

Why Women Stay

People who stay in violent relationships undergo gradual steps of reasoning to reconcile the violence in their minds. The reasons a victim stays may change as the violence in the relationship progresses.

AT FIRST, he/she stays because:

- he/she loves him/her
- he/she believes she/he will grow up or change
- he/she believes he/she can control the beatings by doing as he/she says; cleaning the house, keeping the children quiet, having dinner on time, etc.
- he/she believes that he/she can convince him/her that he/she loves him/her (and end his/her jealousy)
- he/she believes it is his/her duty to make the relationship work
- he/she believes he/she can reason with him/her
- he/she believes him/her when he/she says that he/she is sorry and won't do it again
- he/she's embarrassed for him/her and/or himself/herself, so he/she seldom seeks help
- he/she's afraid of what will happen if the police get involved

5 Things to Say
to a Victim Reluctant to
Leave a Violent Situation
(or who is returning to one)

**I am afraid for your
safety**

**I am afraid for the safety
of your children**

It will only get worse

**I am here for you when
you are ready to leave**

**You deserve better than
this**

LATER, a victims stays because:

- he/she loves him, but less
- he/she hopes he/she will change or get help
- he/she is under pressure from family or friends to stay
- he/she believes he/she loves and needs him/her
- he/she is afraid to be alone
- he/she believes he/she can't support him/herself
- he/she believes his/her promises that he/she will change and that they'll start living the life he/she dreams of, that he/she will get counseling, that he'll stop abusing drugs or alcohol, etc.
- he/she is confused
- he/she is increasingly afraid of his/her partner's violence and may see lethality in his/her out of control behaviors

FINALLY, he/she stays because:

- fear: he/she has become tremendously powerful in his/her eyes
- he/she threatens to kill him/her or the children or his/her family
- he/she has developed low self-esteem
- he/she believes no one can love her/him
- he/she believes he/she can't survive alone
- he/she is very confused and feels guilty: "he/she cares, he/she beats me, I must be bad, I must deserve this, I

don't know why"

- he/she becomes depressed and immobile. Decisions are difficult, sometimes even impossible for him/her to make.
- he/she believes he/she has no control over his/her life
- he/she feels hopeless and helpless
- he/she believes he/she has no other options
- he/she has developed serious emotional or physical problems
- he/she becomes suicidal and homicidal