

## Why Doesn't She Just Leave?

Because he'll stop the abuse after they **marry** ☆ Because he'll stop the abuse after they buy a **house** ☆ Because he'll stop the abuse after they have a **baby** ☆ Because she had to **quit work** to take care of the baby ☆ Because the kids are now in **school** ☆ Because the kids need a **father** ☆ Because she has no **money** of her own ☆ Because she's lost her marketable **job skills** ☆ Because he said he'll **take the kids** ☆ Because she's **afraid** of him ☆ Because she knows he'll **kill** her ☆ Because **society doesn't make him stop**

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

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

**FINALLY, she stays because:** Fear: he has become tremendously **powerful** in her eyes ☆ He **threatens** to kill her or the children or her family ☆ She has developed **low self-esteem** ☆ She believes **no one can love her** ☆ She believes she **can't survive alone** ☆ She is very **confused** and feels guilty: "he cares, he beats me, I must be bad, I must deserve this, I don't know why" ☆ She becomes **depressed** and immobile ☆ **Decisions** are difficult, sometimes even impossible for her to make ☆ She believes she has **no control** over her life she feels hopeless and helpless ☆ She believes she has **no other options** ☆ She has developed serious **emotional or physical problems**

**Other Reasons:** She does not know her **legal rights** ☆ The risk of being **killed** when leaving ☆ **Fear** that protection orders and the criminal justice system will not protect her ☆ **Lack of economic resources** with which to support herself and her children ☆ The desire to keep her **children** with their father ☆ Being told by **family or friends** that the abuse would stop if she changed ☆ **Suicide threats** from

the perpetrator ☆ **Threats** of violence to others by the perpetrator ☆ **Dependence** on the perpetrator for health care ☆ Lack of affordable **housing** ☆ Lack of affordable **legal assistance** necessary to obtain a divorce, custody/visitation plan, or protection order ☆ Lack of faith in **systems** designed to help victims ☆ Inability to speak **English** fluently ☆ **Lack of access to resources** due to physical isolation ☆ **Religious pressure** to keep the family together no matter what ☆ **Duty** "I swore to stay married till death do us part" ☆ **Responsibility** it is up to her to work things out and save the relationship ☆ **Identity** women are raised to feel they need a partner ~ even an abusive one ~ in order to be complete or accepted by society ☆ **Belief** that marriage is forever ☆ **Belief** that violence is the way all partners relate (sometimes this woman has come from a violent childhood) ☆ **Religious and cultural beliefs** ☆ **Denial** "It's really not that bad. Other people have it worse." ☆ **Guilt** She believes ~ and her partner and the other significant others are quick to agree ~ that their problems are her fault ☆ **Shame and humiliation** in front of the community ~ "I don't want anyone else to know." ☆ **Lack** of emotional support ~ she feels like she's doing this on her own, and it's just too much ☆ **Simple exhaustion** She's just too tired and worn out from the abuse to leave ☆ **Fear** of losing custody of the children, often based on her partner's remarks ☆ **Social isolation** resulting in lack of information about her alternatives ☆ **Fear** of involvement in the court process; she may have had bad experiences before ☆ **Fear** of the unknown ~ Better the devil you know than the devil you don't ☆ The **children** would have to leave their school, she would have to leave all her friends and neighbors behind ☆ For some would be like being in the Witness Protection program ~ she could never have any **contact with her old life** ☆ **Ties** to her home and belongings ☆ She believes him to be all-powerful and able to **find her anywhere**. Many times he has proven this to her by stalking her and tracking her down, making her return home. ☆ Abusive partners who are arrested are usually released in a matter of hours (on bond), and may take **revenge** on the woman reporting ☆ If the neighbors report, the **abuser may still take it out on her** ~ often when the police come she will not admit to being assaulted ☆ Because she has a **criminal** background ☆ She doesn't know she has the **right** not to be beaten ☆ Some women are afraid that if they report the crime the husband might lose his job, which is the family's only source of **income** ☆ Some believe that outsiders should not be involved in the **affairs of a family** ☆ Some women are afraid of some kind of **retaliation** by the extended family, if they break up with him or report him to the authorities. ☆ Many women do not want any **change** in the relationship except not to be abused ☆ She is **deaf** ☆ She is in a **wheelchair** ☆ She doesn't have **papers to be in this county** ☆ She is afraid of the **unknown** ☆ She is **mentally impaired** and therefore not believed ☆ She is **blind** ☆ He's her solitary **care giver** ☆ Because he is a **public figure** ☆ Because she's a **public figure** ☆ She **can't read**

*The real question we should be asking is: WHY DOESN'T HE JUST STOP ABUSING HER?*