

Breaking Free

Breaking the Trauma Bond



Phoenix Recovery Coaching



3 Steps to Start Breaking Trauma Bonds

Introduction:

If you've ever felt stuck in a toxic relationship, even after leaving, you're not alone.

Trauma bonds create deep emotional attachments that make breaking free incredibly difficult. But healing is possible!

This guide will walk you through 3 powerful steps to start breaking the cycle and reclaiming your freedom.



3 Steps to Start Breaking Trauma Bonds

Step 1: Shift Your Mindset –

Acknowledge the Bond

Trauma bonds keep you emotionally hooked because of the cycle of love, abuse, and hope. Your brain becomes addicted to the highs and lows.

- Definition: A trauma bond is a deep emotional attachment to an abuser, often formed through cycles of abuse and intermittent kindness.
- Why It Happens: It's a survival response, created by a mix of fear, hope, and dependency.
 - Common Signs:
 - Feeling addicted to the abuser, even after leaving.
 - Making excuses for their behavior or blaming yourself.
 - Confusing abuse with love.
 - Feeling anxious, guilty, or empty when thinking about detaching.

Acknowledge the bond by writing down the truth about the relationship.

- "When I think about my past relationship, what emotions come up first? Do I feel sadness, longing, anger, guilt, or something else?"
 - "What moments made me feel the most attached to them? Were these moments genuine love, or were they moments of temporary relief after pain?"
 - "Have I ever made excuses for their hurtful behavior? What were they, and how do I feel about them now?"
 - "Did I ever believe that I couldn't live without them? Where do I think that belief came from?"
- "What is one painful truth I need to accept about my relationship in order to break free?"
- "If a friend told me they were experiencing what I went through, what would I say to them?"



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Positive Affirmations

Reciting positive affirmations daily is a common method used to “rewire” our brains and subconscious thinking patterns.

Try reciting the below affirmations in the mirror to yourself morning and evening.

- “I am no longer tied to my past.”
- “Love does not hurt. I deserve safety and peace.”
- “I release the illusion of love and embrace real healing.”



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Step 2: Cut Off Reinforcement – Reduce Triggers

Every time you check their social media, reread old messages, or fantasise about “what if”, you’re reinforcing the bond. To break this cycle, block their number, delete old texts, unfollow them, and avoid people or places that trigger memories. Protect your peace.

Without contact, you’re giving yourself the space to focus on your own recovery without manipulation.

This isn’t easy by any means and I’m not underestimating how strong the bond is; a strong mindset and using distraction techniques will get you through this period.

Its often helpful to keep a list of reasons why to hand, any time the urge comes to unblock or make contact, give yourself the “30 minute rule” – put down your phone, use the time to meditate, recite affirmations, go for a walk for 30 minutes. You’ll often find after this time you’ll have regained a sense of self – control and the urge to make contact won’t be as strong.

Remember, this feeling isn’t forever, as long as you maintain no contact each passing day becomes easier as you focus less on what they are doing/feeling and more on finding YOU again.



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Life after blocking

Why do we experience “withdrawal”?

- The trauma bond activated dopamine and cortisol cycles in your brain, making the relationship feel addictive.
- Your mind associates the abuser with relief (even though they caused the pain).
- Your nervous system is adjusting to being free, and it takes time.

Use challenging times to revisit journaling. Visualising your overall goal can help with the withdrawal symptoms often felt when you go no contact.

Ask yourself the questions below:

- “What will my life look like without their influence?”
- “What can I do with the energy I used to spend worrying about them?”
- “What’s one thing I can do today that symbolises my new beginning



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Step 3: Replace the Bond – Reconnect with Yourself

Your brain needs new positive experiences to replace the toxic cycle. Start a daily self-care ritual, find healthy emotional support, and set small personal goals to rebuild self-trust. Healing isn't just about letting go – it's about creating a new life you love.

Rebuilding Self-Trust

One of the biggest losses in a trauma bond is self-trust. Survivors doubt their own judgment and ability to make decisions. To rebuild:

- ✓ Keep small promises to yourself (e.g., journaling for 5 minutes, drinking water, doing something kind for yourself).
- ✓ Make decisions without second-guessing (start with small choices like what to eat or wear, then work up to bigger decisions).
- ✓ Trust your intuition (write about moments when your gut feeling was right, and commit to listening to it more).

Finding new sources of joy.

Instead of seeking validation from an abuser, survivors can find love and fulfillment within themselves and safe connections.

Ways to Reconnect with Yourself:

- ✓ Try new hobbies or revisit old passions.
- ✓ Spend intentional time alone (without numbing distractions).
- ✓ Strengthen healthy relationships (friends, family, support groups).
- ✓ Create self-care rituals (morning routines, affirmations, mindfulness).



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Final Words:

Breaking a trauma bond takes time, but every small step forward is a victory. Be patient with yourself and surround yourself with people who uplift you.

Looking for deeper guidance? My 'RISE' online program gives you the tools to break free for good. Visit my website for more.



www.phoenixrecoverycoach.com