

Phoenix7 Solutions - Am I Trauma Bonded?

A Gentle Self-Check for Women Healing from Toxic Attachments

You're not crazy. You're conditioned. And you can break free.

What is Trauma Bonding?

Trauma bonding is a psychological response to abuse, where a strong emotional attachment forms between the victim and their abuser. It often stems from cycles of affection followed by mistreatment, making it confusing and painful to leave. You're not broken – your nervous system was trained to normalize emotional chaos. This guide will help you gently check in with yourself and begin to break free.

Here are some common ways trauma bonding can show up:

- Love Bombing: Overwhelming affection or gifts early on to create quick emotional attachment.
- Intermittent Reinforcement: Kindness is unpredictable, keeping you hoping it will return.
- Gaslighting: Making you doubt your memory, perception, or sanity.
- Isolation: Encouraging you to pull away from friends or family to become more dependent.
- Guilt Conditioning: Making you feel responsible for their emotions or actions.

Self-Assessment Quiz

Rate each statement from 1 to 5:

1 = Not at all true | 5 = Very true

1. I feel addicted to someone that hurts me (emotionally, physically, mentally)

2. I justify/make excuses for their behavior often

3. I fear being alone more than being mistreated

4. I confuse intensity with love

5. When they are kind, I feel hopeful that it will change for good this time

6. I cycle between leaving and returning

7. I often doubt myself/my thoughts in the relationship

8. I feel like No one else will ever love me the way they do

9. I feel responsible for fixing the relationship

10. I walk on eggshells to avoid upsetting them

11. I feel guilty/selfish when I try to focus on my needs

12. I have tried to leave, but can't stay away

13. I blame myself when things go wrong, even if I'm being mistreated

14. I downplay or hide the truth about the relationship to others

15. I feel like I have LOST myself in the relationship

Section 2: Red Flags (Signs of Trauma Bonding)

Check all the red flags you've noticed in your relationship:

- There's a constant cycle of emotional or physical abuse, followed by apologies, promises to change, and temporary moments of calm or happiness.
- I feel stuck or trapped in the relationship, unable to leave despite the abuse.
- I feel manipulated or emotionally blackmailed, often being made to feel responsible for my partner's actions or emotions.
- I've been isolated from friends, family, or support networks.
- My partner often makes me question my reality or sanity through gaslighting.
- My partner is excessively jealous, possessive, or controlling, often accusing me of things without cause.
- After abusive events, my partner makes grand apologies and promises to change, only for the cycle to repeat again.

- I feel unworthy, invisible, or that I am not enough for my partner.

Section 3: Green Flags (Signs of Healthy Love)

Check all the green flags that resonate with your relationship:

- Both my partner and I respect each other's boundaries without any pressure to change who we are.
- My partner offers emotional support and understanding when I'm struggling.
- I feel safe to express myself and be vulnerable without fear of judgment or retaliation.
- There is mutual trust and security between my partner and me.
- We have healthy communication where both of us feel heard and respected.
- We encourage each other's personal growth, including maintaining relationships with others and pursuing individual goals.
- Conflicts are resolved with respect, compromise, and understanding.
- My relationship feels stable, calm, and predictable.

Section 4: Real Love vs Trauma-Fueled Attachment

Real Love (Healthy Attachment)

- Love feels calm, secure, and consistent, not chaotic or emotionally draining.
- I feel respected, valued, and cared for in my relationship, without fear of manipulation or control.
- We share mutual care, empathy, and understanding, supporting each other's emotional and mental well-being.
- There is a sense of partnership where both of us contribute equally, supporting each other's personal growth and dreams.
- Our relationship allows for individuality and independence, encouraging both partners to grow as individuals.
- There's trust, transparency, and safety in our communication, without fear of gaslighting or dishonesty.

Trauma-Fueled Attachment

- I feel emotionally dependent on my partner, needing constant reassurance or validation to feel secure.
- My relationship feels like a rollercoaster, with extreme highs followed by extreme lows.
- I often doubt my reality, my feelings, or my memories, and feel confused or crazy because of my partner's behavior.
- I find myself sacrificing my own needs, goals, and boundaries to keep the peace or please my partner.
- I constantly feel anxious, fearful, or on edge in the relationship, unsure of what might trigger my partner's anger or withdrawal.

- There's a constant cycle of abuse followed by reconciliation, where promises are made to change but the behavior always repeats.
- I feel like I am 'walking on eggshells,' never knowing how my partner will react to my emotions or actions.
- Love feels conditional, given only when I meet certain expectations or when my partner is satisfied.

Section 5: Reflection & Self-Assessment

After completing the quiz, take some time to reflect on the following questions:

1. How do you feel about the relationship dynamics?
2. How would you describe the emotional environment in your relationship?
3. What are some of your immediate feelings after answering this assessment?
4. Are you ready to take steps toward healing?

Final Words & Affirmations

You're not broken. You're in a pattern that can be broken. This bond may feel powerful, but your healing is more powerful. You are worthy of real peace, not just familiar pain.

Affirmation 1: I am releasing what hurts, even if I once called it love.

Affirmation 2: I am learning to choose peace, even when chaos feels familiar.

Detachment Action Tips

Whether you've already left or are still in the relationship, you can begin to detach emotionally and reclaim your peace. Here are some actions you can try:

If you've already left the relationship:

- Block their number or mute their messages to reduce emotional triggers.
- Journal daily about your wins – even small ones – as proof of your growth.
- Journal moments when you feel the urge to contact your ex – ask yourself: What triggered this feeling? What do I truly need right now?
- Build a support list of 3 safe people you can reach out to instead of returning.

If you're still in the relationship:

- Begin noticing how you feel after interactions – write it down without judgment.
- Set one silent boundary (like limiting how much you explain or apologize).
- Create a mantra: 'This is not the love I deserve.'