



50 Reasons for Not Leaving

One of the most common questions asked in any discussion about victims/survivors of domestic violence is “Why doesn’t she just leave?” While we understand the emotion underlying this question, Circle believes this line of questioning places the blame and focus on the woman who is surviving the abuse and violence. While we do not want to ignore all the factors that make it difficult for a woman to leave any abusive relationship, we hope society begins to ask this question more often: “Why does he do that?” We believe in direct responsibility and accountability focused on the batterer, on the abuser, on the person who is exhibiting behaviors and beliefs that give empower and enable them to degrade, denigrate, abuse, and assault their intimate partners.

Nevertheless, we do recognize all the challenges women face in making the decision to leave an abusive relationship. Here is a list of many of them.

1. Fear.
2. Children.
3. Lack of money.
4. She loves her partner.
5. Her partner “loves” her.
6. The children love them both.
7. Police blame her.
8. Clergy blame her.
9. Relatives blame her.
10. She blames herself.
11. Therapists blame her.
12. Her batterer blames her.
13. She’s an alcohol or drug addict.
14. Her partner is her pimp.
15. Her father abused her.
16. Her mother abused her.
17. Her partner is an alcoholic.
18. Her partner is a drug addict.
19. Her partner says, “I’m sorry.”
20. Her partner says, “I love you.”
21. Her partner says, “I’ll never do it again”
22. Her partner says, “I’ll take the children”
23. Her partner says, “I’ll kill you if you leave.”
24. Her partner says, “I’ll kill myself if you leave”
25. She’s afraid of losing custody of her children.
26. She’s deaf.
27. She’s blind.
28. She’s mentally impaired.
29. She can’t read.
30. She’s in a wheelchair.
31. She can’t speak English.
32. She doesn’t have papers to be in this country.
33. The shelters are full.
34. She’ll become homeless.
35. No one believes she is being abused.
36. She doesn’t think she is being abused.
37. She knows the welfare system will abuse her more.
38. She’s isolated.
39. She’s depressed.
40. It’s not the right time.
41. She’s never told anyone.
42. She’s afraid of the unknown.
43. She’s a public figure.
44. Her partner is a public figure.
45. Her partner threatens to abuse the pets.
46. Her partner is her personal care attendant.
47. Her partner threatens to expose her as a lesbian.
48. She feels that there is no help.

Other Considerations

Alternative housing and other economic support may not be available or sufficient because of state and national budgets and the availability of assistance. Employers can sometimes respond unsupportively and she may lose her job because of his harassment at her workplace. Clergy may be trained to see the ultimate goal as saving a marriage and, thus, support the coercive control by the husband.

Some women believe they are solely responsible for making their marriage work. Some women believe protection orders won't protect them. Some women do not believe divorce or separation is an alternative. Many women believe that even a violent father **is** better than no father for their children. Many women rationalize their abuser's behavior by blaming stress, drugs, alcohol or work. And many women believe if only they did and said the right things that it will get better. Some believe they can "change" him.

Certainly, no one enjoys or deserves abuse. A person's barriers to leaving an abusive relationship are many and varied. And yet, most women choose to stay in abusive relationships. Circle supports victims and survivors regardless of their decision to stay or leave. Our goal is to help empower and enable people to make independent, safe, and healthy decisions for themselves. For instance, we can help women obtain "no abuse" orders even though they remain at home in the relationship with their abuser.

Call Circle toll-free at 1-877-543-9498.