

THE OTHER SIDE OF BORDERLINE PERSONALITY DISORDER

Mindfulness and Radical Acceptance for Non-Borderlines

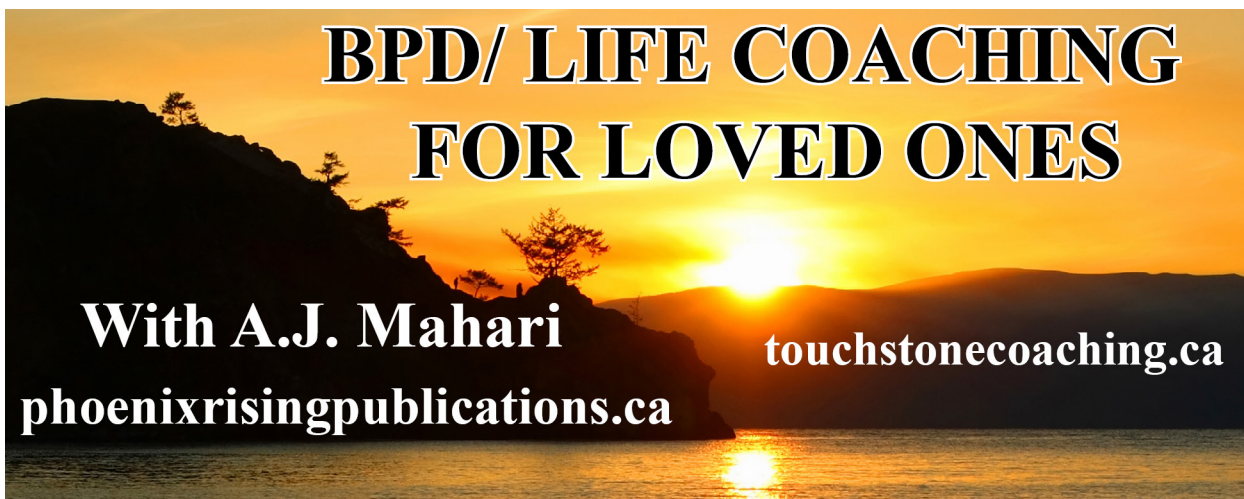
How non-borderlines can free themselves emotionally from the chaotic and painful roller-coaster ride of loving someone with Borderline Personality Disorder.

By A.J. Mahari

phoenixrisingpublications.ca
borderlinepersonality.ca

CONTENTS

<u>Chapter 1: The Other Side of BPD</u>	4
On the other side of BPD are what are referred to as Non-Borderlines who are left trying to figure out how to cope with the crazy-making universe of the borderline.	
<u>Chapter 2: Acquiring Skill In Everyday Living</u>	12
With Non-Borderlines need to continue to acquire skill for everyday living. This is even more true when one has a borderline in his/her life.	
<u>Chapter 3: Borderline Raging Emotional Roller-coaster and Loved One's - Non's Dilemma</u>	16
Borderline rage and arrested emotional development make relating to him/her a challenging dilemma for the Non-Borderline.	
<u>Chapter 4: Mindfulness For the Non-Borderline</u>	36
Mindfulness for Non-Borderlines are the way to peace and health.	
<u>Chapter 5: Radical Acceptance For the Non-Borderline</u>	47
Pain is the motivating force behind so much negative impacting behaviour that, in fact, adds to overall pain. Borderlines need to choose to face their pain in order to heal it and recover.	
<u>Chapter 6: Loss and Grief</u>	82
Non-Borderlines need to surrender, mindfully and through Radical Acceptance to the loss and grief that BPD causes.	
<u>Chapter 7: Non-Borderlines Managing Their Own Emotions</u>	96
Many Non-Borderlines need manage their own emotions, pack their own parachutes and tend to their own gardens. a	
<u>Chapter 8: Mindfulness and Radical Acceptance is Just The Beginning</u>	108
Mindfulness and Radical Acceptance are an important beginning of the pathway to freedom that you long for.	



CHAPTER ONE

THE OTHER SIDE OF BPD

Borderline Personality Disorder (BPD) is a painful reality causing untold suffering in the lives of those who have BPD and anyone associated with them in any relational way.

On the other side of Borderline Personality Disorder (BPD) exists the family members, children, adult-children, spouses or significant others, and the parents of those with BPD. The suffering, chaos, and turmoil that this personality disorder causes for those diagnosed with it (borderlines) subsequently proliferates to all who are in any way connected with someone with BPD. Also often affected in profound ways by those with BPD are the professionals who treat them.

Anyone can be a non-borderline whether they have BPD or not. If a person diagnosed with BPD is in a relationship with, has a parent, or child with BPD, when they are on the receiving end of borderline behaviour they are for all intents and purposes then in the non-borderline role unless and until they themselves relate in any distorted or regressed borderline ways in response themselves.

On the other side of Borderline Personality Disorder countless numbers of what are commonly now referred to as non-borderlines (people who do not have BPD) learn that more often than not when dealing with someone with BPD, in your life, you have to find ways to be able to cope with the reality of needing to light a new fire of your own in the hopes of extinguishing already chaotically raging borderline fires all around you.

Lighting your own fire can be anything from setting limits and boundaries, reiterating them as many times is needed, to making a sharp left hand turn in your life by extricating the borderline (regardless of your relationship to/with them) out of your life.

Non-borderlines can step off the emotional rollercoaster of the borderline in their lives through the practice of Mindfulness and Radical Acceptance.

Many with BPD do improve, some recover. However, the reality, in the lives of many non-borderlines, is that the borderline in many of their lives won't even acknowledge that they have any problem that needs addressing let alone professional help.

There are some very good books out there that address the many ways that non-borderlines struggle to straddle the line between meeting their own needs, taking care of themselves and their families.

This ebook does not seek to outline the ways that you can actually undertake specific steps to change because other books clearly do that.

This ebook will address the meaningful and uncomplicated ways that the non-borderline can skillfully cope with the barrage of often abusive borderline transgression passed off as ways of relating borderline style.

This ebook seeks to inform you of how you can learn to just cope in any and all unforgiving moments of borderline chaos in your life as things are in the here and now which may well be the beginning of your taking stock and searching for the answers that you need in order to identify what you actually want to do and can do to improve the quality of your own life or the quality of life for any children involved with a borderline parent.

Mindfulness, Observing and Radical Acceptance can and will provide you with a renewed and clearer understanding of how to cope with borderline behaviour in each unfolding present moment skillfully in ways that will release you from the resulting suffering that you have been enduring.

At worst, learning to be more skillful in your dealings with those with Borderline Personality Disorder will give you more peace and a firmer foundation within from which to make necessary decisions for your own welfare and that of any children involved. At best, learning to be more skillful in your dealings with anyone with BPD in your life will slowly enable you to communicate in ways that may prove beneficial for both you and the borderline in your life, in the long run.

What I Know About Being a Non-Borderline

I had a parent (perhaps even both) with Borderline Personality Disorder. I found out rather through the back door, if you know what I mean (I wasn't actually prepared or told appropriately), at the age of 19 that I was diagnosed with Borderline Personality

(I don't think one leads to the other in all cases per se) sadly we then go on to inflict upon others the kind of pain and wounds that were inflicted upon us.

The Target of Unpredictable, Frequent, and Intense Rage

Though my father was a professional in the banking field with his own international company, when he was home and/or on holidays he often had construction projects to complete. He built his parents a recreation room in their basement one year. He built picnic tables for several relatives and so forth. The problem with this was it was just another time that I dearly would have loved to have not been around him. He had my brother and I as his "help" (read slaves) and would rage almost the entire time, mainly at me. When he hit his finger with the hammer, I could expect a punch in the back, back of the head, or a kick in the seat of my pants. When I didn't bring him the requested, (read demanded, screamed, and swore about tool) fast enough he would rage at me some more, swearing his head off at me putting me down. Working with him was a nightmare in daylight.

There were many times we would be all travelling in the car. God, how I hated those trips. I never wanted to go but they legislated family outings, holidays, relative visits etc. The point here, however, is that when my brother and I would argue or fight in the back seat of the car, which was most of the time, my father would speed up the car to very high and scary speeds and scream at the top of his lungs, "If you two damn kids don't shut the ____ up NOW I am going to drive this car into the next bridge. Would you like that?"

This immediately shut me up. I resented it. It terrified me. He was so unpredictable that I did not take for granted that he wouldn't do it, just because he hadn't all the previous times he threatened to. For years, I was controlled and traumatized in cars with him. Despite all his abusive and controlling threats he never did crash the car into anything accidentally or on purpose.

The Reality of Being in the Line of Fire of a Borderline

Although, what I have shared here is based upon my experience as a non-borderline and the relationship with my borderline father, don't underestimate the effects of borderline behaviour in your own life even if you are not the child of a borderline. While the damage done and the severity of the negative influence on a child of a borderline parent may be somewhat more far-reaching than the negative influence and stress of a borderline to a partner or parent there is, nonetheless, a tremendous amount of pain caused for most non-borderlines by the borderline(s) in their lives.

CHAPTER TWO

Acquiring Skill In Everyday Living

Each and every one of us continues to mature, grow, and learn throughout our lives if we so choose to. Non-borderlines are no exception to this rule. One of the greatest catalysts for the evolving of the non-borderline who ends up being in an intimate relationship with someone with BPD is that borderline.

Why do I say this? Well, because, whether the non-borderline wants to face it or not it is usually what you aren't so skilled at that leads you directly into the emotional grips of a borderline partner. Borderlines aren't the only ones with issue from the past. It takes two to dance.

Don't misunderstand me here, I am not saying that the non-borderline is like the borderline generally. Having said that though, I will add that it is important to remember that the traits that define Borderline Personality Disorder are human traits - they are found in all people. These traits are more intense and more frequent in their presentation in the behaviour and lives of those with BPD.

Non-borderlines will benefit from looking at what unmet needs of their own enabled them to get involved with someone with BPD who can only hurt them.

One of the most common areas of difficulty that non-borderlines encounter is trying to maintain healthy individuation when in relationship with a borderline. The opposite of this individuation is enmeshment. When two people become enmeshed these types of relationships are commonly referred to as being co-dependent. It is this co-dependence that keeps the non-borderline stuck desperately searching for help from the borderline. Often against all odds too because your borderline (ex) partner doesn't want any help, thank you very much. Where does that leave you?

It leaves you with decisions and choices to make. It leaves you with things that you can learn about yourself. It leaves you with a roadmap to the reasons why you do not, or have not paid attention to your intuition. Most non-borderlines I've ever talked to

or read email from admit to seeing many, if not endless, red flags in their borderline partners and moving forward with the relationship regardless.

Does this mean that non-borderlines are making mistakes? Maybe. But I prefer to think of it as an unconscious desire to heal whatever remains unhealed in you and to acquire more skill for everyday living.

For those who end up on the other side of the borderline's dance of chaotic demanding drama there are reasons why you didn't choose someone who would have treated you much better. Those reasons and those aspects of your own unhealed past need to be addressed so that you can truly walk out of the other half of the borderline dance.

There is no doubt that most people with BPD also possess many positive and charming qualities. There are, initially, many reasons to fall in love with them. However, often simultaneously there are as many, if not more, reasons to run the other way.

Part of being open to acquiring more skill for everyday living is being able to honestly look at your own choices without judging yourself. You had your own set of reasons, reasons that often match one's skill set in life for choosing the person and relationship that you did.

It is an important part of acquiring more skill for everyday living that you learn (if you haven't already) that it is okay to make mistakes. Mistakes happen. Mistakes are growth opportunities.

It is healthy to welcome in what our mistakes can teach us. Painful often, but, important nonetheless. Everyday life is experiential. Life is a hands-on classroom. Emotionally, we are all students in the classroom of life.

Those diagnosed with Borderline Personality Disorder can be very charming and have plenty of wonderful qualities. It is however, also very real that they lack the ability (until successfully treated) to relate in healthy age-appropriate adult ways. This causes considerable suffering for both borderlines and non-borderlines.

Things to be aware of as you read on and think about what skills you have or what skills you would benefit from developing. What has the pain and suffering associated with relating to someone with BPD come to teach you about yourself? How can you take what seems like a personal train wreck in your life now and find emotional stabil-

CHAPTER THREE

The Borderline's Raging Emotional Rollercoaster & The Non-Borderline's Dilemma

Are you at a loss when it comes to even remotely understanding what to do when the borderline traits of someone close to you erupt and throw your life into very unpredictable painful chaos and turmoil? Are you living in what has become a nightmare of emotional entanglement, enmeshment, and endless trapping no-win situations?

Do you see a patterned dynamic that has become a dysfunctional and painful dance of the borderline leaving you, the non-borderline with the dilemma of what to do?

Read on and know that you are not alone. You are not crazy. You are not losing your mind. But, if you are not careful, you just might lose yourself, your values and ethics, and drown in the tides of the whirlwind of borderline raucous raging revenge-seeking relating. So many non-borderlines are held hostage to the rage and abuse of an adult who emotionally is a young child whose emotional development arrested in some narcissistic phase of early emotional development in which being the demanding and needy centre of the universe is temporarily expected.

There is a dance that occurs in the relational space of parallel worlds that are the gaps between the borderline and the non-borderline.

Borderline narcissistic attempts at being relational, rage and/or acting out, along with an inability to take personal responsibility are formidable realities in the lives of non-borderlines who ride the roller-coaster of relating to someone with untreated BPD.

This dance, between the borderline and the non-borderline, is one of survival for the borderline and a sanity-challenging emotional roller-coaster dilemma for the non-borderline. Each and every non-borderline can learn the skills necessary to disengage this dramatic crazy-making dance of the borderline.

Central to the narcissistic and needy relational dance of the Borderline is the loss of a known self that fuels rage, lack of responsibility, and a myriad of abusive behaviour because pain is dissociated from in fragmented and self-defeating ways. This borderline pain is then projected and transferred onto the nearest non-borderline. The borderline's expectations of the non-borderline are actually just as unrealistic as the non-borderline's expectations of the borderline.

The borderline expects the non-borderline to meet his/her every need immediately. The borderline is often fairly narcissistic. The borderline expects to heal the profound woundedness that he/she has carried for years. Some borderlines are aware of this and others have no awareness or insight about it.

The borderline is often regressing to very younger ages and stages of life and is looking to be re-parented by a his/her partner. This is not age-appropriate or healthy adult relating.

The non-borderline expects the borderline to be age-appropriate and emotionally mature enough to respect him/her, to have appropriate interpersonal boundaries, and skills. The non-borderline partner of someone with BPD is looking for an intimate equal who knows how to be empathic, intimate, close, and take space and who knows how to take care of him/herself.

The non-borderline, for the most part, is an adult and wants to relate in age-appropriate adult ways. The non-borderline with a BPD partner is not looking to be a parent or surrogate parent to his/her partner.

If the non-borderline is the parent of a borderline he/she wants the best for his/her child. He/she wants to see the borderline child grow up and be able to live a functional adult life that ends the dependence upon his/her family of origin.

The non-borderline parent of an adult-child with BPD is often left in the role of rescuer the longest. It is a role that is futile because it not only usurps your own life but you truly cannot rescue your borderline adult-child. He/she has to want to get help and to want to change the way that they relate to self and to others. There comes a time when a non-borderline parent of an out-of-control borderline in the active throes of untreated BPD must retreat for his/her own well-being and the well-being of his/her other children. There can be a tremendous amount of guilt and grief that comes with having to make this choice. However, parents are not responsible for their children once they are of adult age. Let go and let the borderline learn to swim on his/her own. Setting those limits of healthy detachment often provides the

you definitely cannot satiate the borderline's needs. You cannot make the borderline safe. You cannot make the borderline get help.

You are powerless over anyone but yourself. You need to know where you end and your borderline begins. You need to keep firm boundaries between your borderline's projective identification and projection of their "reality" on to you and who you really are lest you lose yourself.

Non-borderlines can disengage the borderline's crazy-making dance of dysfunctional relating through Mindfulness, Radical Acceptance and Detachment. All of which are discussed in the up-coming chapters of this ebook.

The Dilemma of The Non-Borderline Who is a Parent of a Raging Borderline:

Unlike the significant other of a person with Borderline Personality Disorder, the non-borderline parent cannot just (certainly not in the same way) divorce an adult-child with BPD. Tied closely to the pain and chaos of the borderline child, for the parent (who has not abused or failed his/her child), is the unending blame and resulting confusion which is then compounded by self-blame and guilt. Added on top of this is the reality that often professionals and the mental health delivery system are blaming and shaming of parents as well.

I would like to emphasize here that even though I was a borderline who had very abusive parents and experienced all types of abuse, and lack of nurture etc in an invalidating environment - classic breeding ground for BPD - this is not the case for all who end up being diagnosed with and having BPD.

In this section I am speaking most directly to the parents who did not abuse their children and who have tried to be there for them every step of the way but who regardless continue to suffer as the result of the BPD of their children.

When blame is everywhere

Of course there are many cases of those who go on to be diagnosed with BPD who have been traumatized, neglected, abused - sexually and otherwise - and/or experienced tremendous loss or early literal abandonment. However, there are also many other cases where the parents of an adult-child who is later diagnosed with BPD

disconnect (in many cases) from the person with BPD.

Learning to not ascribe or judge the borderline's actions as "good" or "bad" will help set you free from that investment. An investment that most in relationships are sadly defined and controlled as well as hurt by.

Why Mindfulness for the Non-Borderline?

If non-borderlines do not learn how to be mindful they will continue to be reactive. If they are reactive they will remain entrenched in a dynamic dance with the borderline that will only end up compounding the pain and confusion non-borderlines are left with as a result of the turmoil and chaos driven by borderline behaviour.

Mindfulness can help the non-borderline to pause long enough to begin to change old automatic negative reactive protective responses (ANRPPR's) developed in response to the often chaotic and unpredictably intense presentation of the borderline. Mindfulness can mean the difference between reacting, cycling through yet more abusive and unproductive dysfunctional relating in response to the borderline, or maintaining a calm peaceful state of being in spite of the borderline's chaotic and often needy, demanding drama.

Mindfulness is the pathway for the non-borderline to leave the emotional suffering, chaos, turmoil, and drama of the borderline with the borderline. It is the borderline's responsibility.

Mindfulness can be your gateway to freedom from the suffering you've endured at the hands of the borderline in your life. Non-borderlines, can, through the practice of Mindfulness create an emotional space for themselves that enables self-care. As I will outline in up-coming chapters in this ebook, along with Accepting Reality, Detachment, Radical Acceptance, Emotional Management and Mindful observation non-borderlines can take their lives back whether they continue to be in relationship to the borderline in their lives or not.

Maureen, a non-borderline mother of a daughter with BPD writes:

"My daughter used to be able to push my buttons at will. I have learned that I am responsible for whether or not I allow my daughter to push my buttons.

Mindfulness has really helped me with this. Practicing Mindfulness means that instead of the

If you keep investing in understanding more and more about a borderline who isn't trying to understand more about him/herself you may well be blocking your own peace and happiness. Putting the focus on the borderline and not on yourself usurps your here and now unfolding moment after moment and surrenders it to the borderline's repetitive regressed recapitulations of his/her past. Nobody wins. Nobody grows. No one is helped.

The Quest for Radical Acceptance when you are still Investing in Attempted Rescue

2) The Pitfalls Of Attempted Rescue of (or trying to fix) anyone with BPD

There are more pitfalls than benefits in attempting to rescue a borderline and here I examine what trying to rescue a borderline does to both the non-borderline and the borderline. Rescuing is a misnomer. It cannot be done. Rescuing flies in the face of Mindful Radical Acceptance practice.

Borderline Personality Disorder is a personality disorder that sees many diagnosed with it seeking to be rescued. It also is a disorder that tends to be a witness to many a loved one trying to rescue the borderline from themselves. Some of the attempts to rescue the borderline, by the non-borderline, are also attempts to control what is happening and to get the borderline to come around to be more like the non-borderline wants him/her to be. In other words, the attempted rescue of someone with BPD by a non-borderline has two prongs to it. One is that you want the borderline to get better, learn how to behave in age-appropriate ways, fit into your household without driving you crazy (if you are the parent) and without putting the health of the rest of your family in jeopardy. The other main prong to why non-borderlines attempt to rescue borderlines is to meet your own needs as well.

Wanting to have your own needs met by attempting to rescue a borderline, even a child with BPD who is creating chaos in your life and your house more often than not just proves to be more crazy-making than it is worth.

In the long run, non-borderlines will find much more peace, sanity, and self-control, in practicing Mindfulness and Radical Acceptance than they will ever find in trying to change or control a borderline. This is especially true when the borderline is your rebellious acting out teenager.

- You cannot take the place of the borderline's parent
- You cannot undo the borderline's woundedness
- You cannot love them out of it
- You cannot expect to have the kind of relationship with a borderline you'd have with someone who isn't personality disordered
- You cannot get in the trenches with a borderline lest you lose yourself too
- You cannot take responsibility for the borderline (unless it is a child under age of majority).
- You can only do your best to fulfill your parental obligations while getting professional help for your child. However, leading the borderline to therapy doesn't mean you can make him/her truly participate in it
- You cannot hold up your life, your goals, your dreams for the day or time when it will be okay or the borderline will have changed

Make this your mantra - I can only control myself and how I choose to react to situations and life. I cannot control the borderline in my life. What he/she does about getting help or taking personal responsibility is something that I need to remain detached from - whether I stay in the relationship or not.

As Margaret, whose borderline adult-child has now recovered shares from what she learned in their journey:

"If you think that you can control her your borderline child in any way, then the battle is already lost"

My daughter has recovered from BPD and is living a full and productive life after dragging us all through the emotional chaos of BPD for almost 10 years. What I learned in all that borderline of chaos was:

1. Learn all you can about DBT and model the skills yourself. Do not attempt to teach the Skills to her leave that to a professional.
2. Learn about and practice radical acceptance, not just with her, but with everyone you meet.
3. Validate her feelings, no matter how hard it is for you, no matter how much she is pushing your buttons, no matter how angry or crazy she is making you.
4. Set limits. And when you do, make sure that they are about you, not her. Get out of your head the illusion that you can control her. What you can control is you and your space.
5. While controlling you and your space, make sure that boundaries are well-defined

and consequences are clear. Be consistent with those consequences, no matter how much it hurts.

6. Improve your relationship with her and with everyone else in the family. Understand what you are responsible for and what you are not responsible for. Lower your reactivity. Mindfulness practice will help you with this.
7. Introduce safe and smart options to her - for example, If she is tired of consequences, she can change her behaviour - and if she can't do it on her own, she can start DBT to learn new ways of behaving.

Note that therapy in place of consequences - that won't work.

The rest, is totally up to her."

As Margaret so clearly states from her own experience with a borderline child you can only do what is reasonable for you to do within limits and then you have to surrender to borderline's own self-determination or lack thereof. Once a child with BPD reaches the age of adulthood, of course, you want to try to help and support them but it is important to do so within limits and to not allow your life to get turned upside down indefinitely. Setting limits and practicing radical acceptance mindfully always keeping clear where your responsibility begins and ends and where the borderline's needs to rise to the challenge will mean the difference between detachment and getting off the borderline's emotional roller-coaster or spinning and being essentially held hostage to the borderline's emotional roller-coaster.

The key thing to mindfully radically accept is that you cannot rescue the borderline. Surrender to that reality.

What does it mean that non-borderline often focuses more and invests more energy on this than on themselves?

What does it mean to just let go and let the borderline make his/her own choices, accept your losses, grieve and walk toward the kind of peace you can have when you stop allowing a borderline to effectively run and/or control your life?

LISA, a non-borderline breaking up with a suspected borderline shares the following:

"I am very discouraged right now. I was single for 14 years - 2 almost grown daughters (one

in college, one a junior in high school) and met this incredible man. He was open and honest, articulate, intelligent and so loving and affectionate. He is helpful, industrious, ambitious, hardworking - a true helpmate in every way.... except... when there is conflict. At least that's what it seemed at the beginning. Now, I really often can't figure out what the trigger is and it has escalated the 7 months we've been married (whirlwind relationship - dated 4 months and were engaged and then married 3 months after that - so in the relationship now a total of 14 months).

I ignored all rationale and married this man - I was, and am, truly in love with him. Very recently (2 weeks ago), I discovered/suspect he is more than likely BPD. We went to a counselor (at his suggestion - I was thrilled). It was disastrous. He lied to the counselor and I was devastated and began to lose hope. The counselor (based on observations) asked us to come back for individual appts. the next week. We did. He went first, then mine was 2 hours later. When he was taking the furniture and all of his stuff out - which was devastating to me as I love this guy so much-- but clearly and quickly recognized the need to separate. So the emotional roller-coaster continued - just in a different aspect.

I looked online at our bank account and saw that in just a few short days, over \$2,000 had been spent. The apartment rent, the deposit, the utilities, etc. I panicked. This guy had handled all of our finances and had NEVER been irresponsible. He did a beautiful job. So I was panicked and realized that whatever I was dealing with had now begun to affect financial decisions at its heightened state...

Bottom line - I genuinely love this guy. Luckily, I have fairly healthy boundaries - Oh -- don't get me wrong - I've done the "dance", I've gone down the sewer drain right with him, but I recognized that I couldn't live that way any longer no matter how much I loved him or how much he professed to love me. I knew it wasn't healthy. We have been apart now for almost 2 weeks and have had contact - albeit mostly positive - text messaging, a few emails, some voice mails and a couple of phone conversations. I easily get sucked in when I'm with him because he's charming, convincing, loving, etc. I so want to believe that he deeply loves me - as I do him. I so want to believe that we can be together if he "chooses" to get help. I've read so much of your writings and am encouraged as well as discouraged.

I am now convinced I did the right thing by pushing the separation. He needs to be on his own. He needs to recognize that he can do this vs. going from one relationship to another (previous marriage was for 7.5 years - can't imagine how miserable that was now that I see what I've experienced in only 7 months, but I do think maturity and healthy boundaries somewhat saved me from something worse). I want this to work -- what can I do? I