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Is It Love or a trauma bond?

A Self-Reflection Guide to Help You Get Clear

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Why this guide matters

You're not imagining it. Some relationships do feel like both home and harm. That's the confusing nature of trauma bonds.

This guide is here to help you:

- Pause and reconnect to your body's wisdom
- Clarify the subtle signs of self-abandonment
- Reflect on whether this relationship supports your healing
- Make decisions with compassion—not confusion

Take this at your own pace. Breathe between sections. You're not doing it wrong. You're doing something brave.

DISCLAIMER: This resource is for informational and educational purposes only and is not a substitute for individual medical or mental health advice.

Quick-Check: Is This a Trauma Bond?

Check any statements that feel familiar:

- I feel intense chemistry, but I'm often walking on eggshells. Yes / No
- I make excuses for their harmful behavior. Yes / No
- I feel anxious and preoccupied in this relationship, even if I feel peace at times. Yes / No
- I used to feel grounded, but I've lost touch with my routines, friends, or creative outlets. Yes / No
- When I set boundaries, they're ignored or punished. Yes / No
- When I express my needs, they're subtly or overtly dismissed. Yes / No
- I keep hoping they'll go back to the person they were at the beginning. Yes / No
- I feel confused. A lot. Yes / No

The Body Knows

Prompt:

Close your eyes. Place a hand on your chest or belly.

Bring this relationship to mind. Ask yourself:

- What parts of me feel soothed by this connection?
- What parts feel anxious, tight, or abandoned?
- When I imagine setting a boundary, what does my body do?

Write freely. Don't overthink. Let the truth rise gently.

Self-Abandonment Inventory

Since getting close to this person, have I...

- Stopped doing something that used to make me feel like me? Yes / No
- Lost touch with friendships or community? Yes / No
- Started doubting my own perceptions or needs? Yes / No
- Made myself smaller to avoid conflict? Yes / No
- Said “yes” when I meant “no”? Yes / No
- Tried to earn love by over-giving, fixing, or explaining? Yes / No

These are not signs of weakness. They’re signs of a nervous system trying to stay safe.

The Healing Maps

If you want to stay:

- Both people must be willing to:
 - Take accountability
 - Create emotional safety
 - Get support
 - Change behavior, not just words

If you need to go:

- That doesn't mean you're giving up.
- It means you're choosing clarity, care, and peace.
- You are allowed to leave what confuses your body and silences your truth.

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Integration Practice

Softening Session: Regulate & Reconnect

- Sit quietly for a few minutes.
- Imagine your wise adult self sitting beside your younger self.
- Place a hand on your heart and say:
- “You don’t have to earn love by suffering. I see you. I’ve got you now.”

Breathe. Notice what shifts.