

# WHY THEY STAY

## THE BARRIERS TO LEAVING

On average, an individual in an abusive relationship will leave their partner 6-8 times. This fact appears confusing to those outside the relationship, which allows for others to question: "Why don't they just leave?" Reasons for this occurrence vary.

### Situational Factors

- **Economic dependence**
- **Fear** of greater physical danger to themselves or children involved
- **Fear** of being hunted down and suffering a worse beating than before
- **Survival.** Fear that their partner will kill them
- **Fear** of emotional damage to the children
- **Fear** of losing custody of the children
- **Lack** of alternative shelter
- **Lack** of job skills
- **Social isolation** resulting in lack of support from family and friends
- **Social isolation** resulting in lack of information about alternatives
- **Lack of understanding** from family, friends, police, etc.
- **Negative responses** from community, courts, police, etc.
- **Fear** of involvement in the court process
- **Fear** of the unknown
- **Fear** and ambivalence over making formidable life changes
- **"Acceptable violence."** Since the violence slowly escalates, they may be unable to recognize the pattern of abuse
- **Ties to the community.** For some individuals, leaving completely cuts them off from their old lives
- **Ties** to their home and belongings
- **Family pressure.** Being told "I told you so"
- **Time** needed to plan and prepare to leave
- **Unable to use resources** because of how they may be provided (language barriers, disability, homophobia, etc.)

So while it may appear an easy task looking from the outside, there are many reasons that an individual may feel their only option is to stay with an abusive partner.

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