This looks like a high warmth and low intention relationship where lots of promises are made, the addict “falls for you” hard and fast, the relationship is sped up. You move in together, talk about getting married, and everything is perfect. He seems like your prince, knight in shining armor, love of your life and everything you had hoped for. Attentive, thoughtful, loving, obsessed with you etc. Then one day he gets angry for no reason and hits you, or threatens you (physically, verbally, covertly).. But then he apologizes profusely later and cries, says it will never happen again and that he wants to marry you right away. Next thing you know you are stuck in a relationship with a possessive, angry, unpredictable, abusive partner who threatens you. But you love him so much...and he loves you too.. He tells you all the time. He is just misunderstood.

Sound familiar? This is incredibly common. This is why women stay. The pattern is so addictive, the addict is so addictive. What they **promise** you is so addictive.

Seduction, Shame and self-doubt erode whatever sense of self the person had. The combination of seduction and fear is a potent combination used to distort personal judgment.

Betrayal by Power -

Trauma Bonding is defined as: "The evolution of emotional dependency between two persons of unequal power - an adult and a child, within a relationship characterized by periodic sexual abuse. The nature of this bond is distinguished by feelings of intense attachment, cognitive distortions and behavioral strategies of both individuals that paradoxically strengthen and maintain the bond."

What incest and sexual harassment have in common is the exploitation by people in power of those who are vulnerable to them. If you are not equal in power, then by definition you are vulnerable. This vulnerability is critical to trauma bonding. The misuse of power, which includes terror and seduction, induces fear, anxiety, and self-doubt - All critical aspects of trauma reactivity.

Betrayal by Intimacy -

Betrayal of intimacy occurs when the person who is in power over you exploited the intimacy that you have. Being betrayed by the trust that you have in someone.

Betrayal by Spirit -

Betrayal by the spirit occurs when the person who betrays the victim also plays a critical role in the resources the victim has for defining meaning. The victim's spiritual path is blocked. Victims commonly will try to find meaning out of what happens to them. Such as, "why do bad things happen to good people?" It is a far more troubling question when the cause of the problem is supposed to be the resource for the answer.

People are always searching for meaning. That search, and the vulnerability it produces may be used as a part of the seduction or the promise to victims.

How Betrayal Bonds are Made Stronger

1. Repetitive Cycles of Abuse
2. When the Victim and Victimizer Believe they are Unique
3. When High Intensity is Mistaken for Intimacy
4. When there are Increasing Amounts of Fear
5. When Children are Faced with Terror
6. When there is Also a History of Abuse
7. When it Involves Trusted Family Members or Trusted Family Friends
8. When the Community, Family or Social Structure Reacts in the Extreme
9. When there are Familiar Roles or Scripts
10. When the Roles of Victim, Victimizer, and Rescuer Switch