

Myths and Realities of Domestic Batterers

Bancroft, Lundy.2002.*Why Does He Do That: Inside the minds of Angry and Controlling Men*,Putnam's Sons.New York

10 Realities of Abuser Characteristics

REALITY # 1: He is controlling

- ✓ He expects his word to be the last word; does not accept defiance
- ✓ He believes it is his right to control his partner's actions

REALITY # 2: He feels entitled

- ✓ Entitlement is the abuser's belief that he has a special status and that it provides him with exclusive rights and privileges that do not apply to his partner

REALITY # 3: He twists things into their opposites

- ✓ The abuser's highly entitled perceptual system causes him to mentally reverse aggression and self-defense

REALITY # 4: He disrespects his partner and considers himself superior

- ✓ Objectification is a critical reason why an abuser tends to get worse over time. As his conscience adapts to one level of cruelty-or violence-he builds to the next
- ✓ By depersonalizing his partner, the abuser protects himself from the natural human emotions of guilt and empathy, so that he can sleep at night with a clear conscience

REALITY # 5: He confuses love and abuse

- ✓ An abusive man often tries to convince his partner that his mistreatment of her is proof of how deeply he cares, but the reality is that abuse is opposite of love
- ✓ An abusive man may feel a powerful desire to receive his partner's love and caretaking, but only when it is convenient for him

REALITY # 6: He is manipulative

- ✓ Few abusive men rely entirely on verbal abuse or intimidation to control their partner for fear that they may look bad...the abuser tends to switch frequently to manipulating his partner to get what he wants

REALITY # 7: He strives to have a good public image

- ✓ Most abusive men put on a charming face for their communication, creating a sharp split between their public image and their private treatment of women and children
- ✓ enraged at home but calm and smiling outside
- ✓ selfish and self-centered with their partner but generous and supportive of others
- ✓ domineering at home but willing to negotiate and compromise outside
- ✓ highly negative about females while on his own turf but a vocal supporter of equality when someone else is listening
- ✓ assaultive toward his partner or children but non-violent
- ✓ entitled at home but critical of other men who disrespect or assault women

REALITY # 8: He feels justified

- ✓ Abusers externalize responsibilities for their actions, believing that their partners make them behave in abusive ways
 - "she knows how to push my buttons"
 - "she wanted me to go off, and she knows how to make it happen"
 - "she pushed me too far"

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- “there is only so much a man can take”
- “do you expect me to just let her walk all over me. What would you do?”

REALITY # 9: Abusers deny and minimize their abuse

- ✓ If a man is abusive, of course he is going to deny it, partly to protect himself and partly because his perceptions are distorted
- ✓ If he were ready to accept responsibility for his actions in his relationship, he wouldn't be abusive

REALITY # 10: Abusers are possessive

- ✓ The sense of ownership is one reason why abuse tends to get worse as relationships get more serious
- ✓ Possessiveness is at the core of the abuser's mindset, the spring from which all other streams spout; on some level he feels that he owns his partner and therefore has the right to treat her as he sees fit