



# Why People Stay In Abusive Relationships

*Many people recognize they are being mistreated or even abused, but choose to stay in the relationship for a number of reasons. When friends or family members ask them "Why do you stay...?" they may have a hard time explaining. After all, it is never easy to end a relationship, even a hurtful one. Below are some of the common reasons people stay in unhappy or abusive relationships. If you are being mistreated, it might be helpful to look over this list and circle the reasons that might have something to do with your decision to stay.*

1. **Love.** You love your partner, and there are still times when your partner is very loving.
2. **Hope.** You have many memories of happy times, and hope those times will return. Your partner may promise to change, or you may think if you do things differently, the abuse will stop.
3. **Making light of the abuse.** Your partner may deny that his or her behavior is abusive, or act like it's not such a big deal, and you want to believe this. It's very painful to admit that someone you love would hurt you, so you might try to convince yourself it's not really that bad.
4. **Blaming yourself.** Your partner might blame you for his or her abusive behavior - saying you made him or her angry, or that you did something to deserve it. A part of you may believe this.
5. **Link between love and violence.** If you grew up in a home where there was violence, or if you were ever hit by a parent and told they were doing it because they love you, you might have learned to think that love and violence go together.
6. **Hopelessness.** You may feel like you'll never be able to be happy, you'll never find a partner who treats you any better, or that all relationships include abuse.
7. **Gender roles.** If you are a woman in a relationship with a man, you may have learned from family, religion or culture that men are supposed to be in charge, can't help being violent, or have the right to discipline their women. You may believe that women have to put up with this behavior and try to keep their men happy.
8. **Embarrassment and shame.** You may not want to admit what's going on to others because you're afraid of what they will think about you.
9. **Financial dependence.** You may depend on your partner for financial support.
10. **Lack of supportive relationships.** You may have become isolated from your friends and family. Or, family and friends may pressure you to stay with your partner.
11. **Fear.** Your partner may have threatened to hurt or kill you or someone you care about if you leave.
12. **Not wanting to be alone.** You may panic at the thought of being without your partner.
13. **Loyalty.** You may feel the right thing to do is to stick with your partner no matter what.
14. **Rescue complex.** You think you can change, fix, or heal your partner if you stay.
15. **Guilt.** Your partner may make you feel guilty about how much it would hurt him or her if you left. S/he may even threaten to commit suicide.
16. **Children.** If you have a child with your partner, you may believe it is best for the child to have two parents who are together.
17. **Dependency on drugs or alcohol.** Many people use drugs or alcohol as a way of coping with abuse, which then makes them less clear and strong and makes it more difficult to leave.
18. **Other** \_\_\_\_\_