

**Solutions for Borderline Personality
Disorder**

by
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Chapter One: Discovering BPD

If you are reading this e-book, I assume you have heard the term Borderline Personality Disorder before. Still you understandably have many questions about this term that is both controversial and misunderstood. In this first chapter I will lead you through what the term BPD actually denotes and how to tell if you or someone you love is suffering from this emotional disorder.

But first, a word about who I am: I myself have historically been a person suffering from this emotional disorder. At the time of this writing, I no longer possess the symptoms in the DSM-IV's descriptions of this disorder. I offer you the encouragement and hope that you can transcend the limitations that this disorder has placed upon your life. There was a time when I was painfully familiar with the symptoms of this condition because I possessed most of them. That qualifies me to digest for you here the information surrounding the disorder and the treatments available for those suffering from this condition.

What is the Definition of BPD?

Borderline Personality Disorder, like so many of the labels in the DSM-IV, was invented by Freudians. They invented the term while attempting to describe the disorder that they felt sat on the "borderline" between neurosis and psychosis. For those unfamiliar with the Freudian terms neurosis and psychosis, neurosis basically

means a behavior pattern that causes discomfort to the individuals possessing it and to their families. Psychosis means a total mental or emotional break with reality and/or society. So, as you can see, the term Borderline Personality Disorder is begging for re-invention. One term that has been kicked around as a possible replacement is Emotional Dysregulation Disorder. This highlights the feature of the mental pattern that makes it difficult for the sufferer to differentiate between crises and inconveniences. It is always hard to create a label change in a DSM and this case is no more easy than the typical. Don't hold your breathe. If you are not the BPD sufferer, hopefully you won't allow the use of the heavy-handed label to prejudice you against those suffering from this disorder. Most of them are far from psychotic even if their behavior may appear to be psychotic sometimes. They aren't dangerous; they are just in pain and they need guidance more than ostracization.

DSM-IV Criteria

Here are the criteria listed by the DSM-IV for Borderline Personality Disorder:

“A pervasive pattern of instability of interpersonal relationships, self-image, and affects, and marked impulsivity beginning by early adulthood and present in a variety of contexts, as indicated by five (or more) of the following:

1. frantic efforts to avoid real or imagined abandonment. Note: Do not include suicidal or self-mutilating behavior covered in Criterion 5.

2. a pattern of unstable and intense interpersonal relationships characterized by alternating between extremes of idealization and devaluation.
3. Identity disturbance: markedly and persistently unstable self-image or sense of self.
4. Impulsivity in at least two areas that are potentially self-damaging (e.g., spending, sex, substance abuse, reckless driving, binge eating).
Note: Do not include suicidal or self-mutilating behavior covered in Criterion 5.
5. Recurrent suicidal behavior, gestures, or threats, or self-mutilating behavior.
6. Affective instability due to a marked reactivity of mood (e.g., intense episodic dysphoria, irritability, or anxiety usually lasting a few hours and only rarely more than a few days).
7. Chronic feelings of emptiness
8. Inappropriate, intense anger or difficulty controlling anger (e.g., frequent displays of temper, constant anger, recurrent physical fights)
9. Transient, stress-related paranoid ideation or severe dissociative symptoms”

Questionnaire If You Suspect You Have BPD

1. Does the world and the people and events in it appear to you to be either with you or against you with no clear in between?
2. Do you have a hard time staying the course in a job or relationship?
3. Do you have a hard time knowing who you really are inside your own mind?
4. Do you see yourself as dirty or untouchable in some way? Does this make you assume that most people must hate you?
5. Do you feel that no person exists who really gets you? Do you feel unfairly misunderstood everywhere you go?
6. Do you find yourself desperately clinging to others? Is this clinginess often the source of discord in relationships that you are a part of?
7. Do most people you meet or know either end up being nearly perfect in their goodness or nearly total in their corruption? Can the same person be one and then the other in the course of as short a period as a minute?
8. Does rejection seem to lurk around every corner and be a part of every relationship you engage in? Is it difficult for you to avoid seeing others' actions as a rejection of you personally?
9. Do you find yourself saying nasty things about people behind their backs whom you feel a deep affection for when in their presence?

10. Do find yourself unconsciously seeking after risks even when there is no obvious reason to?

If even five of these qualities match your personality you should consider asking a licensed therapist if you have this disorder.

BPD Quiz If You Suspect Someone Else of Having BPD

A common question is “does my loved one have BPD?” The questionnaire provided above is meant primarily for you if you think you might have BPD. An important tool that can help you to determine whether someone that you are in a relationship with has this disorder is the Diagnosis Guide I have placed in this ebook. Please note that it is not meant to provide an authoritative diagnosis, but if you can determine on your own what you think is going on with your loved one you can also find some methods to deal more effectively with that person.

Caution: Beware of prejudice. You don't want to assume that a person with these symptoms is choosing to “use BPD” to abuse you or others. Abuse is not a necessary component of this thinking problem. It will often result because emotions are so volatile in someone with BPD, but that doesn't mean that you get to assume they are using it to abuse you or anyone else. Abuse, when it comes from a BPD, is not to be accepted as okay, but likewise, it is not to be used to stigmatize or label them as in some way inferior. Rather, it is a way to help you understand what they are dealing with. Help them get help, if you are going to do anything.

1. Does your loved one exhibit intense moments of depression?

2. Does your loved one exhibit intense moments of anxiety?
3. Does your loved one exhibit intense periods of anger?
4. Are these intense emotional moods short-lived rather than lasting for many hours or days?
5. Is it possible that there has been either self-injury or high risk behavior?
6. Does your loved one threaten or joke frequently about committing suicide?
7. Does your loved one display impulsive aggression with little or no provocation?
8. Does your loved one deal with periods of alcohol abuse, drug abuse, or other dangerous behavior?

If five of these eight qualities appear to match your loved one, you should consider the suggestions in this book useful in improving your relationship.

Symptoms of BPD

So in summary, the symptoms of Borderline Personality Disorder are outlined in the following lists.

External Symptoms:

1. Intense moments of depression
2. Intense moments of anxiety
3. Intense periods of anger
4. These moods are only short-lived, unlike bipolar or depressives

5. There may be self-injury
6. There could be threats or frequent jokes of suicide
7. There might be impulsive aggression with little or no provocation. (This is what makes a borderline personality disorder such a good companion)
8. There might be alcohol abuse or drug abuse.

Internal Symptoms:

1. Black and White thinking (borderlines see things as either good or evil)
2. Difficulty staying the course with a given course of action like a job or a relationship
3. Difficulty finding the me inside. That is a borderline personality disorder patient may have a hard time knowing who she is or which internal voice is actually hers (they don't hear voices like some other troubled minds, but rather they can't tell which internal drive is them or someone else)
4. They see themselves as dirty or untouchable for their badness. Everyone must really hate them because they are so bad.
5. A Borderline personality will see itself as unfairly seen and misunderstood. Others don't really get them. This is especially true when they don't have an external system of emotional support.

6. They will desperately seek to cling to others. This is often the wedge in relationships for borderlines.
7. They have a hard time with seeing people as just people. They can shift from seeing someone as perfect and ideal to evil and hate-worthy in a moment.
8. They sense rejection everywhere, even where it is not. This fact makes rejection appear again and again in their lives for real.
9. Much of the BPD difficulty stems from a difficulty remembering well the nature of their emotional attachment to key individuals when those individuals are absent. They can say the nastiest things about people they love when in their presence.
10. The BPD will view life as so horrible generally that they will engage in risks—no safety belt, poor health habits, risky drug use—in order to ask life to kill them.

Other factors:

- a personality like this will often engage in dramatically risky behavior as a way to express their displeasure towards life or God or whatever ultimate construct they have above them.
- Often this personality will be both addictive and prone to other disorders of the personality.

-Deep connections will happen very fast with BPDs. It is strange but their hunger for connection and lack of connection will attract powerful, deeply trusting connections that will then become dust eventually.

-When a relationship with a BPD is good it will be marked by over-idealization and a flood of intimate behaviors all at once.

-But beware, the slightest provocation can make a saint into Satan himself in the mind of a BPD. The BPD sees these slights as legitimate messages of betrayal and hatred from the other party.

Relationship between ADD and BPD

If ADD and BPD are seen as collections of symptoms, then ADD and BPD are overlapping illnesses. Some of the same tendencies that will lead an individual to develop BPD will also be present in a youngster with ADD. They both stem from an inability of an individual to see beyond the present moment very clearly. They both involve a problem with impulsivity as well. As the ADD matures into adulthood, they develop many BPD symptoms as adults, especially an inability to control their temper and other impulses.

Difference Between BPD and Bipolar Disorder

Borderline is not the same as Bipolar Disorder. The similarities include extremes in emotions and behavior and thoughts of suicide but end there. The extremes to which a Borderline will go are similar to those engaged in by a Bipolar

sufferer, but they don't last nearly as long. The Borderline Personality may feel these extreme fluctuations in emotions at different times throughout a day, but they only last minutes or hours. For the Bipolar patient, on the other hand, these episodes can last days or weeks. Instability within any given day or context is the rule with the Borderline patient. With the Bipolar patient, there is more stability than with the Borderline, so that when Bipolar patients get into a manic or depressive episode, it will last much longer.

There is also a strong element of instability in identity involved in the Borderline that is not occurring in the Bipolar. The Borderline experiences a huge array of beliefs and values in a given year due to identity confusion, whereas a Bipolar does not shift in the same way. Also, while this instability makes Borderlines hard to know and understand, they are not prone to truly psychotic episodes in the way that Bipolars are. Borderline is also more responsive to treatment than is Bipolar. So, if you suspect that you are Borderline because you have intense temper fits at times and intense depression or anxiety at others, the main question for you to focus on is "how long does a period of mania or depression last?" If it lasts for more than a week at a time, you are not likely to be Borderline. Remember though, that only a licensed therapist is completely equipped to give you a definite diagnosis.

So, the question often arises, can people have both Bipolar and Borderline Personality? The answer is I don't really know. Nobody *really* does. Some people will act like they do, but the thing about BPD or Bipolar or any of the mental disorders is that there is no blood test. So, let me ask you, can a person both have

the frequent emotion shifts of BPD and, at the same time, possess the loner emotion shifts of Bipolar? The definitions seem fairly incompatible to me, yet there are therapists out there diagnosing people with both. In my opinion, those therapists are probably looking into the issue only very shallowly. If they looked into them more deeply, they would be able to determine which of the disorders the symptoms closely matched. Then again, they are the therapists and I am just the recovered patient, so who am I to say? When it comes right down to it, the more likely situation is that a person has BPD at one point in their life and then at a later point, they develop Bipolar instead of BPD. That can happen. BPD is typically a milder disorder than Bipolar, but it really depends on the individual and how the symptoms manifest in their lives. On many occasions prior to my diagnosis, I thought I might have BPD. There is a certain manic quality to some of the moods you get into as a BPD--both the positive and negative aspects--so my brother--who is himself a licensed therapist--even thought I was Bipolar for a time.

Rambling Speech and BPD

When a BPD sufferer gets really far into either his intellectual or emotional minds, their speech often loses all sense of pacing. They can drone on and on long after they have lost everyone's attention. This is because they can't help but spitting out what they are thinking or feeling. The overdeveloped desire to be heard is an important aspect of this pattern or thought. You will find that they can be very boring or dull in some conversations--because they will converse in detail about a subject

that you are not even a little familiar with as though you know it well. They can also be very moving because of their intensely emotional nature. When they get caught up in that side they can be incredibly inspiring, moving, and touching, but they can also be frightening, degrading, debasing, and dehumanizing in these moments. They seem to carry on without any sense of what they are making you feel.

Convincing a Potential BPD to Get Help

Once you have determined to your satisfaction that the person you are concerned about likely has BPD, then you have the challenge of getting them into a therapeutic program. Believe me, finding a good program is going to be the least of your worries. If they don't like the way their life is going and are scared about the future--a likely scenario--then guiding them to a resolution to take action is only a step or two away. The biggest key for you to learn is that they will not respond well to commands, threats, or even transparent urging. They will resist, especially if you catch them in a good mood. What you need to do is catch them during one of the depressions that follows one of their tantrums. This is a golden moment for getting them committed to therapy. Follow a pattern like the following:

- Ask how they are feeling (expect something very morose or very explosive and don't be shocked by it).
- Ask them if they think they could ever feel better (expect their denials that such a thing is possible, or at least their doubts).

- Offer to find a therapist for them (this is important because they *will not want* to do this step for themselves because they will feel too hopeless while they are sad, too sure of themselves when they are mad, and too happy when they are happy. If you get their commitment, they are more likely to go when the time comes).
- Take them to their appointment when it comes.
- If when the time comes, they don't want to go try a soft persuade. (Remind them of practical things like how much you will be charged if they don't meet their appointment or remind them of something emotional like how badly they want to be happy again. Do not--I mean *do not*--bring up labels--like the label BPD. This will shut them down fast).
- Remember Churchill's short speech: "Never give up! Never! Never! Never!" Failure in the game of healing only comes to those who quit before the job is done. (Those aren't just trite words, they are the absolute truth in this case).

Chapter Two: Understanding Yourself if You Have BPD

One of the most difficult aspects of dealing with BPD is trying to understand yourself. It is scary to see the effect you have on others. It is confusing too. You have a difficult time comprehending the responses that others give you when you behave. You wonder about your own humanity, your own sense of normality. What you must remember going in is that no one is warned about becoming BPD. No one chooses this path in selfishness. The path of the BPD is lonely and scary. I hope that

by addressing some of the most common concerns surrounding this disorder that I can help you to come to terms with its presence in your life.

How Did I Get This Way?

The paths to BPD are many and varied, but in essence, the evolution of the traits that make you you began with a special sensitivity to external stimuli. This sensitivity is a neutral trait that allows you to respond quickly to slight shifts in circumstance. It can support talents in many fields. Unfortunately for you some form of trauma in your early years triggered a survival response that dampened the feelings of pain by teaching you that there were huge pay-offs at the emotional extremes. You learned that unleashing your powerful emotions gave you a feeling of comfort and order though, conversely, it demolished your life's order in the process. You also learned how to turn each moment into a moment when huge dramatic emotions were necessary or appropriate.

Another possibility for how you developed this disorderly pattern of thoughts is that you began with a sensitivity to external stimuli that led to huge separation issues with your caretaker that in turn made even the smallest separations traumatic to you. Your parents likely either ignored you and allowed you to flounce about in tantrums on your own or they showered you with attention asking you to please stop yelling or crying and that they loved you. Either way, they conditioned you to get pleasure from engaging in the intense emotions that you have become accustomed to. As you can see, understanding how you got this way can only be discussed here in general patterns. It is difficult to say exactly how you developed it, but the bottom

line is that you have a habit of thinking that is harming your life and you need to do something about it. The sooner you can accept the fact that those who have hurt or harmed you didn't create this disorder, the sooner you can begin rolling up your sleeves and doing the work of recovery. At the root of your disorder is your own thought choices, nobody else's.

My Story

I can tell you how I developed this disorder. When I was a young boy growing up in a family with seven children, I wasn't interested in competing for attention and resources; however, as time passed and the resources and attention continually went to the ones who competed for them, I became less and less capable of standing it. I believed firmly--no matter how many times my feelings got hurt (for I was always a sensitive child)--that I deserved attention and I deserved resources and that those things would come to me if I was just nice and patient. Then my parents announced to my siblings and I that they were getting divorced. In a moment, my whole model of the world shattered. It fell into tiny shards.

I remember the silhouette of our neighbor's house and tree on the frosted window pane that night as I looked out it, the tears pouring down my cheeks. I knew that my world was never going to be the same again--and it wasn't. I had learned in that moment that there really are only two kinds of relationships: the ones where others bowed to my wishes, and the ones where they were my enemy. That fragmenting of the totality of humanity into just two groups made it hard for me to let

go of situations and hard not to turn them into crises. In short, it started my BPD thought habits.

Can I Ever Be Free?

The most frequently asked question by someone suffering with this condition is “Is there any way to be free?” The conservative answer is maybe, with therapy, the proper medication, and training, you may very well be able to leave the illness behind. I think that the more accurate answer is that you can absolutely be free of this thinking habit. After all, how your neurons fire is very much something you can learn to condition. I think that if you condition a human’s brain and body to be able climb a mountain the size of Everest, you can condition it to see more aspects to life than just this moment--which is the kernel error for your disorder (this has nothing to do with the eastern teaching of living in the present, I will discuss why that is so in the chapter on unconventional therapies).

The inability to see or feel that your life changes over time and that the world changes over time is the kernel thinking error of the BPD sufferer. When you learn how to correct this error, you will possess enough leverage on yourself to correct the other errors associated with the BPD personality. The thinking pattern does take commitment to realign. I will go into the prevailing treatment for BPD and then look at some less conventional ways to treat it that you don’t need a therapist to engage in.

Can I Feel Love?

Another question often posed by those suffering from this disorder is whether or not it is possible for them to feel love. One person with BPD put it this way:

“I have Borderline Personality Disorder. How does someone with borderline Personality know exactly what love is? I have two little boys; I feel something, but is it my trying to look like the "best mom" or is it love? Why is unconditional love an inconceivable reality? I know that I feel and I have really strong feelings. I know what anger is, I know what hate is, I know what responsibility is and I know I feel other things. Why not love? Is it impossible for a borderline? Seems like a silly question but I have no idea. I don't love myself or my behaviors. Does this have anything to do with it? I hate you is a much easier feeling for me to grasp! I love you is scary.”

What can you say to someone who is so lost that they don't even remember the way love feels? Of course a BPD can feel love. Of course the faintness of the emotion attached to the love actions you give to your children is the real thing. One illusion that wraps itself around the emotional thoughts of a person suffering from BPD is that no other emotion or feeling except the one you are feeling right now is real. This illusion is so powerful that it can outstrip your own memories' ability to give you information about yourself. I am confident that, whoever you are, there was a time in your life when you felt love. The fact that you can't remember it clearly now is not real evidence that it didn't occur.

Do you remember what you ate for breakfast last Tuesday morning? How about lunch? Dinner? Unless you have solidly established routines--which you probably don't if your BPD--you probably don't have a clue what you ate for dinner last Tuesday. For you as a BPD you probably don't even remember well how you were feeling last night. You could probably describe it or even put an accurate name to it, but you have a hard time recreating the emotions themselves because the current moment is the one that seems most real to you. My point is that the faintness of the love feeling you are feeling is not proof of its lack of veracity. Instead, it is proof that you are in a part of your brain that is associated with non-love emotions. When you get yourself into positive feeling emotions it is easy to recognize the loving nature of your being. That requires that you get to know your wise mind. This will be touched on in the standard treatments section and you will be referred to a workbook that you can buy and use at home to help yourself discover what your wise mind is. That faint flicker of love you describe above is that wise mind. It is your true self. Forgetting it doesn't make it go away. It waits for you when you get lost in one of your other minds.

Why Do I Have Such A Hard Time Letting Things Go?

One of the most difficult aspects of BPD is the way that other people's viewpoints and words that appear to you as being incorrect in some way seem to grab onto your mind and refuse to let go. You think that the discomfort from these slights or disagreements will leave if you just let the other person have it. The problem is, your letting them have it looks like hysterics to everyone but you. You

frighten everyone around you when you let your feelings be known. You also hurt them. Soon after you make friends with somebody, one of these little slights causes you to blow up at them. The consequences are so difficult to handle emotionally because you find yourself lost and lonely so much of the time.

So why do you have this problem? The problem stems from the core mindset of the BPD symptom set. This mindset says, there is no other moment but this one. This belief is, strangely, more certain to you than the existence of your physical body. You may doubt your body, you may doubt your mind, you may doubt that your mother or children love you, but you will almost never doubt that this moment is the only moment there will ever be. I don't mean this in the eastern wisdom sense. Rather, I mean this in the emotional sense. You are tied up in your present emotions. Even though, you have a faint memory of different emotions and talk with others as though emotions cycle, you don't truly believe that they do. When someone tells you that you can have a better or worse life than you are having, you tend to think that they are a little of their nut.

This tendency--that is common to all people--is developed into a huge stumbling block to your emotional functioning. When a person tells you something you don't like, you tend to get stuck in how much you hate that person for saying the thing. I have been so angry with someone for saying that the Jackson family (the pop singers) are a little weird that I wouldn't talk with them for months. This was someone that I love. That is the type of insanity that should wake you up to the fact that there is something wrong with your belief that this present experience is the only

one there is. Life is dynamic. It changes all of the time. The most solid thing you can imagine is not solid at all. So, why shouldn't your emotional experience of the world be the same way?

How Come I Never Seem to Make any Progress?

As a BPD sufferer, you will likely experience an illusion that will cause you much consternation until you realize that it is just an illusion. You might work for months or longer on activities that should be helping you to progress--like the Feel Better Process found in this book--then, one day, you will fall into an old pattern of behavior--a tantrum, a dress-down of someone you love, or a severe depression (probably following something like the previous examples). The trick your flawed mind is playing on you is that it will tell you, in these moments, that you have made no progress. That you are lost in an eternal nightmare loop that never ends.

So many times, this silly illusion has caused BPDs to dive more deeply, intensely, and thoughtlessly into their destructive behaviors. Don't you believe it! It isn't a true picture of reality. It is merely a trick. Remember that your central thinking error is that you believe yourself to be continuously the person you are now. You have a terrible habit of putting your current emotional state as a filter on every other moment in your memory bank. You will take true memories and falsify them by making your former emotional state match your current one. Trust the path of recovery more than you trust your memory. It is more sure. Your memory will lie to you. The upward character of your recovery is the truth. You are improving every day in every way. Trust it, believe it, feel it. Especially when it feels like a lie.

Will I Commit Suicide?

Statistically, a person suffering from BPD is far more likely to commit suicide than other populations. The suicide rate among BPD sufferers is 8 to 10%. That is staggering when you consider that the rate of suicide among the general population is only 0.011%. If you are BPD and contemplating suicide, your biggest obstacles to committing the act are others' feelings and your own fear of failure. You fear failing at the suicide and that keeps you at bay. For most BPDs the thought of a cancellation of existence is tantalizing indeed. Because you are trapped in a single moment, you crave the ending of that moment. No matter how your life improves, it always seems to be that the horrible moments are the most real. Unless you are in a good moment and then you wonder how you could ever have felt suicidal. Unfortunately for BPDs, those happy moments are less frequent than their dark counterparts. The illusion that you find yourself trapped in much of the time is that there is no solution to your frequent bouts of pain.

This is nothing more than a lie you tell yourself. Peace, contentment, yes even happiness is available to you. Your brain is as capable of making the chemicals of happiness as anyone else's brain. You only lack the skills to engage that happiness. The work appears impossible only because you are trapped into believing that your current emotion is the only emotion that exists; however, your memory of better times is enough of a clue that your belief about your current feeling is a lie. Don't believe the lie. I see suicide as an easy out just as much as any of you, but the trick is to remember the faces of those who depend on you. If it's your dog,

think of her existence without you. If it's your child, consider whether you wish to leave a legacy of suicide for her to follow. Think of that. Bottom-line: (1) There are happier emotions available to you and (2) it is better to find the happier emotions in your brain than die. If you are contemplating suicide, please talk it over with someone first at 1-800-273-TALK

Chapter Three: Understanding BPD for the Concerned Outsider

If you are one of those lucky people who is involved in a relationship with a person suffering from BPD, then you are at a loss to understand the behavior that you are faced with on an almost daily basis. Yelling fits, unfounded worries, desperate fears, or flying dishes might be a part of your daily ritual. If you are in a committed relationship you might be tempted to think that your partner is simply a jerk or lacking empathy. You might wish for a way out of the relationship. You might think that your partner really despises you and wishes your life to end or be miserable.

I promise you that the behavior that makes you feel that to be true is misleading. BPD's may be the queens or kings of hysterical theatrics, but they are also yearning for your love at a deep level. Someone broke this person that you love so that they don't know how to be in a relationship with you very well. That doesn't mean that they don't want to be good at loving you. There is nothing more important to most people dealing with this condition. This is usually true even if they act arrogant, smug, or self-righteous about the possibility that they might need healing. In the very moments that they are scoffing at the suggestion that healing might be

needed in their emotional lives, they are secretly wishing that they had the courage to tell you that they want nothing more than healing.

Biological Causes of BPD

BPD appears to have some biological underpinnings. Some babies are borne with an embryonic version of the affective instability found in adult BPD patients. They have a sensitivity to separation that is more acute than their peers. Children with sensitivity as infants that cause them to cry more often than other infants may be more likely to develop a habit for temper tantrums as older children and adolescents which, in turn, is more likely to become the impulse aggression found in the adult versions of these children. I would say take these findings with a grain of salt, however, because I did not match this pattern at all. I was a very docile infant--if my mother's account is to be believed--and as a result of the inattention my mother showed me (again, due to my docility) I developed an anxiety concerning separation. While it is probably true that many BPDs fit the pattern above, clearly not all of them do. I would concede, however, that my response to my mother's inattention may have been biologically predisposed.

Environmental Causes of BPD

So, how do these contradictions show up so emphatically in the same mind? In a nutshell, the pattern goes like this: BPD individuals experience a massive emotional trauma or a series of less intense traumas at a vulnerable time in their mental development; this trauma creates errors in the rules through which the individual sees the self in relation to the outside world; these thinking errors, in turn,

create a virtually unmanageable emotional system in the life, mind, and body of the individual.

To explain it in a little more detail: Borderline Personality Disorder usually shows up in adolescent girls who are the victims of abuse. Other traumas can cause this condition as well though, they can range from events as commonplace as divorce to more unusual events such as the death of a parent or alcohol and drug abuse by a parent. Much of the question as to whether or not BPD will show up hinges upon how well the individual's thinking and feeling system has been prepared for whatever trauma she is called to endure. Some families do not prepare the individual well for even the most basic disappointments of life and then they ask the child to endure a divorce in a religious belief system that calls such an event a major trauma. The child has little choice but to have his thought system damaged by this event. The child's internal model of the world that had been growing and developing in a natural and healthy way is overturned and shattered into fragments of the original. These fragments then become the way that the individual interprets the future events of her life. They also dictate the way in which she will emotionalize the characters and events of her life.

Something about having the childhood illusion of security creates a feeling of loneliness in the BPD sufferer. These children becomes a lone wolf unable to ever see eye-to-eye with other people. Yet, from the outside they may appear to be the most sociable and well liked of their peers. This is because they learn well how to manipulate the emotional states and behaviors that will call others to their side. That

is not to suggest that they are cold and unlovable on the inside of these tactics, rather, they are so hungry for the love of others and so certain of their inability to attract it that they develop skills of the extrovert in order to prove beyond a doubt that they deserve--more than anyone else--the praise and love of others.

Often the ways in which these skills manifest is in powerful creative or athletic abilities. Even when they lack the natural talent, the BPD sufferer is often driven to demand acclaim of others. This drive can be a positive force on the front end, but it rarely leads to emotional satisfaction or fulfillment. That is because it is founded on the sufferer's illusion that there is some way to fix the thinking pattern that gives rise to emotional dysregulation by getting the emotions that s/he most craves. The gaining of those emotions in the life of the individual will not fill the emptiness that so many with this disorder experience, instead it exacerbates the emotional stress of the individuals by creating unrealistic expectations. Note: I am not saying that starring on Broadway, in Hollywood, or becoming a successful musician is impossible, I am saying that it is impossible for the BPD sufferer to be cured by securing such successes. Each new success will bring with it a powerful surge of emptiness and helplessness as the individual now sees the next goal on their path to be even more essential to their emotional well-being than the previous ones and even less achievable. The only way for the BPD sufferer to change their emotional dysfunction is to patch the thinking errors that give rise to the said dysfunction. Once those errors are corrected, then the individual can learn to manage their emotional life effectively. Effective thoughts are the basis for effective emotions.

BPD is like Brainwashing

As has been mentioned, BPD is the result of a system of thinking errors. A helpful way to think about the thought processes engaged in by a BPD sufferer is as a person who has been brainwashed. In order to understand why this is so, let me first define brainwashing. Brainwashing means the taking of the normal patterns of a mental setting and breaking them through severe means like torture or reward to create an abnormal conditioned response to emotional stimuli. The resulting image of the world is a mess. It has few rules that do not contradict themselves and few useful boundaries. The entire ability of the individual to engage the world is adversely affected by the brainwashing.

My Loved One Has BPD; What Is Their World Like?

Your loved one lives in a much different world from you. In your world, there are many ways that a person can treat you; to your loved one there are only two ways that they can be treated (with slight variations within them): either the other person adores your loved one or the other person hates your loved one and wishes his or her destruction. Since it is very difficult for your loved one to obtain evidence that someone adores her, it is very difficult for your loved one to feel loved. The result of this is that your loved one spends much of his time certain that everyone hates him. This causes a host of various behaviors that you find difficult to bear, but rest assured that your loved one finds them at least as impossible to bear as you do, but she feels that she has no choice but to engage in these behaviors. Of course,

she is mistaken about this, but only with training and focus can your loved one begin to understand that he is not alone in the world with no one to love him.

Borderline Personality Disorder and the Chameleon Effect

One character trait of the BPD that you are likely to notice is what I call the chameleon effect. This symptom shows up because the BPD sufferer is unable to clearly identify which of the two minds in her brain are really hers--that confusion stems from the fact that neither of them is hers. The result is that you will notice that the BPD will pick up a lot of the personality traits of people in the room. They might begin to blend the attitudes of others into their own. You will notice that they often agree with you right off the bat. Notice that this is not a manipulative tactic with the BPD like you might see in a social climber. Rather, the BPD honestly thinks he is agreeing with you. The BPD honestly wants to be agreeing with you. Still, he will probably register a look on his face at one point or another that shows doubt about his choice to agree with you. If that happens, explore the look. Ask if there is a part of their mind that doubts their agreement with your statement. They might open up right there. BPDs have a strong tendency to do things like that. One funny thing with me is that I actually end up picking up accents of others in the room without even noticing it. Of course, now I use it intentionally for fun, but throughout my adolescence, I did this without really noticing I was doing it.

Why a BPD is Always Right

There is an incredible amount of contradiction in the thought pattern and behavior pattern of a BPD. Don't assume that they will be consistent with you.

Remember that the heart of the disorder for a BPD is a poor sense of their lives as a continuous experience. They are only well aware of the current moment. Ironically, they will also often have a very good mind for history--especially your history if they have known you for years. This is because that history looks like a long block of now. They will not, however, be good at remembering exactly how they were feeling at a given point in that history. All of this combines into an insufferable tendency of the BPD to always be certain he is right about whatever the topic is.

You will try to explain how wrong he is and he will insist that you are mistaken. This can be anything from whether you two saw a certain movie together to whether the sauce is too salty. It doesn't matter, the BPD has a cult-member-like faith in their current state of emotion or thought. They have a very difficult time accepting their own fallibility on one level, even though they might be painfully aware on another level that they are totally in the wrong. Often--and this can be very difficult to be patient with--they will come along again later and tell you about their position on that same subject and it will be *the position that you were defending!* When you press them on it, they will likely deny ever having been so adamantly opposed to that position. They will say, "no I wasn't that opposed to it, I was just playing the devil's advocate." Just deal with it, because this one isn't even at the heart of their disorder. It might go away with treatment and it might not. It is not considered to be the most urgent of symptoms to treat.

Examples of How BPD Processes Things

To better understand the way in which your loved one filters reality here are a few examples of how s/he might process an everyday situation:

Example 1: The bird cage hasn't been cleaned for a week and has smelled fine every day until today. A normal thought would be, "okay, I guess I've procrastinated this one long enough, let's clean the cage." A BPD would be unable to see it so clearly. Up until that day, the bird cage has been acceptable and mostly ignorable to the BPD. Now that it stinks slightly, it is "awful", "filthy", "impossible to keep up with", or "too much to deal with right now." You might find that the last one "too much to deal with right now" is always or almost always the way your BPD friend sees the world, you are right it is always "too much right now." This is true until they get on some kind of emotional high where doing things that are boring seem acceptable to them, but these moments are few and far between so don't expect them too often until your partner has learned some new ways of perceiving the world.

Example 2: Your BPD loved one has just received an award for an acting part that she had. She was Eliza Doolittle in the college version of My Fair Lady. She won "Best Actress" in her college's awards program. A normal way of processing this situation would be, "wow, they liked what I did with that role, I am so happy about this, let's celebrate." But your BPD loved one processes this situation much differently that you would expect, she sees the accolade as meaning either 1. that they love her so much that she can now

become a famous actress and everyone in the world will love her very soon, or 2. they really hate her and wanted to make her feel embarrassed about the mistakes she made in the part of Eliza Doolittle and that they really just wanted to embarrass her further. You would be amazed at how hard it is for your BPD loved one to not twist a huge victory into a huge sign of conspiracy or hatred towards them. It is hard not to see others as out to get you even when they are loving what you have done.

Example 3: You disagree with your BPD loved one's viewpoint that George W. Bush should be impeached for his crimes against humanity. He says he thinks W. should be impeached, you say you think he is a decent man with a larger job than he was ready for. A normal way to process this situation would be, "huh, I wonder how you could see it that way, maybe you could explain it to me." The way that your BPD loved one is processing this is, "she stands for everything I stand against; she must be shown how wrong and evil her position is or I will never again feel peace in my life." No kidding. This is the way they see such disagreements, you must stand with the enemy if you don't agree that it's totally the embodiment of evil.

A BPD's Main Thinking Errors

In this section, I will present the eight most common thinking errors in a BPD's mental system. These errors are what provide for the emotional instability experienced in the lives of most BPDs. Please note that these are not intellectual problems per se. The BPD can be very intellectually sophisticated, seeing way

beyond the black and white dichotomy of their splitting error for example. These errors often effect intellectual pursuits and creative pursuits far more positively than negatively. It is the emotional thinking of the BPD that is being discussed here. BPDs are very primitive in their emotional modeling of the world due to the fragmentation they experienced at a vulnerable point in their development. So, often the BPD sufferer will see the black and white scenarios in their emotional lives but be very good at understanding the nuances in facts on an intellectual level. Notice too that each of these thinking errors is a correct strategy in proper context. It is when each of these strategies is overused and used in all situations that they become errors leading to emotional dysfunction.

1. *"I can change this situation for the better by doing something radically different right now"*: When the pain of life becomes too much to bear (which is a frequent occurrence for BPDs) acting out behaviors allow the BPD to radically and immediately change their emotional state from disturbed to some more manic and pleasurable emotion. These come in the forms of sexual deviance or temper tantrums or high risk behaviors. The behavior must be powerful enough in its emotional effect to entirely wipe the memory of the painful situation from the BPD's mind.

2. *"I'll bet if I ignore this problem, it will just go away"*: This defensive response to the complexities of life allows the BPD to pretend that there is not a need to engage in the normal risks of everyday living. This will take the form of avoiding the presence of people, events, or places that the BPD finds painful.

3. *"If I can't solve my problems, maybe I can dwell on hers instead"*: When the BPD sufferer sees a situation that is too complex to handle on his own, he just finds fault with another person or thing. He will talk about how horrible communism, capitalism, Democrats or Republicans are just so long as he doesn't have to engage in the process of solving his own problems.

4. *"I don't have a problem that needs fixing, the world doesn't work that way"*: If the BPD sufferer can convince herself that there is no BPD, then she can convince herself that the way she is is just as good as it gets. If she is as good as she can get, then the fault is on others or God for not understanding her situation. Following my impulses will not lead to anything too horrendous.

5. *"There is nothing else in this mind but what I am experiencing right now"*: This thinking error is a like a minor split in the personality of the BPD. The individual feels that his life can't possibly be any different than the way he perceives it in this moment. This leads to him being stuck in super harmful emotional trends or in the intellectual loop of no returns. When in one mind or the other, the other mind is only a distant, hard-to-retrieve memory. In more severe disorders this is the same error that gives rise to multiple personalities.

6. *"If you can't fix it, laugh at it"*: More than any of the others, this error may appear to just be a healthy strategy for dealing with problems and conflicts. In the right context, it is just that. However, in the case of a BPD who has turned this strategy into an error, it stops the sufferer from solving the serious problems he may

be facing in life. He can be destroying the lives of other people through abuse or worse and be laughing about it. That is taking the strategy too far. Most BPDs don't get quite psychotic with this one, but you can find them laughing at extremely inappropriate situations.

7. *"I know exactly what is going on behind his eyes"*: The BPD gets into the business of reading his own perceptions and experiences into the perceptions and experiences of others. Of course, this "thinking error" is the foundation of empathy in balanced amounts, but in the intense emotional furnace of a BPD this tool becomes borderline behavior. They get paranoid about things that they should just leave alone. They get fearful of situations that are going completely their way. In one case, a person I knew had been accepted in a top tier school for his subject and was certain that they didn't think he was a good candidate because he didn't receive a full-ride stipend. He just knew they let him in because there weren't enough applicants. As you can see, such a thinking error can be devastating to an individual's progress in life.

8. *"This physical symptom is the result of the random cruelty of nature or God"*: Often times symptoms will occur in the body of a BPD as a direct result of their accumulated thinking errors and emotional dysregulation. Phantom brain pains, inexplicable leg or feet pain are just a few examples of how the BPD will make their thinking errors invisible in the solving of their life problems. How can they be blamed if their body wants to act up?

9. *"If you are not with me, you are against me"*: This thinking error creates a world of enemies and allies. The most challenging aspect for the BPD is that this thinking error makes what they want the most out of life--to be loved--increasingly more difficult to achieve as their emotions become more intense. It becomes like a maze with no portal holes no matter where the individual looks they can only see enemies, gargoyles, and barriers.

How Come my BPD Loved One Fears Abandonment so Much?

Another question that haunts those engaged in a relationship with a BPD individual is "why does s/he always think I am going to leave him/her?" The fear of abandonment stems from the problem in BPDs that causes them to view all moments in the past and in the future as non-existent or peripheral to existence. The only real moment to the BPD sufferer is this one. Every other one appears unreal from their point of view. You will notice that their fear of abandonment often arises when they have some present reason to think of themselves as unworthy of your love or presence. They can't see the entire context of their persona that you can see in those moments. They only see the decision that makes them feel that they are unlovable, dirty, or worthless. They are certain that the world doesn't want them and they are even more certain that those nearest them don't want them. They will latch onto the slightest disagreement as iron-clad proof that a person external to themselves wants to be rid of them. Of course, when you have a passionately held belief and you search for evidence that said belief is in fact the truth of the matter, the evidence to support your conclusion tends to show up everywhere. This is why

they end up feeling more and more ashamed and more and more afraid and more and more angry as a conversation will escalate. Each insecurity feeds the other insecurities and vice-versa.

In further explanation, remember back to the tendency of the BPD to split everyday experience into pure black or pure white. When emotional beings need for others to worship them with total devotion in order to believe that others are good and on their side, then you require evidence without remainder that the other person does in fact have no other thoughts about you than total admiration. When disagreements surface--as they consistently do in relationships--their presence breaks the picture that the BPD thinker has of you, their partner, of being one totally and doubtlessly enamored with them. If you are not totally and doubtlessly enamored with them, their is only one other choice in their mind--you must be their enemy dressed up like a friend. If you thought you were sharing your life with a mortal enemy how would you react? You would probably throw a fit as well. Of course, none of this excuses the behavior because there is a part of the BPD's mind--that they are ignoring--which is certain that you love them. As we will explore later, it is this mind--called the wise mind in therapy literature--that is the key to the BPD's liberation from the hell of BPD. Helping them to find that mind will save you years of grief--that is assuming you are not ready to flee now that the you know the patterns associated with BPD.

What Is the Difference Between High-Functioning and Low-Functioning BPD?

Simply put, the high functioning BPD can live in larger society, hold a job, participate in a relationship (though it will likely be stormy), and in most forms avoid the higher risks in their behavior. The low functioning BPD will often avoid people because they are sure that they will meet someone whom they will blow up at. They spend a lot of time contemplating their own death or engaged in some type of high risk behavior like speeding, cutting themselves or sleeping with likely STD carriers. In short, a BPD is not usually able to stick with a job, a relationship, or any sort of goal. It is imperative that a low functioning BPD be introduced to or find a doctor that can help them pull down from the ledge of their high risk behaviors.

Chapter Four: A BPD Support Plan For Concerned Outsiders

If you have found yourself engaged in a relationship with a BPD sufferer, I offer you my blanket apologies. I know that the pains of that experience can be dark and terrifying. I can only assure you that your loved one hates that s/he has caused you the pain they have because there is nothing that they appreciate or need more than your love. It is precisely this obsession with your--and some childhood emotional template's--affection that has created the behavior that you and s/he finds so distressing. Not that it is much comfort in the dark hours, but they really don't hate you. They need you. That said, if you are not yet committed in an enduring way to the other--read: if you don't have children or the BPD is a family member--you should seriously consider whether or not you have the emotional stamina to see your loved one through their disorder. It is harrowing and requires severe tests of your patience and love.

How to support BPD Loved Ones

Despite the apparent hopelessness of the situation, there are ways for you to support and help your loved one in reducing the frequency of their hysterical episodes. You can also support your loved one in reducing their intensity. Notice the

wording I used because it is important: you can only support your partner in changes s/he is ready to make; attempts to engage your partner in these changes yourself are almost certain to convince your loved one that you are their enemy and get them to unleash on you again, then you will be forced to backtrack and pretend as though your partner's behavior is perfectly acceptable to you. This will further degrade your self-image and lead to even more devastating future conversations between you and your loved one. There are three parts to the general support plan, they are: 1. The Feel Better Contract, 2. The Feel Better Process, and 3. The Feel Better Feedback Session. I will explain each of these shortly, but first you need to understand the three basic mindsets in which your BPD loved one engages. I call them The Three Spells.

The Three Spells

There are likely three basic mindsets or songs that your BPD loved one engages life with. There are various intensities to these songs; however, for the most part one of these songs will match the pattern on thought behavior being engaged by your BPD loved one. The reason I use the word spell is that it quickly and elegantly explains what the experience is like for your loved one. Trying to break one of these mental behavior patterns is like a wizard trying to break the spell of an opposing sorcerer. The only way that the feat can be accomplished is if a more powerful spell is used to evaporate the undesired spell. There are two dark spells and one light spell in your loved one's inner arsenal. The dark spells are known in the literature as the emotional mind and the intellectual mind. These two are very

powerful and give your partner a strong sense of order when they are in control. That is the reason your partner has such a hard time not letting them call the shots. Their voices are firm, clear, and hardwired to your loved one's experience. The third spell is the elixir of life for your loved one--it's known in the literature as the wise mind. This mind resides behind or between or above the other two minds and is integrative in its properties.

The wise mind integrates the best aspects of the emotional and intellectual minds into a wise way of seeing and engaging the world. If your loved one is somewhere between high and low functioning, then the most powerful spells are going to be the dark ones. The fortunate thing is that s/he will be vaguely aware of the existence of the wise mind and it will be available for your loved one to access. Chances are that you have seen your loved one's wise mind on many occasions. It is always present and is the part of your loved one's mind that has not been damaged by the trauma that brought about the initial fragmentation. Even your high functioning loved one's will have a hard time taking control of their lives--for truly the wise mind is who your loved one actually is and the other two minds are merely masters competing over the control of the BPD's life. In time, any person suffering from this inner struggle can find integration of the warring parts, even the low functioning BPDs. The low functioning BPD's first challenge is to discover the existence of the wise mind. S/he may be aware of the wise mind's existence, but s/he has forgotten how to access it.

The challenge at the heart of recovering from the thought pattern known as BPD is learning to be comfortable with your wise mind. Your loved one must find a way to access that mind regularly and let it call the shots. Your part is to help your loved one to engage in the Feel Better Process; however, let me warn you about something: without the Feel Better Contract it will be near impossible to engage your loved one in the process. You need to use the process when your loved one has fallen so deeply under either one of the dark spells that they are in either lost in the swamp of despair/anxiety/anger (the emotional mind) or they are suffering from confusion due to over-analysis (the intellectual mind).

The Three-Pronged Approach

Now to the BPD support plan that you can use to assist your loved one to break the dark spells and leave themselves open to the light spell. The light spell is the natural way that their mind wants to engage the world. It is their real mind, while the other two are clever deceptions made by the mind to deal with trauma. So, all you need to do to create well-being is to break the dark spells; however, in the mind, all negative goals must be changed to positive goals. So, the way to break the old spells is to aid your partner in removing her attention from them and then placing the attention on the new spell, which is the wise mind. This mind will become more powerful as you give it more of your attention. Focus on it instead of focusing on the minds you want to be rid of.

The Feel Better Contract

The Feel Better Contract is the first step in the Feel Good Triad. This contract is written out between yourself and your loved one. You each agree to a particular role. The steps are as follows:

1. Catch your partner at a time when they are in the wise mind. You can tell that this is happening because the nature of their countenance is one of peace and tranquility. They are not overly happy nor sad, they are not overly analytical either. This is essential because if you try to engage them on this subject when they are not in their wise mind it is sure to be distressful to them.

2. Be sure your partner has expressed a desire to work on their BPD behavior. An ambush is never a good idea with this kind of work or with this kind of thought pattern. Your BPD loved one will be well served to know that you trust their will--even if you don't find it particularly trustworthy. Trust is always the best way to engage another person, especially when that person is a BPD.

3. Read the section on the Three Spells with your loved one and see if they think it is a fair description of their situation. If they don't think it's a fair description then going forward with the Feel Better Contract is probably not your best bet. You can still attempt to assist them with the Feel Better

Process even without the process, but the contract will give you leverage that you won't have without it.

4. Describe the Feel Better Process that I will outline in the next section and see if your loved one thinks it will help them. If they think that it will help while in the wise mind, they will have an easier time remembering that they felt this way when under one of the two dark spells.

5. Read the contract to your loved one and see if they agree to it's terms. In short you agree to help your loved one through the Feel Better Process while lost in one of the spells and to engage in the Feel Better Feedback Session when at a time separate from the time in which the process was engaged. You especially are agreeing to hear your loved ones dark thoughts without flinching. This is important. If your loved one can see that you aren't judging or reacting emotionally to what s/he is saying that it will be easier to share freely. Your loved one agrees to allow you to help him/her through the process without directing his/her anger at you.

6. Post the Contract in the most commonly used living areas. If this makes your loved one or you embarrassed just let it be a reminder that life will be that much better when you have left BPD in your dust. I assure you that feeling will be worth any feeling of embarrassment you have to endure in the meantime.

Introducing the Feel Better Process

Now to learn the Feel Better Process. This process is one that you will find to be more beneficial the more often you use it. It is not one that develops a tolerance about it, rather it is a pattern breaker. It takes the hardwired patterns of BPD--which are nothing more than habits--and breaks their power. In the brain when two or more neurons fire at the same time they become chemically hard-wired to each other.

What has happened to your loved one is that s/he has learned to fire the emotional mind's neurons whenever certain kinds of situations come up. The majority of gaps between expectation and event are coupled with the emotional neurons firing in you BPD loved one's mind. The Feel Better Process is a way to help your loved one fire different neurons in a situation that they usually rely on the old destructive patterns for.

Your loved one has also learned to fire the neurons associated with the intellectual mind whenever certain other situations arise. Usually these happen when there is a gap between belief and evidence. If they have a feeling about how things are supposed to be and the evidence appears to contradict that feeling, your loved one then relies on the intellectual mind to bridge the gap.

What you will be teaching your loved one in the Feel Better Process is how to feel okay about a scenario that doesn't match his/her expectation. No matter if your loved one is ineffectively focusing their emotions on a situation or if they are ineffectively focusing their intellect on a situation, you are going to use this process

to help them couple a new set of neurons with the situations they face. The idea is not to create new thought habits, but to break the pattern of thought habits in general. You are teaching them to engage life without the training wheels, so to speak.

The Three Steps of the Feel Better Process

Step 1: Ask your loved one to make a statement about life or the situation in general. Try to get them to be externally oriented about this. This is not because you want them blaming external sources, it is because if they direct it outward to an external object it will be easier for them to find a better-feeling statement. This is true whether they are intellectually tied up or emotionally trapped by their firing neurons.

Step 2: Ask your loved one to make a statement that is just as negative but will make him/her feel better than this thought. This is an important step because it gives your loved one the permission to do what s/he wants--to gripe--but to slightly move toward their emotional goal. The place s/he want to be is at peace, hope, optimism, or appreciation. You can get her/him there by taking them one baby step at a time.

Step 3: Ask your loved one to make a statement that is either negative or positive but will make him/her feel better than the previous statement did. This is the step that can last anywhere from one minute to an hour. You want to repeat it until your loved one is choosing consistently life-affirming, happy statements instead of

negative life-denying ones. This question repeated helps your loved one to fire a series of neurons in this slightly stressful situation instead of always relying on the intense emotion ones.

It is really that simple. The challenge in this process is getting your loved one to believe that there is a better feeling thought than the one she is feeling. She will often be very dubious that any better feeling thought can possibly exist. She will probably be tempted to lash out when you ask the question, but hopefully the contract that you have both signed will help remind her to be patient with the process. It takes patience and repetition to work. You have to repeat it in every situation that it is needed. You have to remind her to reach beyond herself in order to find the better-feeling thought for it will not be found in her current thought pattern.

What To Expect

Expect this process to require repetitions over a long period. You are re-training your loved one's brain. The process is simple and it can even be described as easy, but it cannot be described as an overnight solution. This requires patience, but you will find that each leap forward is truly a leap. Each time you do this it will get exponentially easier to do it next time.

Expect your loved one to put up resistance at first. Don't meet resistance with resistance; this is not a case where resistance is the effective response. Instead, gently remind your loved one to be courteous to you and ask the question again.

You might also add that you are here to stay. This will--hopefully--reassure your loved one that you are an ally even if you don't appear that way in the moment.

If the pattern is an intellectual tailspin, expect that he will go from certain that he is confused to uncertain that he knows the best way to go. His uncertainty is a sign that he is listening to the soft and gentle voice of his wise mind. It will appear meek to him next to the blustery voice of his intellectual mind, but it is the voice of his true self that he has forgotten. In time, this voice will become strong and clear to him and the other will lose its authority. Its bluster will soon sound like the bluster of a crazy man on the street.

If the pattern is an emotional flood expect that she will go from certain that there is nothing but pain in the world to hopeful that the universe might actually be on her side. Don't try to lead her to willful emotions like passion or pure empowerment yet because in future sessions she might mistakenly remember them as anger or hate or jealousy. It may sound like we are talking about a primitive person here, but it is truly hard for a BPD to remember clearly what an emotion feels like unless it's present. Simple hope, faith, or gratitude is a good place to leave your loved one in this process. Eventually you can lead her all the way to the sunshine of pure confidence, but first engage in this process for a while. When they consistently start close to hope then start leading them up to the confidence emotions.

The Feel Better Feedback Session

The Feedback Session is designed to improve your next Feel Better Process. It helps your BPD loved one to remember the session and that another one will be coming along in the future. You engage in this process about 3-5 hours after you have engaged in the Feel Better Process. You ask the questions of your loved one and they ask their questions of you. Ask them simply if the Process was helpful to them. If so, ask them what could have gone more smoothly. If not, ask them what would make the process more useful in the moment. Then have them ask you how you felt during the session. Did you feel threatened? If so, what could they do to make you to feel less threatened next time? Tell them anything that made it painful for you so they can understand how it feels to be on the receiving end of their emotions. Hopefully, the fact that it is about a recent--but not too recent--situation will help them to remain objective and in control. This session should bolster up what you try to do in the Feel Good Process. It should help the improvement to remain more steady. The session is not meant to be longer than ten minutes and can easily be done as a break in a movie you are watching or on your way somewhere. Keep it simple.

Chapter Five: Issues in Specific Relationships

Romantic Love Relationships

The first area that requires our attention is--for lack of a more elegant term--the area of Romantic Love Relationships. This area is meant to cover any type of relationship where two people are sharing a house, bed, and/or future dream. This definition includes married couples, would-be married couples (common law or gay couples), dating couples, etc. This type of relationship involving BPD can be especially hard to bear and handle.

The non-BPD partner begins the relationship astonished at the energy, intellect, or charisma of his partner and he is excited to spend a life with him/her. She is also bewitched by the high regard in which the BPD sufferer holds her. The BPD sufferer wants in the relationship and he wants in *right this second*. This is because he hopes that spending time with you will help him to fill the huge chasm of emptiness he feels in his heart. Marriage is even more attractive because it appears a lot like a guarantee that you will not run away from him when his moods begin

emerging in the relationship. Remember, that this void is the result of a lack of identity. The BPD doesn't spend a lot of time with her real self and so thinks that maybe you can show her what her real self is.

Then not long after the commitment becomes more solid, he starts to see a temper that may not have surfaced in even a hint before. You see your partner unable to let small slights go. As his partner becomes more comfortable with you she lets him see more and more of his insecurity. Then her insecurity appears borderline psychotic on numerous occasions and he fears that she might become violent at some point. At least, he grows wearied by his partner's seeming inability to control her temper. You think of your partner as the only choice for you however, because she intoxicates you with the ultra-high regard she clearly feels for you. From your viewpoint your BPD partner thinks of you in far higher terms than you think are reasonable. This fact flatters and attracts you to stay with him. Still, your partner criticizes, belittles, and hurts your feelings on a consistent basis. So, you have a difficult time dealing with this contradiction.

Of course if that were all you had to deal with it would probably be survivable, but you have to also deal with the regular tantrums your partner throws in fear of your abandoning or not loving her anymore. He works himself into a frenzy that gets worse and worse with every word of comfort that you utter. These moments of hysterical depression alarm you because your partner might often bring up talk of suicide or self-mutilation at these times--that's if you are lucky. If you aren't lucky she might just run off and engage in high risk behaviors--including high risk sex or drugs-

-when she sees you can't help her. I'm sure that one of these patterns--or a combination--is familiar to you.

A BPD and Commitment

Making external commitments to other people is rarely the problem with a BPD individual. Their problem is in making that commitment real from situation to situation. In a moment when BPDs are feeling elation and hope they will want to move right into a commitment; however, when the next day they feel depressed, they will be able to immediately talk about calling the whole thing off. Even if it is as big of a commitment as a wedding! In a committed relationship like a marriage, a difficult problem with a BPD is commitment when you are not present. It is much easier for a BPD to do whatever seems interesting or enjoyable when you are not around than it is for most people because they have a hard time remembering what it was like the last time they were with you. Or if you are unhappy right now, the BPD will often feel totally justified in doing something that is against your wedding vows because s/he feels that you should be providing a happy feeling if you don't want cheating. That said, many BPDs have learned well how to use external reminders to keep them from breaking commitments; so, even if they aren't committed to you in their thoughts like they should be, they make sure to remain committed in body.

A BPD and Sexuality

Splitting and Criticism. One problem that can be difficult in BPD relationships is sexuality. It will often be hard for a BPD to love another person's body without condition. If BPDs notice something in their partner's body that they don't like, the

BPDs will often feel angry and critical towards the partner. It takes a herculean will on the BPDs' part to not say something. Since even the most perfect bodies among us are flawed, BPDs may never find the sexual satisfaction they are looking for and craving. This stems from the splitting thought pattern that they have learned as a way to cope with the lack of care they felt from a caretaker. Abuse or neglect are the primary causes of splitting. BPDs feel that you can't ever possibly match up to some standard that they feel inside. Unless they know that they are looking at a black and white model with perfection being white and anything else being black, BPDs have a hard time ever accepting other people flaws and all because they can just see all of the ways that you could be better. The criticism that arises inside of the BPD cannot itself be controlled. The only way to solve this problem is to change the underlying thinking habits which we will discover in the treatment section.

Intensity vs. Passion. Another challenge that will arise in relationships with BPDs is the problem of their confusing passion with intensity. They think that sex must be intense to be passionate. As a result you will find them wanting to increase the emotional intensity of your encounter much of the time. This, of course stems with their difficulty feeling the middle emotions. Life is often either joyous or horrible, they have a hard time with the subtle emotions in between. So, they will often demand that you find a way to increase the intensity of your sexuality, but they will not be satisfied with the increase because the next few times it will satisfy them less and less. In time, they will need to escalate the sexual encounters you share to more intensity. This often means the eventual request to cross some more that you don't

wish to cross. They will think that you lack passion and want you to comply or else they will leave.

They will talk about how they can't enjoy passion with you and that they love you, but they think they need to move on to someone who is more passionate like they are. This is an illusion. This is a trick of their thinking patterns. Peace and contentment are acceptable sexual feelings and they need to learn to embrace these less intense emotions. At first, they will have a difficult time achieving orgasm without intensity, but in time they will learn that the path of increased intensity could never lead them anywhere good. That path is the one followed by sex criminals and other deviants. In order for there to be happiness, there must first be the opportunity for peace. You BPDs might know this cognitively, but the following is also true emotionally: passion can be controlled and gentle just as well as it can be hot, heavy, and fast.

Trust vs. Control. Often, BPDs will want to control the sexual relationship. They think it is trust they are asking you for when in reality, they are asking that you give up your power of choice to them. This is an unacceptable request, but don't expect them to understand that. They won't. They will see your refusal as a refusal to love them. They will see it as a rejection. They will see you as their enemy. Your only hope though is that you stand up for yourself. It will make them violently angry and you may feel fear for your life. They may just leave you; however, you don't want to be under the control of someone suffering BPD. They don't really know what they're doing, though they may say they do. Do what you can to communicate that

your choice to not do such-and-such a thing does not translate to you not caring about their needs, it is only a matter of you protecting your boundaries. In reality, in order for them to understand this, it is best to bring it up when a therapist can help explain it in more detail.

A BPD and In-Laws

Another hard row for BPDs to hoe concerns their in-laws. Your BPD loved ones probably have plenty of issues with their own parents as abuse or neglect are the likely causes of BPD thought patterns. This fact will not like equate with them falling in love with your parents. Sure, if you have accepting parents they will love this at first but, trust me, they will find things they can't handle about your parents. This is because--as will be of no surprise to you by now--BPDs have a difficult time getting along with anyone. They would have difficulty getting along with Mother Teresa! I am sure they would see her as up to something (with their suspicious natures). The biggest advice you can have about the in-laws and your BPD loved one is don't force the issue.

The best thing you can do is to give them their space generally, but continue to make offers concerning time with your family. You must not, however, allow them to bar you from whatever interchange with your family you feel you need to make. This is a bad choice because it gives them too much control and it cuts you off from a very important system of emotional support. That support is extremely necessary in a relationship involving BPD. When they say things like "your mother is evil or your father is evil" just laugh it off. Don't attempt to dissuade them, because in all

likelihood they know your family is not evil and they are just saying it to vent their frustration over some specific set of grievances. Patience is always an important tool if you insist on encumbering your life with a BPD partner (Remember BPDs, having been diagnosed with BPD myself, I say this because it is true, not because I like its ramifications; people are better off in relationships with people not suffering from BPD).

How Do I End it with a BPD?

The question of how to end a relationship with a BPD has now got to be opened. These pointers hold true no matter whether you are a therapist with a BPD patient, a spouse married to a BPD patient, or an employer with a BPD employee. I have just told you not to engage in a relationship with a BPD if you can help it (note: this does not apply to the employer or the therapist, only the personal relationships, unless you want to open yourself up to lawsuits). That is not to create prejudice in your mind. Please understand that BPDs aren't broken, they have just learned a negative thought pattern that rules their lives. Still, if you know you are not ready or capable of handling a relationship with a BPD sufferer, please break up with your partner ASAP. Don't wait. Don't put it off.

The other thing that is very important about breaking up with a BPD sufferer is that you must be sure that a break-up is really what you want. If it isn't what you want and you do it anyway, it will be much harder to break up with the BPD sufferer when you really want to. Believe me if you are wishy-washy in your resolve BPDs will more than likely be able to plow right through your resistance. Your resolve must

be firm and sure. I don't mean that you pretend it is firm and sure, I mean that you know what you want and you are not going to be dissuaded.

Now, I will warn you that there is virtually no way to break up with a BPD that is easy. When they miss you--and they will--they will be insistent that you get back together. They will be next to impossible to shake off. You can't try the "let's be friends" routine with the BPD. Remember, if they are difficult enough that you can't see yourself hanging around them, then they probably aren't able to see a "friends" category as real. They can see lovers and they can see enemies. You can't easily have an in between with them. If there is no physical abuse, then you must just simply pack up and leave. Tell them in a note exactly why you are leaving. Explain to them, in no uncertain terms, that you cannot live with their tantrums anymore. Tell them you cannot live with the verbal abuse you receive at their hands and give them an instance or two of what they said and how crushed and hurt it made you feel emotionally. Do not try the sweet line with them. Don't use George Castanza's "it's not you, it's me" line. It won't work. They will spend days trying to explain why they can put up with your foibles. You must tell them that it is their behavior that has driven you away.

When they try to engage on some specific point that you are misunderstanding them about--and they will try this--explain to them that the answer is "no". You don't have time to discuss the situation; you don't have time to hear their side and you don't have time to try to understand what you are doing to them. When they realize that there is no wiggle room in your position, they will--more likely than

not--cut their losses. Remember that they are able to forget you more quickly than you are able to forget them. They may not know how to change their emotion from abject loneliness to something better right now, but--assuming they don't commit suicide (which they probably won't)--they will switch their emotions to something more enjoyable soon and when they do, they will forget you fairly totally, though they will have a faint memory of how much they love you. You can't blame yourself for their disorder. Only they can fix it. You can support them in fixing it, but if the work isn't proceeding or you are sure you aren't equipped to deal with the work--you must leave.

Some people have expressed worry over whether they will damage a BPD sufferer or not in the break up process. What you must understand about emotional damage is that the real source of damage for a BPD sufferer is not you or anyone outside. It is their own inability to move on from past traumas. It is their own inability to stop using the thought mechanisms that helped them through their childhood pains. There is no doubt that breaking these patterns can appear difficult to them, but that doesn't mean that it can't be done. Opening yourself to hurt that you can't handle only enables your BPD loved one to continue using broken patterns of conduct. BPDs must learn that they won't get social rewards for their conduct any longer. The behavior they need to see getting rewarded is good emotional management on their part.

When they are making an effort to manage their emotions and you see them making progress, you can find rewards to support them. If no progress is being

made, you must not reward their lack of emotional management by cuddling up--emotionally or physically--to them in hopes that showing love will create love. The path of recovery is made easier with the love and commitment of a partner, but imprisonment in the disorder will result from the wrong kind of love and the wrong kind of commitment. A therapist may be able to help you better define your role in the relationship if you are going to stay. To put it simply: staying in a relationship with a BPD who is not progressing will not help him or her. It will not help you. It will also cause more damage--to you and your partner--than leaving her or him. Staying in a relationship with a BPD who is progressing more slowly than you can endure will not likely help either of you either. It will likely cause more damage in both directions. Supporting a BPD sufferer who is on a steady recovery pace can be rewarding for both of you.

If there is physical abuse, there is no way for you except for stealth. That is the only tool in your quiver if they have shown themselves willing to hit you or your children. You have to get in touch with a women's shelter of some kind. If you are a male victim of violence, then your options are fewer. You will need to find a place to hide from your partner. You will need to leave the state or community where you reside if you can. I am sorry to sound so melodramatic, but when BPDs get caught in any sort of holding pattern, there is no telling when they will get out. Violence towards you or your children is simply not something you can afford to tolerate while you hope for their pattern to change. They will likely escalate rather than get better,

unless they are reaching for paths of healing. Even if they are reaching for healing, you can't afford to wait for that healing to complete if the violence is continual.

After the Break-Up: Cleaning up your Life

The aftermath of a BPD break up can be hard, but it is nowhere near as hard as the relationship was. A crucial action for you take immediately is to list on a sheet of paper all of the beliefs about yourself--that you can think of--that were internalized as a response to what your BPD partner, client, or whatever told you. Notice truth if you can, but in most cases, they will have told you criticisms that are of little real value. You see, the criticisms that come from a BPD are things you may never hear from another person (not all of course, there are sometimes valid criticisms made by BPDs). That is because they are usually the most trivial sort of behaviors that they will criticize. The BPD doesn't criticize constructively--though he probably thinks he does--the BPD criticizes because he feels some sort of demon in his brain that he thinks criticizing you will release. He is wrong about that. Totally wrong. If there was violence against you, of course, the healing will be harder than if there was some sort of verbal abuse alone. Either way, you should seriously consider spending some time on the couch. A therapist can help you to go through these unhelpful beliefs that the presence of a BPD in your life helped to generate. So, much of the bad emotion you feel towards yourself is just the mistake of believing the criticisms of a mad critic.

After you have enumerated the thoughts that you persistently look at as a response to your former companion, choose substitute thoughts that feel better than

the old ones. Choose new thoughts that feel better and turn them into affirmations that you can repeat many times every day. These new thoughts will become the foundation of your whole mindset. By focusing consistently on them you will find wholeness in your life again.

Finally, you must determine what kind of relationship you want now. You must determine what kind of emotional state you want to feel on a consistent basis and focus your attention on it. Get into the habit of visualizing this and acting as if it is your state before it even is. The reason this is important is that it creates a mental environment that is conducive to your mind fixing itself. Your mind is capable of fixing itself, but first you must create the environment of well-being by removing all obstacles to that well-being. Happiness and well-being is your *natural state*, by replacing the painful thoughts with pleasurable ones, you enable yourself to feel wholeness once again. You enable your mind to correct the falsehoods that you have internalized. This way you can attract the kind of people and events that will help you to reclaim your life.

Dealing with the BPD Behavior Pattern if You Decide to Stay in a Relationship with a BPD Sufferer

FACT: You cannot change your loved one. You can't do it. You have tried for years how has it worked? Not well, I imagine. That is because you don't possess the power to do it. You are powerless to change them. What is more, it wouldn't be a very good universe if you could. You are the only one that can choose your own well-being. That is true for you as well no matter how much of a victim you think you

are. I am not saying that you deserve to be mistreated, far from it. I am saying that only you can control what your experience is like. When your loved one yells at you or refuses to accept that you could be right about something, take your focus from the unpleasant aspect of your loved and put on an aspect you adore about your partner. If it seems hard for you need to make some preparations to make it easier next time. The action you are going to take that will make a huge difference in your own personal quality of life is to pull out a journal and make a list. WARNING: As you read every word of these instructions, allow the simplicity of them to amaze you. They really do what I am saying they will do. They are transformative. The list you are going to make is called "What I Love the Very Most About My Partner." Then write down the things you love about your partner. There are payoffs, otherwise you wouldn't stay; so, focus on them. Then feel them and think about repeatedly throughout each day. Find the good feeling about these qualities. This will make a strange miracle occur. It will make it so that you interact mostly with your partner when those qualities you love are being displayed. You will rarely see the qualities you don't want in your life. This is how your life will become. You must get your attention off of the BPD if you expect to find happiness with someone that possesses that thinking pattern. You can't focus on what you don't want and expect what you do want to show up for you. It will never ever happen. What you focus on attracts. That is it.

Relationships Between BPD and Permanent Family Members

Dealing with your BPDs who are brothers or sisters is a little different. While you are growing up together, there are many moments of intense love and fun. There are moments of joy and excitement, but there are also the fearsome aspects of the experience. BPDs learned young to throw fits in order to get what they want. These fits involve yelling, screaming, criticizing, and even demeaning. If you are a younger sibling or your parents' indulged the tantrums, you may have even learned to believe that you deserved such unfair treatment at the hands of your unsettled sibling. I assure you that you did not deserve such abuse. Sure, there may have been moments where you crossed the line of decency as well, but those don't typically call for the kinds of tongue-lashings that you received at the business-end of your sibling. It is important for you to understand that while you aren't to blame for these situation.

The BPDs you engaged with are also not to blame. Blame is one of those inventions in the human social setting that serves nobody very well. When you blame your sibling, you only take away your own power and authority to feel good in your life right now. The truth of the matter is that if you wish to feel happiness and healing in the wake of such pain, you just simply have to stop blaming the BPD sibling or parent for your feelings. If you are grown up now and on your own, you have enough distance that you can love your BPD family members with being overwhelmed by them. That means you don't have to live in the blame and guilt and

shame that were created in your childhood. You can re-create your own childhood within yourself.

As adults, we have much better options in dealing with BPD siblings. Not only can we choose to not be involved too often in the relationship with them--which we only choose if we are on bitter terms--we can also choose to leave any time their BPD attributes flair up in our presence. Let me give you an example. I have a brother with this same disorder. He has not sought treatment for it and it sometimes overwhelms the people he is with. One of these occasions occurred when I was visiting for a family gathering. He started laying into me--with an intensity many of you understand--for some silly reason. I realized the situation was not an appropriate one, so I stood up and walked out. I said, "I'm sorry, but I don't want to have this kind of experience with you. We'll talk later." Then I walked out. He was mad. He had a hard time with it, but he got over it. In a while, I was able to come back into his presence and we had a decent time.

The only choice you have is to protect your power of choice. That is one of the things that BPDs--unknowingly--seek to take from you. They can't learn that their pattern of choice theft is unacceptable unless you make it clear that it is unacceptable. That is not your job for them; it is your job for yourself. You will continue to love them despite their behavior patterns, but that doesn't mean you have to experience the unpleasantness of their tantrums. You can release their tantrums from your life by walking away.

Brothers and Sister In-Law With BPD

This is a tough one because it involves a person you love and may even feel protective of being involved in a very unpleasant relationship. It is important that you don't take rash action to try and "save" your brother and sister who is in a relationship with a BPD. BPDs certainly have trouble with abandonment issues and with keeping their emotions in check, but they are not really the bad guys you may think they are. They tend to be gentle people who have been made to compete in a way they are not built for. This means that they have a hard time not seeing their partners as always a step away from leaving. Of course, the more they focus on the fear of abandonment the sooner it happens. Where concerns often arise is when BPDs start to do things like alcohol or drug abuse, extramarital sexual affairs, or violence, then you wonder how to intervene.

Does your brother or sister know what s/he is doing staying in a relationship with a BPD? Probably not. Being in a relationship with someone suffering from BPD is much like being on a drug of some kind. There is a sense of neediness touched with feigned independence that makes them hard partners to leave. It is hard for married partners to keep themselves out of their BPD partners' dramas. The BPD engages them in such a way that they feel important and crucial in a way that other relationships rarely do. The only case where a hard-and-fast intervention is practically always necessary is in cases of domestic violence. In the other cases, I would seek counsel from a licensed therapist before attempting to intervene. You

usually want to avoid being the third member of a dual, it rarely makes the situation better.

Relationships with BPD Parent

Another for-life relationship that is unlikely to be solved by just ignoring the BPD sufferer is that of the child with a BPD parent. Having a parent with BPD can cause you to want to blame your parent for all of your life's problems. It is even more tempting because there appears to be so much evidence that your parent is responsible for your life's mistakes; however, I have stated before and I will now state again that blaming is beneficial for no parties in a social relationship. It doesn't help you--who have been harmed by your BPD parent--and it doesn't help your parent. Blaming takes the pattern of healing--which only works dynamically--and freezes it into stasis. That stasis is painful to you much more than it is painful to your parent. In fact, it might not hurt your parent at all.

As for you, it can destroy your life creating many of the same behavior patterns in you that you observed in your parent. Removing blame breaks the stasis and creates a flow of emotions and ideas in your relationship with the BPD parent. I understand that there are individual complications that make such forgiveness appear impossible to you. Trust me, the forgiveness is very possible. My BPD father--yes it is everywhere in my family--caused me deep hurt and insult in my formative years. I blamed him for many things for many years. But I have learned how to let go of the blame and rather than pointing it towards me, I have learned to let it convert

into responsibility. When you take responsibility for everything in your life, it changes. It changes for the better.

Anyway, in the process of removing blame, you might find it helpful to go over the thinking errors that give rise to the painful behaviors of BPD. This will help you to know that it was not hatred, but misplaced hope for love that caused the hurtful behaviors to erupt from your BPD parent. When they yelled at you for tiny mistakes or they transferred their shame or guilt to you, they were not trying to hurt you. They, in fact, have a difficult time understanding how their actions could possibly hurt you. Of course, on one level, they are sure that abuse must be painful for you to bear from their lips, this cognitive understanding does not reach to a level where they can empathetically connect what they see in your pained reactions and what they would feel if they were in your shoes. It is only by correcting their thought errors that they are able to--eventually--use empathy in an appropriate manner.

Mommy, Why Doesn't Daddy Like You/Us?

When partners are suffering from BPD, their children often feel much confusion because of the behavior they see being displayed by BPD parents. This is especially true if they have a non-BPD parent to compare with the BPD parent. One day I was caught in a fit of anger yelling at my wife for something really stupid and absurdly trivial. I could see myself doing it all the while, but my heart was breaking with the shame of what was occurring. Then my little daughter asked my wife, "Mommy, why doesn't Daddy like you?" This, rather than breaking the dam and causing me to feel a sense of remorse, reinforced the anger with shame. I then fell

into the path of thinking that it was my wife's fault now that I had gotten so angry at her that I should make my daughter think this. That kind of labyrinth of thought and emotion is common for a person dealing with one of these BPD fits.

As the partner and co-parent with such a person, you have to find ways to help your children understand the condition of your partner's mind without belittling or causing them to doubt his or her integrity. I am lucky to have a wife that has helped me through the dark times of the disorder. She has tried to help the children understand that I am not angry with her necessarily, that, in reality I am seeking to deal with a problem that is sometimes hard to understand. This has helped them to deal with the situation a lot. Still, the fact that a parent has BPD is not a valid reason to remove the children from their presence. BPD is not psychotic though it may appear to be at times. It is merely emotional dysregulation. When a person is given the tools to regulate and find a center in the madness of the BPD thought pattern, it can be re-devised into a thought pattern that can support a well-functioning parent and partner.

Chapter Six: Treatment Options for the BPD Sufferer

Now that we have looked at the external and internal world of the Borderline sufferer, let us turn our attention now to the solutions that are available for the individual with Borderline Personality Disorder. First, let me just say that total recovery is possible. Not only is it possible, it is your natural state. The idea that you go from what-you-really-are (BPD) to what-you-would-like-to spend-your-life-being is fallacious. You are not naturally BPD. One of the biggest problems with the way that people engage Mental Disorder is that they are taught to see it as a static sort of situation. There is nothing static or permanent about your mental state. It is only through snapshots in time that we can even determine whether you have an appropriate relationship with yourself and others. So, first off, think about Borderline Personality Disorder as a habitual pattern of thinking rather than something that is broken. Healing is the natural outcome of disorder. You get it so you can learn to appreciate life in emotional health.

Personal Therapy Is Not Enough

Many borderlines will continue with personal therapy--seeing a therapist one-on-one--over months or years and find that no progress appears to be being made.

Before I move into this deeper, let me caution you to not trust the feeling that tells you that you are making no progress. It is lying to you. There is little doubt that is giving you inaccurate results. The truth of the matter is that you create an illusion of stasis even when you are moving very fast relatively. After that let me tell you that you need more than therapy. Therapy is important, don't get me wrong, but it is not enough. You also need a skill training program. There are specific things you must learn to do with your mind in order to learn emotional regulation and interpersonal conflict resolution. The next segment will discuss specifically the program you need to get yourself engaged with one way or the other. It will teach you what you need to know to throw this mental pattern out with the bad rubbish.

Dialectic Behavioral Therapy

So, how do you change the thinking and feeling patterns associated with Borderline Personality Disorder? The standard method--and the method most supported by research--is Dialectic Behavioral Therapy developed by Marsha Linehan and unfolded for you in precise detail in her book *Cognitive-Behavioral Treatment of Borderline Personality Disorder*. There is also a corresponding workbook called *Skills Training Manual for Treating Borderline Personality Disorder*. The central goal of this program is to teach you--the BPD sufferer--the skill of mindfulness along with several other key skills that are appendages to it. Once you learn how to engage mindfulness in the various situations of your life--which does take time and effort--you can become habituated to a totally new way of thinking.

The new way of thinking is nothing more than the old way of thinking which you had before your trauma caused you to engage the survival mechanisms that formed your BPD in the first place. Of course, your thought pattern will never be completely the same as it was. That is actually a good thing because if you learned nothing from the experience of BPD, then you could easily fall right back into it again. Now you know what resources you have internally to help you focus on what you really want from life rather than reacting to all of the little pains, fears, and slights that might blip across your screen in a given day's span.

I will now briefly describe the four modules you will encounter in the DBT workbook. I cannot reproduce them in too much detail here because that would infringe upon Dr. Linehan's rights as the innovator of this remarkable treatment program. I encourage you to buy the workbook. It will give you everything you need to learn and develop the skill of mindfulness in the variety of your daily experience.

The Four Modules

1. Mindfulness- This module teaches you to find their own mind, as it were. Mindfulness is like the grand key to your mental health as a Borderline sufferer. When you learn to find the mind that is neither overly intellectual nor overly emotional, you have found your own wise mind. This mind is capable of seeing the shades of grey in a situation. It is also able to be flexible and understanding when a gap arises between your expectations and your reality. You will find that having a

comfortable relationship with your wise mind--known as mindfulness--will give you the foundation you need to learn the skills in the other modules. You will always refer back to this skill.

2. Interpersonal Effectiveness- This module helps you to know how to act and react in social situations. It especially focuses you on using the comfortable relationship you have developed with your wise mind to know how to respond to others comments, actions, and non-verbal communication. One very important problem you will be taught to solve is the uneasiness you feel when a situation crosses the line of your comfort. You have learned to ignore this moment and only respond when the situation has deteriorated to a point that it makes you want to throw things. You will learn to say “no” when a situation is not what you want. You will learn how to think for yourself and decide what you will do with yourself whenever a situation is goes beyond your level of acceptance. There are others on top of this, but you will have to develop them by using the workbook.

3. Distress Tolerance- No matter what comes along, there will be times that you will not get the response to the resistance you provide in a situation as taught in the second module. The third module will teach you what you can do in your own mind to tolerate the situations that remain in a state that is unsuitable to your needs and desires. The inevitable distress that you now process as overwhelming and impossible will become bearable and even negligible in your mind. This skill is fundamental if you are going to live in this world that constantly contrasts with your expectations. After all, that contrast that you think you hate so much is also the

source of your greatest joys and entertainment. It cannot be removed, so you must adapt to its presence.

4. Emotion Regulation- Remember when we were discussing the history of the term Borderline Personality Disorder and we said that the label is controversial. This is because it misses the fundamental aspect of the disorder. The central problem that requires a solution is the inability of the BPD sufferer to deal with the smallest of gaps between expectation and reality (on the negative end). Another way to term is problem is as emotional dysregulation. You will remember that many people are supporting the label emotional dysregulation disorder over the current label as it appears to be less prejudicial in its effect. In the fourth module, you will learn the capstone skill that will help you to be free from the label Borderline Personality Disorder forever. When you can learn to manage your own emotions, then you can face any of the situations life will throw at you without going psycho on your friends, family, or strangers on the street. Wouldn't that be great?

Therapy: An Important Component to Healing

Research has indicated that the component of psycho-therapy is essential to your recovery. This is especially true for those of you who are low-functioning BPDs. The importance of therapy is not lessened by the presence of the skills workbook that I discussed above. The reason why therapy matters is that the therapist can confirm for a near certainty that you even are suffering from BPD. You could have some disorder with similar behavior patterns or you could be totally uninformed as to what your symptoms really are. A therapist can cut through all of the illusions that

you have spent years accumulating to create a buffer between you and the outside world.

With the help of a licensed therapist, you can learn what others' responses to your behavior really means. You can understand why they get so scared and horrified at the things you say and do when under the influence of your mood swings. The therapist can help make sure that the skills you are learning in the modules of the Dialectic Behavioral Therapy are sinking and being understood properly. They can also reinforce the lessons in ways that will help you process and use them to their full potential.

One of the most valuable aspects of dealing with a therapist is that s/he can tell you when you appear to be past the descriptors related to Borderline Personality Disorder. This is more valuable than you may think because it is easy to create a cocoon of denial that dampens the real impact that your personality is having on other people. Of course, if you just cannot see yourself getting help from a therapist, it is better to do the workbook discussed above than to not do it. Making progress is very important for the eventual state of remember wholeness that you are after.

Developing Trust with a Therapist

Therapists have a hard time being the type of human beings that a BPD sufferer wants to rely on. That is just the way it is. The whole philosophy of the therapists' profession is that a wall of decorum be erected between the patient and the therapist. Without this wall, the therapist would be unable to help you at all. Of

course, you have probably talked a lot to somebody about how not being able to count on a therapist for a long-term relationship makes it hard for you to trust the therapist, or whatever your complaint. All I can say to that is that it is pure nonsense. It is one of the lines you feed yourself and others in order to feel okay about avoiding treatment. You know treatment will be tiring and difficult. You know that feelings of unworthiness will undoubtedly become harder to deal with before they get better. Furthermore, you know that the therapist could just up and quit on you at anytime, which would be read as abandonment by your emotional mind. All of those possibilities are real and you need to see a therapist anyway.

An important step to your recovery is just simply dealing with the fact that you are not in possession of the power or right to manipulate other people however you wish. They will not dance to the beat of your drum nor should they. I know it seems like you are only being reasonable in your request, but think about it for a second. In order for a therapist to meet your expectations, she would have to be on call 24/7. If she was on call that often, you would certainly monopolize much of her time. Do think she can make a living with you as her only patient? Do think that he can have other patients if his total person is dedicated to your treatment at all times?

In order to meet your expectations, he would have to never get sick or miss a day of therapy. Does that seem reasonable to you? He would have to never retire or go on vacation. Essentially, he would have to become what only a God has the believable power to become--your own personal savior. People can't do that. No matter how nice they may be, no matter how much they care, and no matter how

much they want you to get better, people will still remain only able to do what is right for themselves day in and day out. You are the same way, so give them a break.

As for gaining enough trust to open up, that is so much easier than you think it is. Especially if you become convinced of the fact that you are their job and not their friend. A big part of their job is keeping your secrets secret. That means you can trust in their professionalism more than you can even trust in your own best friend's ability to keep his trap shut when the cards are down. These people's entire career rides on them keeping your secrets. That means that for the hour or two a week that you are in their office--they belong to you--as mentors or guides or teachers. They will help you at those times. So, don't get so attached. This is an important lesson for you in your quest to release BPD from your life. If they cancel your appointments, let them go, learn to move on. They are not you, your parents, or your family. They are only your therapists. Sometimes you can be really intense and people will have a hard time with that--even therapists. Learn to accept that and kind of find it funny. It is pretty funny that you get worked up over the little things that really don't matter. Just learn to move on when people can't continue therapy with you. Whether they have a problem with you or not, it doesn't matter. Your progress and healing is *your responsibility, not theirs*.

Medications

There are dozens of medications used by doctors in the treatment of Borderline Personality Disorder but the three medications that are considered by experts to be the most effective are Effexor XR and Serzone. The SRIs (Prozac,

Zoloft, Celexa, Luvox, and Paxil) are considered a close second to the first three.

The main way in which therapists--in tandem with psychiatrists--will use medication is to support treatment rather than as a central aspect of it. In many cases, the behavior of particular BPD patients has become so erratic that they cannot be effectively treated. The medications can be used to calm the patients down to a point that they are able to talk through the problems in their mind and lives.

In less extreme cases, the medication can help reduce thoughts of suicide and depression so that the patients are able to explore the ways in which they have been dealing with their lives. They can begin to correct the thinking errors that create their dysfunction. In time, they will be able to be weaned off of the medication due to the thinking shifts that have occurred during treatment.

A note of caution on medication: I have found that medications don't always help. Sometimes--if it is the wrong medication or dosage--you will find that it makes your emotions more difficult to deal with. This is because of the large emotional issues that arise for BPDs anytime there is a gap between expectation and reality. You will begin the treatment hoping that the medication is going to make life easier to live. Then as it seems to lift you at first, the good feelings will normalize and you will have a hard time with the returned feelings of sadness and depression.

This eventuality will also create disappointment on top of the depression. This is because you hoped that you would be able to put the feelings of desperation behind you. Now that you realize you can't, you may feel far more intense impulses

towards suicide. The only time I ever came close to actually fulfilling the suicide wish was when I was on medication. I decided to do without and--honestly--doing the treatment without medication made the treatment easier. This is because I knew I had to expect the depression and anxiety and learn to deal with it on my own. You will have to make your own decision on this, but try to keep in close touch with your practitioners if you decide to go ahead and medicate. It can be hard to avoid suicide without their timely help in both dosage and medication type.

Responsibility: The True Secret of Great Accomplishments

Great Women and Men have found again and again both in the past and the present that there is a great secret underlying the universe that we live in. This secret has been discussed by the avatars and has been related the storytellers both in print and in person for hundreds--if not thousands--of generations. It is a secret that unfortunately many fail to realize until they believe it is too late. Of course, they have still failed to realize the secret. It is so deceptively simple that you will think it is nothing, that is a mere trifle or bumper sticker wisdom. Yet, despite these humble clothes this secret is the Lion that has conquered nations and created the most extravagant deposits of cultural beauty known to the human family. Still, it is the secret that lies at the root and the core of your transcending the traumas of the disorder that has snuck up behind you and seemed to claim your life for its own. The secret, in short, is this: you created your whole life exactly as it is and you can create any life you choose for yourself. If that sounds too simplistic, I am sorry. It is the basis for every treatment program that has been developed to treat BPD. It is the

core principle of the concept of therapy in the first place. The only way that your life can change is if you learn that hating your life and hating BPD is a useless exercise.

Conclusion: Choose To Live

You now have some choices. You can continue on default and watch as your life continues on in the uninspired path that has led you to despair. You can watch as your friends and some of your family deserts you. You can watch as you slowly dismantle every good thing that you have lived for or there is another option. You could choose to accept your pain as your own best way to happiness. You can accept it as your past that you can release instead of seeing it as your present and future. You can declare your past released and learn to believe it and feel it. These activities--along with the suggestions given throughout this ebook--will help you to overcome the pain of BPD. It is not a pain you have to continue to live with it. Owning it does not mean making it permanent. Owning it means setting it free. I suggest you choose to be whole. Because in reality, that is what you are any way. You are only living an illusion if you think that you are anything else.