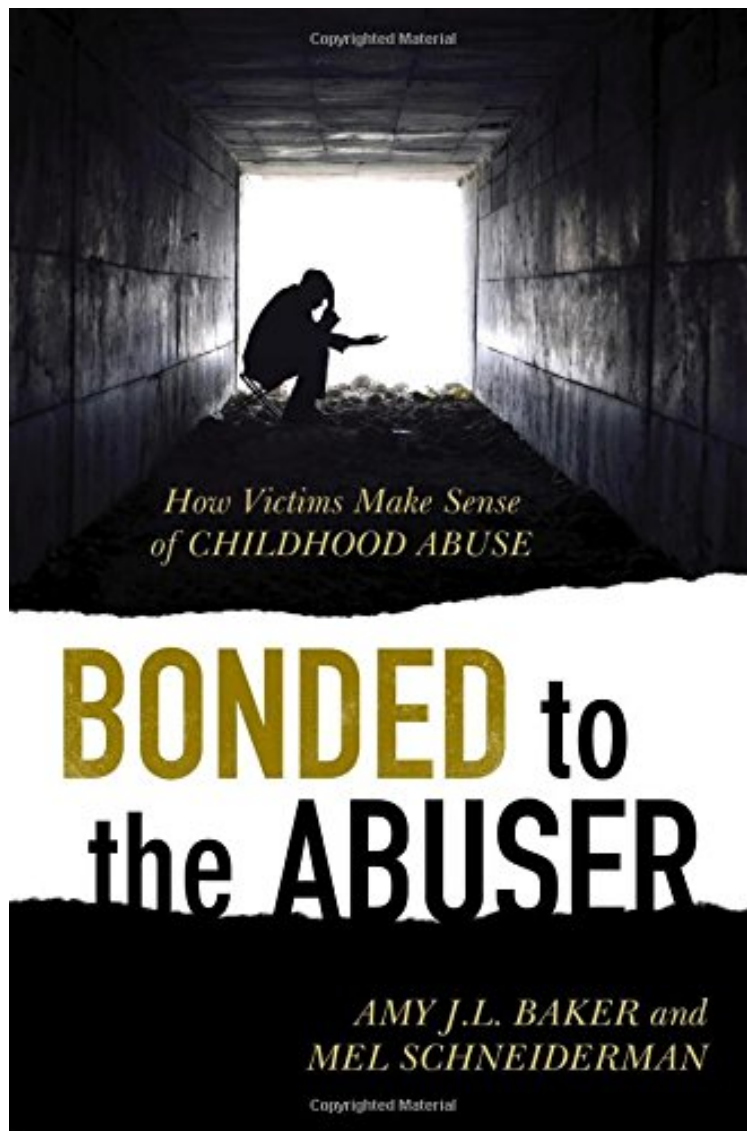


Bonded to the Abuser: How Victims Make Sense of Childhood Abuse

Amy J.L. Baker author of *Surviving Parental Alienation: A Journey of Hope and Healing* and *Bonded to the Abuser: How Victims Make Sense of Childhood Abuse*, Mel Schneiderman
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Amy J.L. Baker author of *Surviving Parental Alienation: A Journey of Hope and Healing* and *Bonded to the Abuser: How Victims Make Sense of Childhood Abuse*, Mel Schneiderman : *Bonded to the Abuser: How Victims Make Sense of Childhood Abuse* before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised *Bonded to the Abuser: How Victims Make Sense of Childhood Abuse*:

3 of 3 people found the following review helpful. Helps Us Understand the Perspective of Abused Children!!By C. F. JamesThis is a fantastic and important work. It helps explain the counter intuitive mystery of why victims of child abuse are so caught up into the lives of their abusers. To explain this, the book does a masterful job of referring to all available anecdotal evidence (published memoirs), provides references from the relevant attachment theory, and explains it from the child's perspective. In an eerie way, the sections describing psychological abuse matches what I have seen. Abused children will benefit from this book for years, because adults can now better understand their plight. Thanks for publishing this book2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. It has been a good read to understand others around meBy Sheree HobsonIt gave me the information to answer some questions from my early childhood and explains why I have a positive connection at all despite the evil within my father. It has been a good read to understand others around me. We are a large group--those of us with imperfect childhoods.0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. just quotes from various studies with no analysis of the information making for a dull reading doing little to bring clarity to this matterBy Quincy GirlThis is an important subject needing widespread information. Writer of this books has no voice, just quotes from various studies with no analysis of the information making for a dull reading doing little to bring clarity to this matter.

Tens of thousands of children are removed from home each year due to some form of child maltreatment, usually physical neglect, physical abuse, or sexual abuse, although sometimes for emotional abuse as well. An additional significant number of children are victims of child maltreatment but remain in their home. Extensive research reveals the far reaching and long lasting negative impact of maltreatment on child victims, including on their physical, social, emotional, and behavioral functioning. One particularly troubling and complicated aspect is how the child victim forms (and maintains) a traumatic bond with his abuser, even becoming protective and defensive of that person despite the pain and suffering they have caused. This book will provide the reader with the essential experience of understanding how children make meaning of being maltreated by a parent, and how these traumatic bonds form and last. Through an examination of published memoirs of abuse, the authors analyze and reveal the commonalities in the stories to uncover the ways in which adult victims of childhood abuse understand and digest the traumatic experiences of their childhoods. This understanding can inform interventions and treatments designed for this vulnerable population and can help family and friends of victims understand more fully the maltreatment experience from the inside out.

Baker and Schneiderman are both leaders in research on child abuse and parental alienation. Here they examine published memoirs and stories of physical, emotional, and sexual abuse of children, identifying themes from the literature and illustrative narratives. Though the authors do not elaborate on the themes or on how children make sense of maltreatment by parents, the writings Baker and Schneiderman examine reveal children's fear and dread, yearning for approval, and coping strategies as they try to please parents enabling readers to travel with children through trauma, deprivation, and the quest for parental approval. The book reveals children's need for parental approval and recognition even when parents are not present, do not approve of their children, or do not see children as separate beings. Mental illness (e.g., schizophrenia, substance abuse, personality disorder) often figures in, preventing parents from appreciating children's needs. The authors point out that despite pain, suffering, and/or deprivation, children often yearn for parental love, approval, and recognition; without therapeutic intervention, that yearning can continue into adulthood. This book will be helpful for understanding child abuse and children's bonds with abusers. Summing Up: Recommended. Lower- and upper-division undergraduates; graduate students; professionals; general readers. (CHOICE)Before I became a therapist, I had a very hard time seeing how one could forgive the abuser of an innocent child. I found it almost excruciating to try to understand the mindset of the person who had harmed an innocent kid, often their own. But once I became a therapist, I recognized that a host of problems in the abusers life and upbringing often contribute to their violent behavior. Mental illness, their own experience of prior abuse, their own early childhood trauma, and substance issues can be factors. Sometimes, though, we cannot quite identify what the behavior stems from. But as Amy Baker and Mel Schneiderman write in *Bonded to the Abuser: How Victims Make Sense of Childhood Abuse*, no matter what the cause of the maltreatment, there are children who suffer through unthinkable experiences yet still feel connected to their abuser. . . . When it comes to this difficult but extremely relevant topic, Baker and Schneiderman give us an excellent resource As a therapist, I found their book not only interesting but also necessarily jolting. It can be easy to forget, or to not understand, what happens to the millions of children who are hurt by a disturbed parent. One way to ensure that we contribute to the eradication of child abuse is by educating ourselves and awakening our senses to this very heartbreaking reality. (Psych Central)*Bonded to the Abuser* is a wise and helpful approach to a painful subject. It gives voice to an often neglected and under-served population. It will be an extremely helpful resource for professionals and for those who are living with the legacy of abuse. (Joshua Coleman, Ph.D., author of *When Parents Hurt: Compassionate Strategies When You and Your Grown Child Get Along*)Amy J. L. Baker and Mel Schneiderman have synthesized a mountain of qualitative data from the first-hand accounts of individuals who experienced abuse and neglect as children. They reviewed 45 books, which relate in painstaking and

heartbreaking detail how the writers lived through and managed to survive physical, sexual, and emotional abuse and neglect. The primary theme of the book is the remarkable and counterintuitive observation that abused children remain attached to their abusive parents, whom they might perceive as charming and charismatic. Children who are physically or emotionally neglected remain loyal to their parents, who rarely acknowledged the children's presence or personhood. Readers of *Bonded to the Abuser* will learn various mechanisms by which maltreated children fear, love, hate, and long for their moms and dads. (William Bernet, M.D., professor emeritus, Department of Psychiatry, Vanderbilt University School of Medicine, Nashville, Tennessee)

Bonded to the Abuser is compelling for both lay people and for professionals who deal with child maltreatment on a daily basis. By presenting the voices of adults abused as children as they narrate, in their memoirs, their early life experiences, and then identifying the themes that arise by form(s) of abuse, Baker and Schneiderman capture the essence of the human experience. This includes our extreme vulnerability as children, our complete dependence on our parents for care and provisioning, the enormous responsibility of that care, the tragedy that occurs when parents refuse to accept responsibility/are not up to the task, the lasting consequences of abuse and neglect for individuals, the role of forgiveness, and the importance of other caring adults and institutions (particularly schools) in partially compensating for parental deficits. I cannot think of another book that illuminates the experience of maltreatment more clearly than *Bonded to the Abuser*. (Marla R. Brassard, Ph.D., Professor of Psychology and Education, Teachers College, Columbia University)

Bonded to the Abuser is a compelling read. Baker and Schneiderman have captured the power of individual experiences and have knit them together in a way that reveals patterns and contextualizes them in current psychological theory and research. This is a great resource on maltreatment for anyone seeking to understand what it is like to be a victimized child. (Amy M. Smith Slep, Ph.D., Professor, Family Translational Research Group, New York University)

About the Author Amy J.L. Baker, PhD, is a nationally recognized leader and expert in the field of parental alienation and loyalty conflicts. She is the author of *Adult Children of Parental Alienation Syndrome: Breaking the Ties That Bind* (2007) and *Working with Alienated Children and Families: A Clinical Guidebook* (2012). Baker has published numerous academic articles on the topic of parental alienation and writes a blog for *Psychology Today* on the topic. She also has an active coaching practice for targeted parents and serves as an expert witness in custody disputes around the country. She is the author of the forthcoming *Surviving Parental Alienation*. Mel Schneiderman is senior vice president, mental health services at the New York Foundling and is cofounder and senior advisor and chair of the research advisory committee at the Vincent J. Fontana Center for Child Protection. Dr. Schneiderman founded the first child sexual abuse treatment program located within a child welfare agency in 1986. Dr. Schneiderman has been a leader in the field of child welfare for the past thirty years. He was one of the founders and first chair of the Committee of Mental Health and Healthcare Professionals in New York City. Dr. Schneiderman introduced the first agency-wide universal mental health screening program for children entering foster care in New York City. He is currently the President of the American Professional Society on the Abuse of Children, New York. He has served on several boards and presented at over fifty conferences and workshops, he is the recipient of numerous grants and has published several articles in peer reviewed journals.