



The Cycle of Violence differs for each set of partners, each with their own unique rhythm and participant behaviors. Yet three phases are typically represented: the tension building phase, the explosion phase or acute battering incident, and the hearts and flowers phase or kindness and contrite loving behavior. Over time, the kindness and apologies of the hearts and flowers phase often disappear, and the relationship cycles continuously between tension and explosion.

Because sometimes friends, relatives, and “helping people” become discouraged when a victim remains in a threatening situation, it is vital to understand all of the dynamics involved. Relationships do not generally begin as disruptive and abusive but become so only after an initial platform of care has been established. Victims often stay because *some*, however few, of their needs are being met. (See: “Why People Stay in Abusive Relationships.”) The Cycle of Violence may combine with economic hardship, social conditioning, emotional attachments, cultural traditions, religious beliefs and/or other reasons to capture the victim in her/his own cycle of fear and denial making leaving or escaping difficult.

(Adapted from Lenore Walker’s *Battered Women*: Harper & Row Publishers New York SF 1979)