

## Narcissism Free

Recovery From Narcissistic Abuse

### Can Borderline Personality Disorder be Helped?

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*Borderline Personality Disorder* has many of the same characteristics of *Narcissistic Personality* and someone who is Borderline can easily be mistaken for a *narcissist*. But there are differences.

*Borderline Personality* is characterized primarily by a *fear of abandonment* where *narcissistic personality* is characterized by a *fear of engulfment*. This is why Borderlines have a “I hate you don’t leave me” behavioral pattern and narcissists are more likely to just push you away to deal with their fear of letting you in “too close.”

Of course a *fear of intimacy* is present in both disorders. To be intimate with another is to allow him or her into your “inner world” and “see” who you really are. This is terrifying to most people with *Cluster B personality disorders* because instead of feeling “to know me is to love me” they feel “to know me is to hate me or abandon me.”

Many *borderline personalities* know they have an issue. They may have an awareness they are lashing out at the ones closest to them, pushing them away and pulling them back in. They may apologize after an outburst in order to “patch things up” and may even admit to having a problem and promise to get help. The apologies and promises to get help are ploys to avoid the much feared abandonment.

Another thing that is common amongst *borderline personalities* is what is referred to as a very “thin skin.” This means *borderlines are hypersensitive and over-reactive*. They are like *emotional burn victims* who are so emotionally raw that the slightest concern of criticism or disapproval can set a *borderline* into a *rage*. Borderlines have difficulty controlling their emotions and often feel justified in lashing out with inappropriate and often abusive behavior.

The deep underlying insecurity will cause a *borderline* to be engaged in stalking behaviors to prove they are right about a partner having an affair. Often the deep, underlying insecurity will bring about the result they fear most....abandonment. If you find out the one you love is having you followed, hiring private detectives, hacking into your emails and phone records and other invasions of privacy coupled with wrongful accusations and threats, you are likely to throw in the towel at some point, sooner rather than later. If you are a relatively healthy individual why would you tolerate this kind of behavior?

In divorce a *borderline personality* can be ruthless, engaging in wrongful accusations, *pathological lying*, long custody battles and cruel attempts to destroy the former beloved. There is an underlying feeling “if I can’t have you/control you then nobody else can” or “I will destroy you as punishment for abandoning me.”

A *borderline* will often perceive any kind of boundary in the relationship as abandonment and will feel abandoned even if they leave the relationship first or have an affair. There is a double standard “it is okay for me to mess around and have an affair but if you do there will be hell to pay.”

A *borderline* will often have an affair or series of affairs not only to punish the “other” for a perceived slight, but as a backup in case the other leaves. This is ironic as the affairs are often what cause the “other” to leave.



Like a *narcissist*, a *borderline* is not accountable, will blame, lie, cheat and be cruel and vindictive towards those they are supposed to love. They can be the most charismatic and loving personalities until any perceived slight sends them in the opposite direction and the once valued and loved partner becomes the hated and the accused. It really has nothing to do with the significant other but rather the *borderline's* inability to deal with her own fears and insecurities.

If someone who is in love with a *borderline* confronts her on her toxic behavior there will be hell to pay. She cannot accept any feedback that doesn't paint her in a completely flattering light. Once again this originates from a feeling "if I am flawed in any way I will not be loved and I will be abandoned, therefore I paint myself in a perfect light and find fault with those who dare confront any bad behavior in me."

*Can a borderline personality be helped?* Well actually the likelihood of a *borderline personality* getting better is much higher than the likelihood of a *narcissist* getting better. Why? Because *borderline's defense structure* will more easily crumble and expose the wounded, fragile childlike individual who is desperate for love, attention, affection and acceptance. In these moments of truth, a *borderline* may be able to admit to herself and to others she has a problem and be willing to sign up for *long term therapy* or a program designed to help these kinds of personalities with new coping skills.

Therapists will often avoid working with *borderlines* because they can be very difficult clients. The therapeutic relationship, in order to be successful, must involve a close interpersonal relationship which brings all the *borderline defenses* out into the open. There will likely be hostility, demands, missed appointments, entitled behavior, accusations, undermining of the therapist and other behaviors that make the therapeutic relationship very unpleasant for the therapist. Therapy is often ended prematurely by either the *borderline*, who may hop from one therapist to the other when she gets too close to her defenses, or the therapist may choose to discontinue therapy due to missed appointments and abusive behavior towards the therapist. Of course this causes the *borderline* to feel abandoned by her therapist. It is a double edged sword.

If a *borderline* is not receiving unconditional praise and acceptance in the therapeutic relationship and is confronted on any issue, including missed appointments or lack of timely payment for her sessions, the *borderline* may become abusive or project the issue onto the therapist accusing her of lacking understanding, being unfair, hostile or uncaring. Although a good therapist can approach these issues with the *borderline*, the *borderline* is still in control and can end her therapy at any time. Therefore in order for a *borderline personality* to heal she must be committed to her therapy even if it is uncomfortable. She must learn how to voice her fears of being unloved, uncared for, or whatever else is causing her to want to escape from therapy. Abandoning before one is abandoned is a common coping mechanism for a *borderline*.

Although I don't specialize in working with *borderline personalities*, a *borderline* might come to me as a result of *suffering narcissistic abuse*, which is my specialty. It is typical a *borderline personality* and a *narcissistic personality* will be attracted to each other.

There are many different levels of *borderline personality*. There is *mild borderline* all the way to *full-blown borderline*. Many of my clients may have *mild borderline personality* which is characterized by a strong *fear of abandonment*, high levels of *emotional sensitivity* and a pattern of unhappy relationships.

In my experience people with *mild borderline personality* can be pleasant and easy to work with, are willing to look at their own fears and insecurities and explore their emotional realm. These people can improve quite rapidly, over a period of months rather than years. I have had a couple *full-blown borderlines* come to me and the experience has not been pleasant at all. In these cases the therapeutic relationship ended by the *borderline* devaluing me as a counselor and disappearing. There was extreme resistance to self assessment, hyper sensitivity to therapeutic insight and also a need to be "right" about everything.

Dr. Elaine Aron, the author of "*The Highly Sensitive Person*" says "don't worry we are all *borderline* just a little

bit.” So all of you who are reading this who are thinking “I wonder if I am a borderline,” you may have some characteristics but if you are not a *full-blown borderline personality*, or just a *highly sensitive person*, which is not a disorder, you will not have the same issues as a *full-blown borderline*, who are often considered quite impossible to work with or have a relationship with.

*Full-blown borderlines*, who are committed to their treatment will often need two to ten years of consistent therapy in order to heal the disorder, but there are many accounts of diagnosed borderlines who have healed their disorder and gone on to have healthy, happy lives and relationships. This is evidence *borderline personality disorder can be healed*. However; if you are someone who loves a borderline and feel it is your duty to *get the borderline into therapy* so that you can have a happy relationship with him or her, forget about it. Most borderlines who have a successful path to healing embark upon this path of their own desire for healing and transformation. Many of these borderlines don't have serious relationships while in treatment. Those relationships are considered a distraction to the healing process.

If you are worried about *leaving a borderline*, especially understanding his or her *fear of abandonment*, it is important to understand that sometimes *leaving a borderline* is what inspires them to seek treatment; not necessarily out of an attempt to get you back, but because he or she is tired of suffering.

*Borderlines* do suffer and quite a lot. They are often suicidal as a result of immense suffering. Where it often seems a *narcissist* doesn't suffer at all, the *borderline* lives a tragic and painful existence. Ironically this is what leads such a person to treatment; in attempt to end the suffering. So even though the life of a *borderline personality* seems so much more tragic than the *narcissist*, the *borderline* stands a much better chance of getting healthier and going on to live a happy and fulfilling life.



*Kaleah is a non-traditional healer, holistic counselor, spiritual guide and clinical hypnotherapist specializing in assisting others through the dark night of the soul, [healing and recovery from narcissistic abuse](#) and other types of abuse. She has written many [books on the topic of narcissistic abuse](#) and [healing from the dark night of the soul](#).*

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