



**4X4**

By Bon Dobbs

**Two sets of four rules that make relationships with Borderlines  
easier for the Non-BP**

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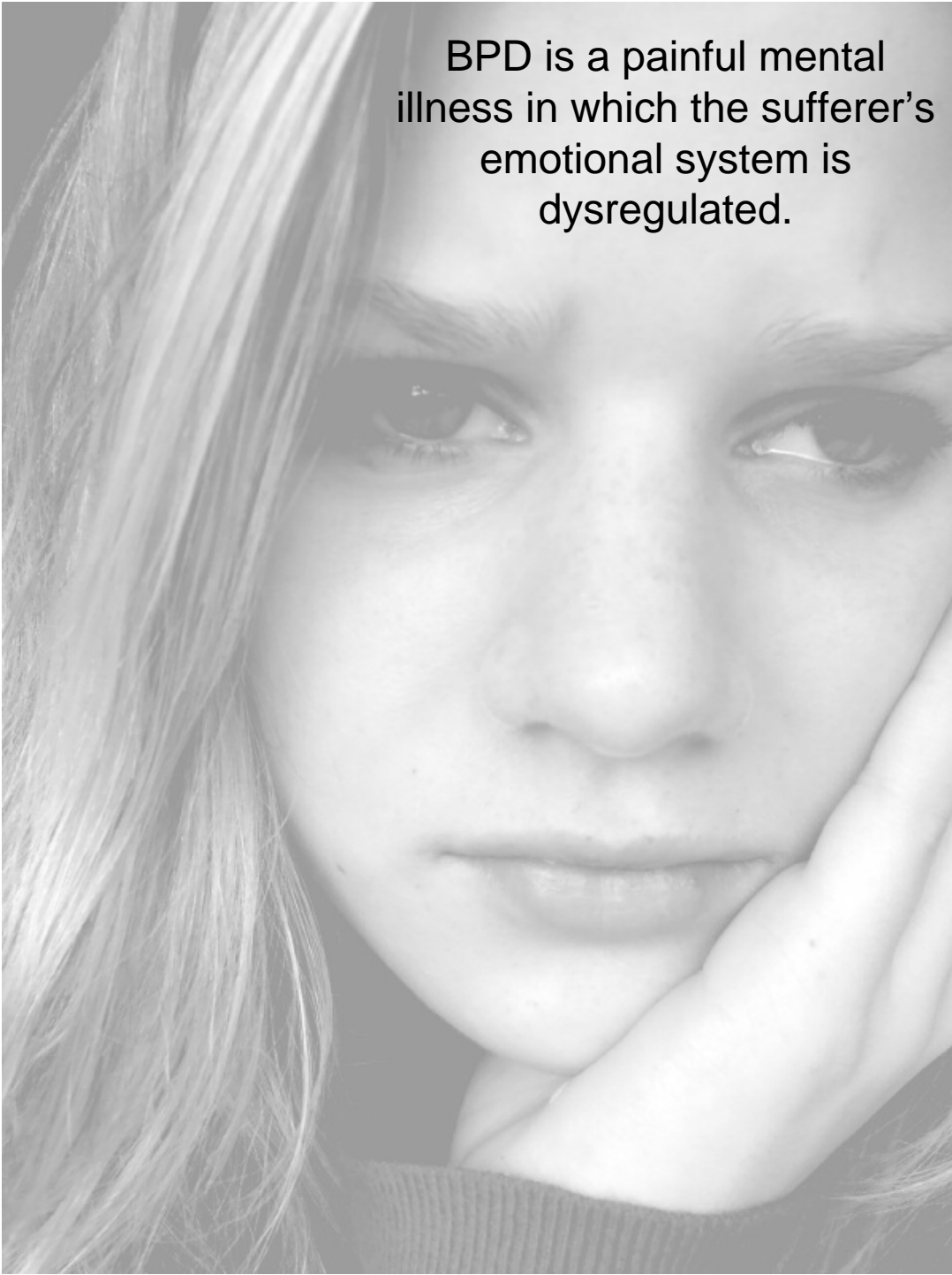
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Feel free to redistribute this eBook to whomever you think might need a copy. Hey, all Non-BP's need help and support, you know?

Thanks!

Bon



BPD is a painful mental illness in which the sufferer's emotional system is dysregulated.

**Borderline Personality Disorder (BPD)** is a serious mental illness of dysregulation, dyscontrol and impulsivity.

People with BPD are highly emotionally sensitive.

People with BPD react strongly to negative emotional cues.

People with BPD take longer to recover from emotional states than others.

When a person with BPD is in a highly emotional state, they are said to be “**emotionally dysregulated**”.

In the support community, loved ones of people with BPD are known as **Non-BP's or Nons**.

If you are the parent, partner, child or friend of someone with BPD, you are considered a Non-BP.

BPD occurs in an estimated 2% of the U.S. population, or about 6 million people. 75% of diagnosed cases are women

People with BPD are **400 times more likely to commit suicide than the general population** – about 8-9% of people with BPD commit suicide.

BPD can be extremely stressful on close interpersonal relationships, especially family, partners and friends.



Dysregulation is the opposite of regulation. It means that a person with BPD has poor control over something.



According to Dr. Marsha Linehan, who invented Dialectical Behavior Therapy (DBT) to treat BPD, the dysregulation occurs in five areas:

**Emotions**

**Behavior**

**Relationships**

**Self-Image**

**Cognition**

People with BPD can feel that they are awash with negative emotions, drowning in a sea of sadness, anger, desperation and shame.



# Emotions

A person with BPD's inner world is constantly shifting. They are like a cork on the surface of the ocean, at the mercy of their ever-changing emotional states.

Unlike moods, emotions are immediate and fast-acting. They rarely last more than a few hours. However, emotions can be intense and trigger other emotions.

It takes much less stimuli to trigger an emotional response in someone with BPD, and the response is likely to be much stronger than in others.



# Behavior

To cope with the intense emotional pain going on inside them people with BPD often engage in impulsive, self-destructive behaviors. The purpose of these behaviors is to squelch the emotional pain.

**Eating Disorders**

**Lying**

**Self-harm**

**Fights**

**Suicide Threats**

**Substance Abuse**

**Dangerous Driving**

**Burning Bridges**

**Unsafe Sex**

**Shoplifting**



Many people with BPD abuse drugs and/or alcohol. Some estimates say about 60% of people with BPD have substance abuse issues.



# Relationships

People with BPD place much value on their relationships.

**Fear of rejection or abandonment** can lead to intense panic on the part of the BP.

People with BPD can have an intense fear of abandonment. They may have a love/hate relationship with those around them.

**Rejection Sensitivity**

**Unstable Relationships**

**Love/Hate**

**Need for Reassurance**

**Lack of Intimacy**

**Fear of Judgment**

**Lack of Trust**

**Weak Boundaries**

**Idealizing Others**



# Cognition

Cognitive Distortions  
are common among  
people with BPD.

People with BPD can have distorted thinking, especially when under stress or when they are emotionally dysregulated.

**Black-and-White Thinking**

**Devaluation**

**Jealousy**

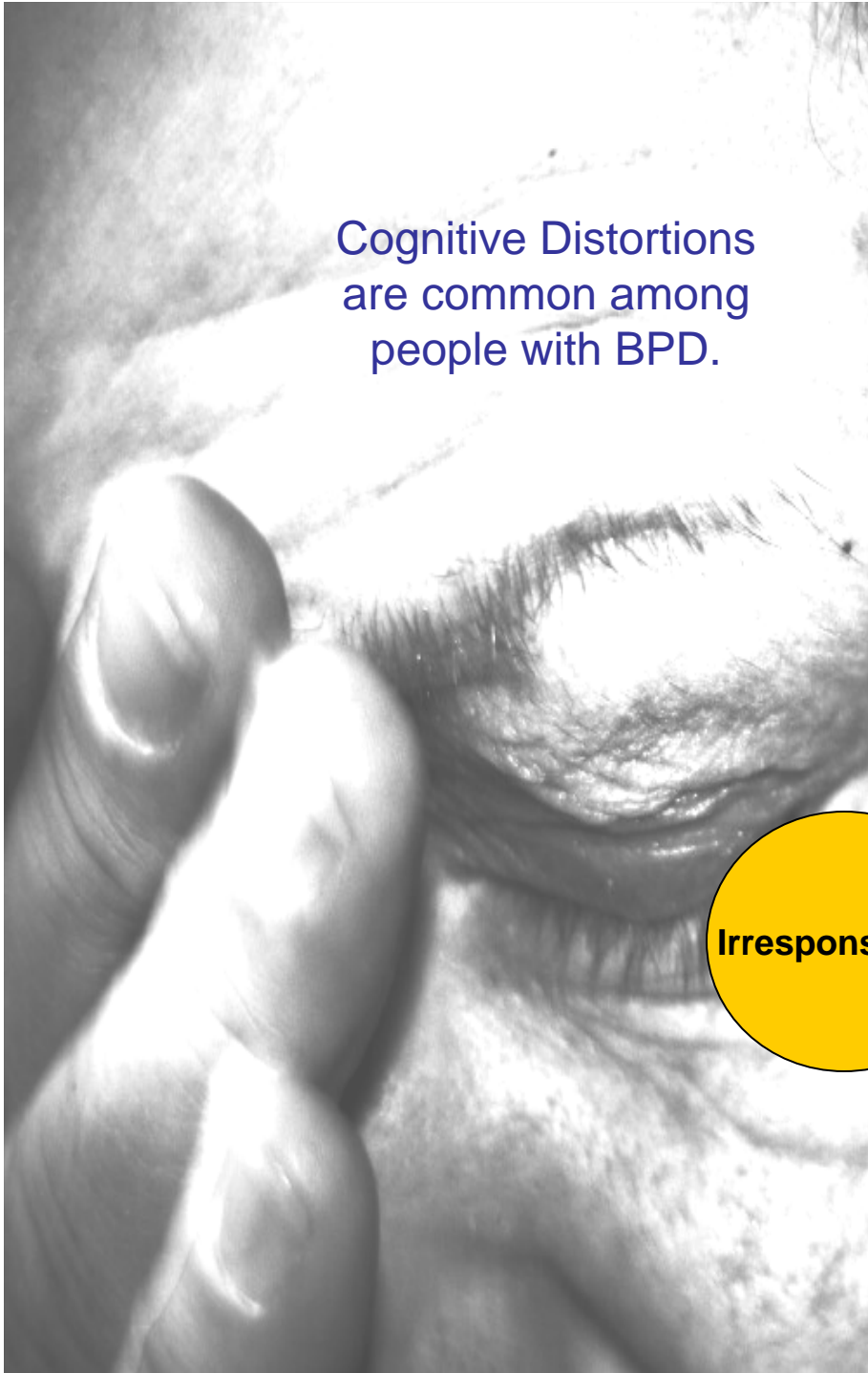
**Irresponsibility**

**Negativity**

**Perceived Threats**

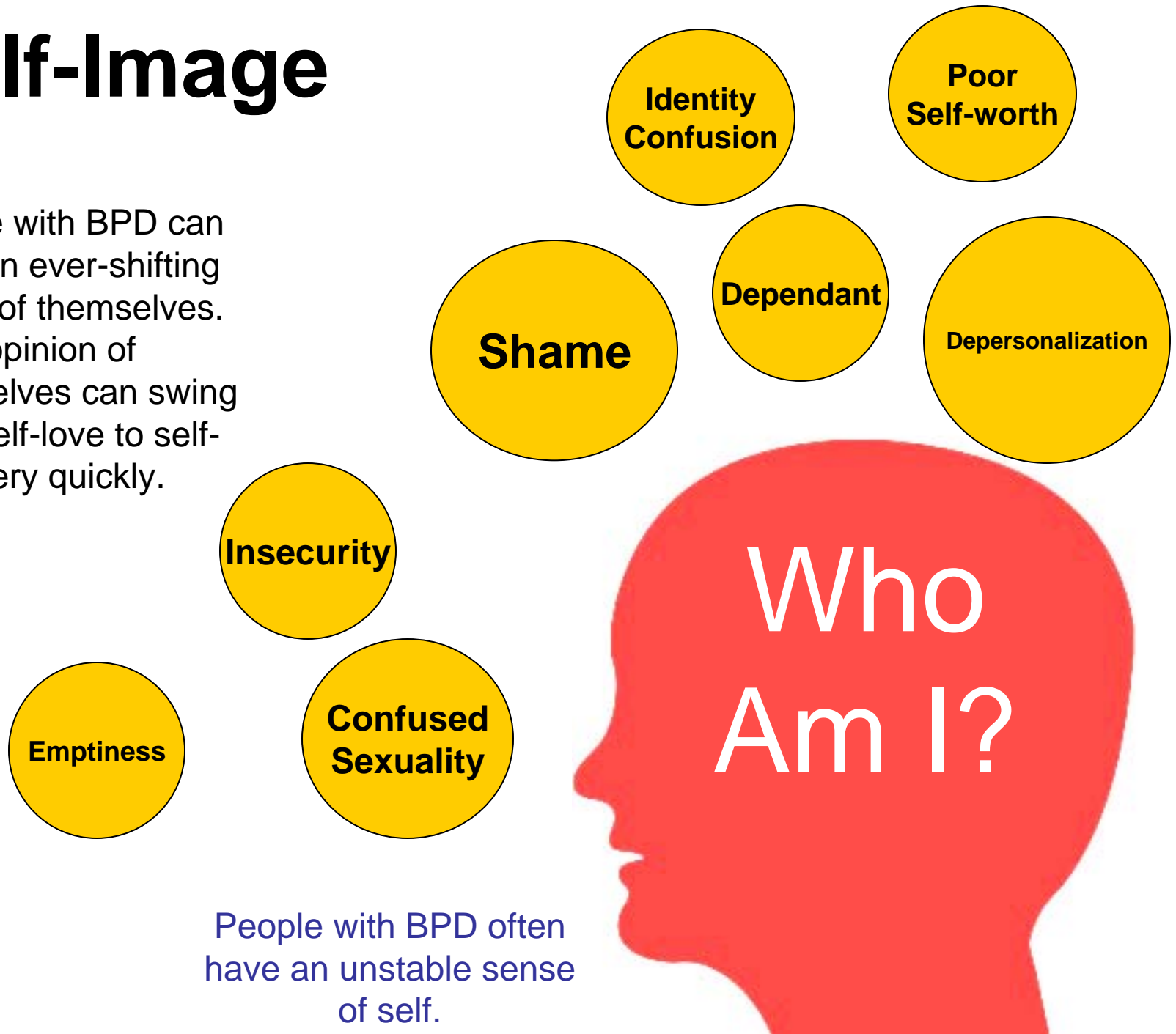
**Feelings Are Facts**

**Paranoia**



# Self-Image

People with BPD can have an ever-shifting sense of themselves. Their opinion of themselves can swing from self-love to self-hate very quickly.



People with BPD often have an unstable sense of self.

### **The BP**

In pain  
Emotional  
Filled with Fear  
Angry  
Acting out  
Self-destructive  
Suicidal

Having to endure crazy behaviors, threats, lack of intimacy, manipulation attempts, lying and a host of other behaviors, creates a gulf in the mind the Non-BP.

### **The Non-BP**

Confused  
Angry  
Numb  
Tired  
Secretive  
Isolated  
Fed-up

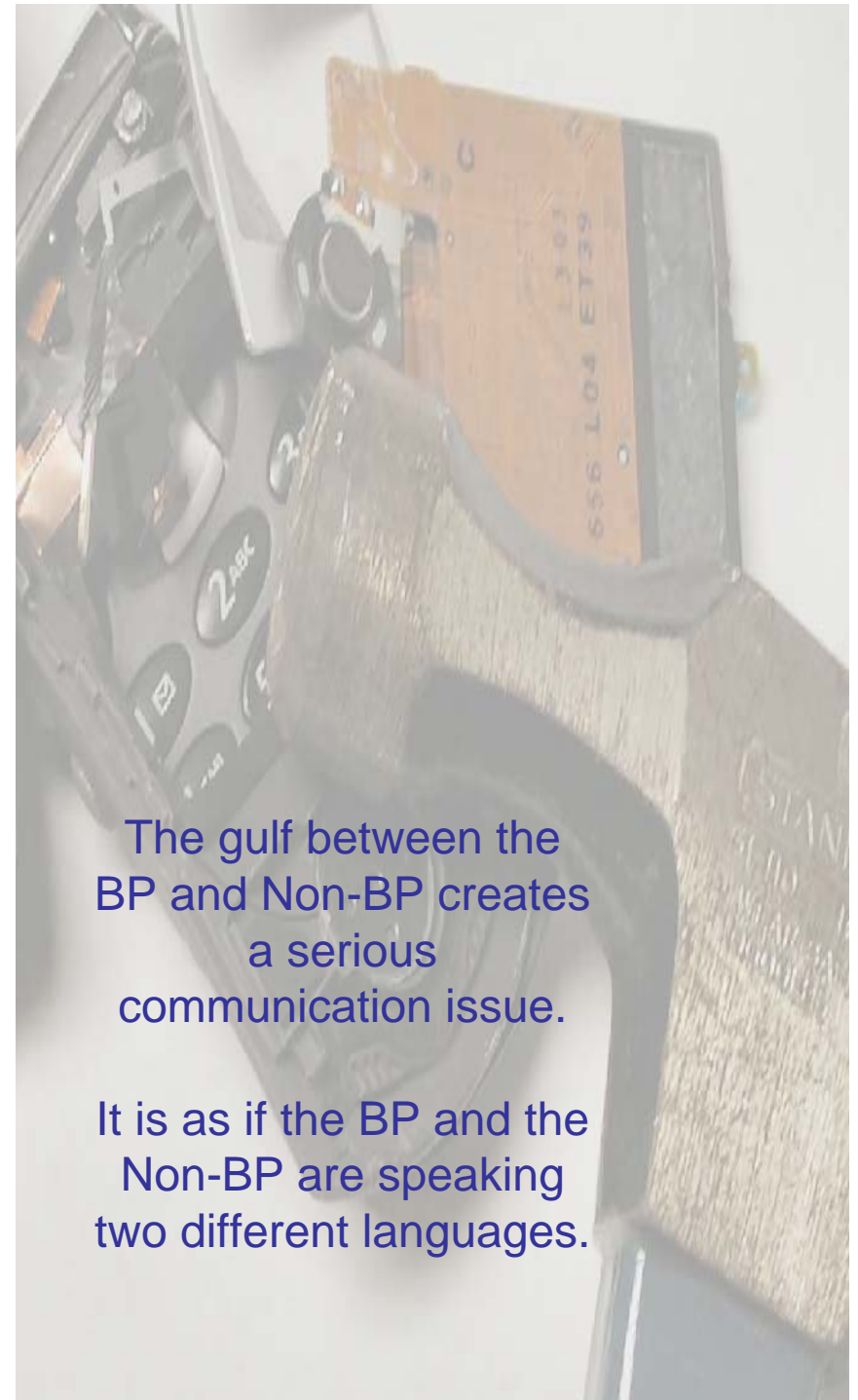


# There is hope!

Although a BP/Non-BP relationship sometimes seems impossible, it can be managed. As a Non-BP, there are things that you can do and skills that you can learn that will help build the lines of communication back up.

**You can't change other people.** You can only change yourself. If you want to remain in the relationship, something new has to be tried. If you keep doing the same old things, you'll get the same old results.

The following pages are my “4 rules” for Non-BP's. There are 2 sets of 4 rules. The first are for dealing with the relationship. The second are for yourself.




The gulf between the BP and Non-BP creates a serious communication issue.

It is as if the BP and the Non-BP are speaking two different languages.

# Relationship

## RULE #1:

As difficult as it is to believe sometimes, the behaviors of the BP typically have just one purpose: to stop their own emotional pain. Even when a BP rages at you, calls you names, blames all their troubles on you, they are usually just trying to stop their own emotional pain. THAT is what all this crazy, maladaptive behavior is about. It is about their feelings and trying to feel better.



It's not  
about you.

This rule is also known as "IAAHF" or "It's all about his/her feelings."



# Relationship

## RULE #2:

One of the reasons that BPD involves so much shame is that the BP feels that their feelings aren't validated. They are the way they are (emotionally sensitive). They can't help the feelings that arise. When someone invalidates their feelings, they feel invalidated **themselves**. They haven't done something wrong. They ARE wrong and a broken, bad person.



Learn to  
validate Feelings  
(it takes practice)

Validation is for emotions. While behaviors can be validated, they should be only with respect to the emotions that drive them.

# Relationship

## RULE #3:

Being non-judgmental can be extremely difficult. We are all taught to be judgmental in life. However, when talking to someone with BPD, it's most effective to be non-judgmental, especially about their emotions.

As for your emotions, you can be non-judgmental with those too. You can say, "Your driving makes me scared" instead of "You're driving too fast, you maniac!"



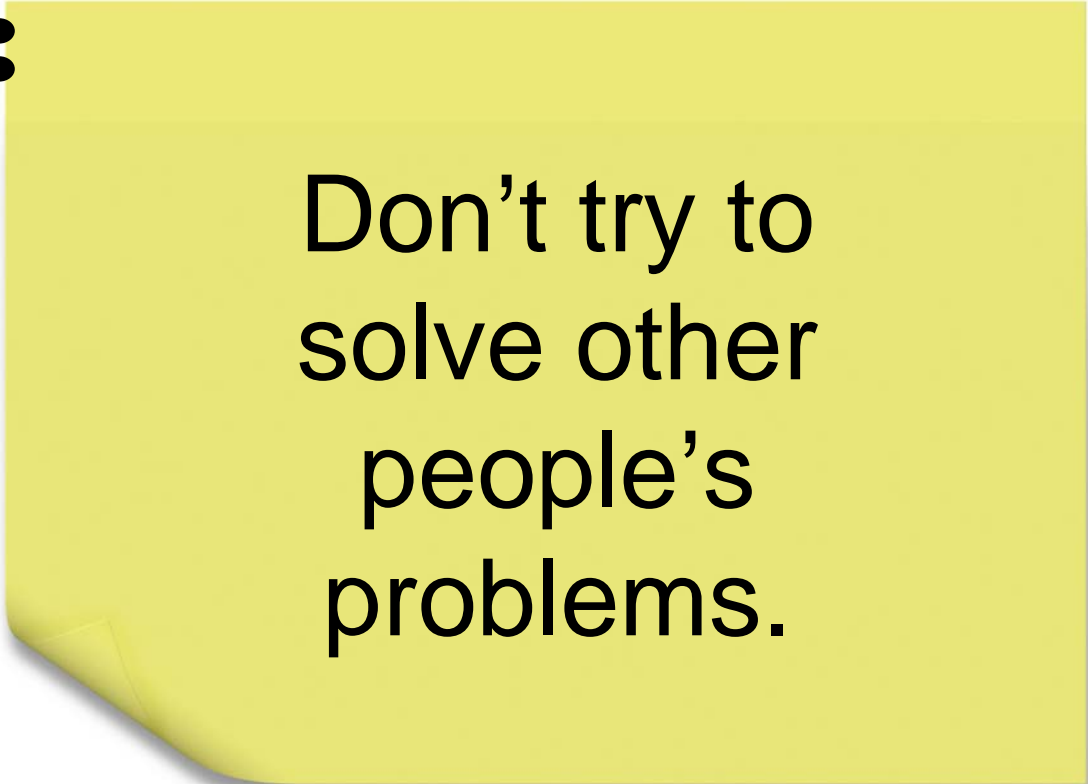
Learn to be  
non-judgmental

People with BPD are very sensitive to judgment. They can interpret judgment of their behaviors as judgment of themselves.

# Relationship

## RULE #4:

This rule is a tough one. As a loved one, you might think that it is your job to give advice and solve the BP's problems. But it's not. It is more effective to validate the BP's emotions and ask **them** to come up with a solution. If you give advice or tell them what they "should" do, they are likely to get angry at you.



Don't try to  
solve other  
people's  
problems.

People with BPD know best how to solve their own problems. When they come up with solutions, you can help direct them to the most effective solution, but not tell them what to do.

# Self

## RULE #1:

People with BPD are in pain. Whether they are naturally emotional or whether they have been abused or neglected in their life (or both), they are sensitive to and react strongly to threats and attacks. Even if the BP is attacking you, you shouldn't defend and strike back at them. The problem is their emotional state. If they can get out of the emotional state, they will no longer attack.



Do no harm.

Relationships can be greatly damaged when a person intentionally tries to harm the other person. Attacking back just perpetuates the emotions.

# Self

## RULE #2:

Sometimes Non-BP's begin to develop a fear of the BP's reaction to the Non-BP's feelings. It is most effective to be brave and say how you feel. If you tell the BP that you are angry, sad or frightened, they can't argue with you since that is how you actually feel.



Be brave.


Sometimes it can be difficult to talk to someone about their shame. Shame plays a big role in BPD, and you CAN talk about it without generating more shame.



# Self

## RULE #3:

You will be unable to change your loved one with BPD. You have to accept them “as is” (but maybe only for a little while). **Only they** can choose to change themselves or their behavior. You can help, but you can’t make the change for them. Accept what can’t be changed and change what is in your power to change.




Accept what you  
have to, change  
what you can.

Trying to change something that you have no power to change leads to frustration. If you can’t change something it has to be accepted “as is.”

# Self

## RULE #4:

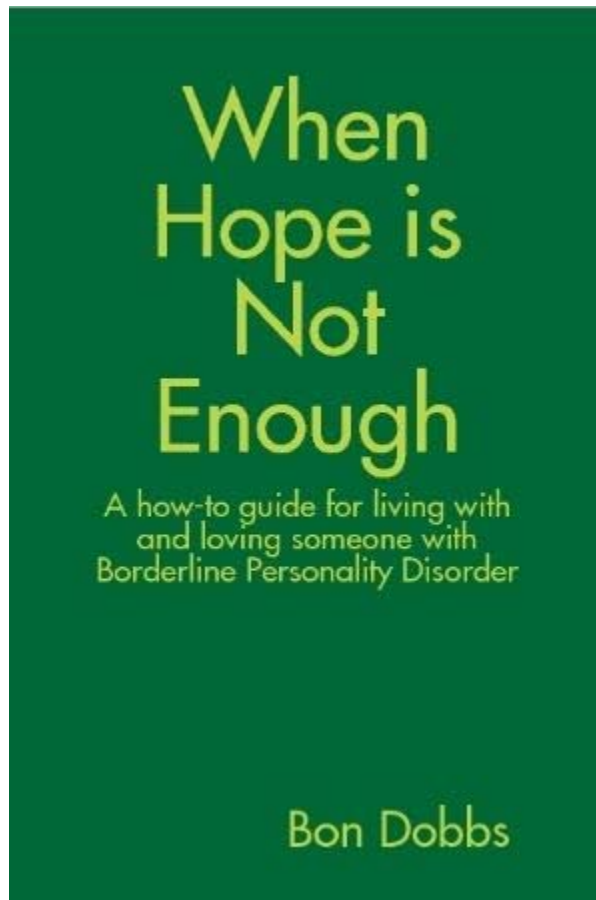
Being effective means doing whatever is necessary in the situation as it is. You have to concentrate on the situation at hand, not on the situation you wish to be in. That said, you shouldn't do anything that goes against your own personal values or boundaries. If you violate your own values, you are likely to feel bad about yourself.



**Stick to your  
values while being  
effective.**

The nature of effective boundaries is that you stick to your own values. Boundaries are for you and your behavior, not the BP's.

**Bon Dobbs** is a Non-BP who operates the “Anything to Stop the Pain” blog and Google Support list. Bon has written a “how-to” guide for Non-BP’s called “When Hope is Not Enough”.



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## Anything to Stop the Pain - BPD and Non-BPs

Help for partners and parents of people with Borderline Personality Disorder - Non-BPs

113 Posts and 54 Comments till now

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### Pages

- About
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### Links

- ATSTP Google Group
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- Bon's Services Site
- Borderline Research
- BPD in OKC
- BPD recovery
- DBT Self-Help
- Emotional Competency

### Linsey Lohan's mugshot used in liquor industry ad

From CNN:

Lindsay Lohan is not exactly toasting her latest public appearance. A mug shot of the 21-year-old actress, who has been in and out of rehab after two arrests last year on drunken driving and cocaine charges, was prominently featured Friday in an advertisement attacking legislation for devices that measure a driver's blood alcohol level before their vehicle can start.

The full-page black-and-white ad appeared in USA Today on Friday and was paid for by the American Beverage Institute, a trade group that supports the interests of the alcohol industry. The ad reads "Ignition interlocks are a good idea for" above Lohan's mug shot from her July 24, 2007, arrest and "But a bad idea for us" above smaller photos of people drinking.

"The reason that we used Lindsay Lohan is because she's had multiple DUIs that have been high profile," American Beverage Institute managing director Sarah Longwell told The Associated Press. "We needed to create the distinction for the public what someone with multiple DUIs looked like versus a low blood-alcohol-level first-time offender."

Lawmakers in several states have passed bills that would require drunken driving offenders to pay for and install an ignition interlock system. Under many such laws, the interlock requirement extends to first-time offenders driving while "highly intoxicated" — or with a blood alcohol level of 0.15 percent or higher.

The ad suggested that ignition interlocks were fine for "hard-core" drunk drivers, but

Google Groups

## Anything to Stop the Pain - A Group for Non BPDs

Home

### Welcome to our group!

If you'd like an introduction to some of the important past posts, see the ["Quick Start Guide"](#) - it is a work in progress. It also is a work in progress.

The Ground Rules are as follows (AKA the fine print):

Disclaimer:

This list is intended to provide support and learning environment for members to share experiences. It is no way intended to be a mental health service. If you local hospital, doctor, and or mental health professional.