

# a book of 9 traits

A self-help book for people affected by borderline personality disorder



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TRIGGER W

**Trigger warning!**

If you have been diagnosed with any personality disorder, think you might suffer from one or feel mentally unstable, this book can and wants to be triggering for you. Therefore, you should consider looking at it in the presence of a psychologist, a family member or a close friend you trust in.

If any of this book's content is relatable for you, makes you feel insecure or uncomfortable, we highly recommend you to see a professional and reach out for the help of friends and family.

If you think you have a close friend or family member who might suffer from any personality disorders choose a protected space to discuss it.

You should not be casual about it. Personality disorders can have a wide influence on a person's life and are potentially life-threatening!

# WARNING!

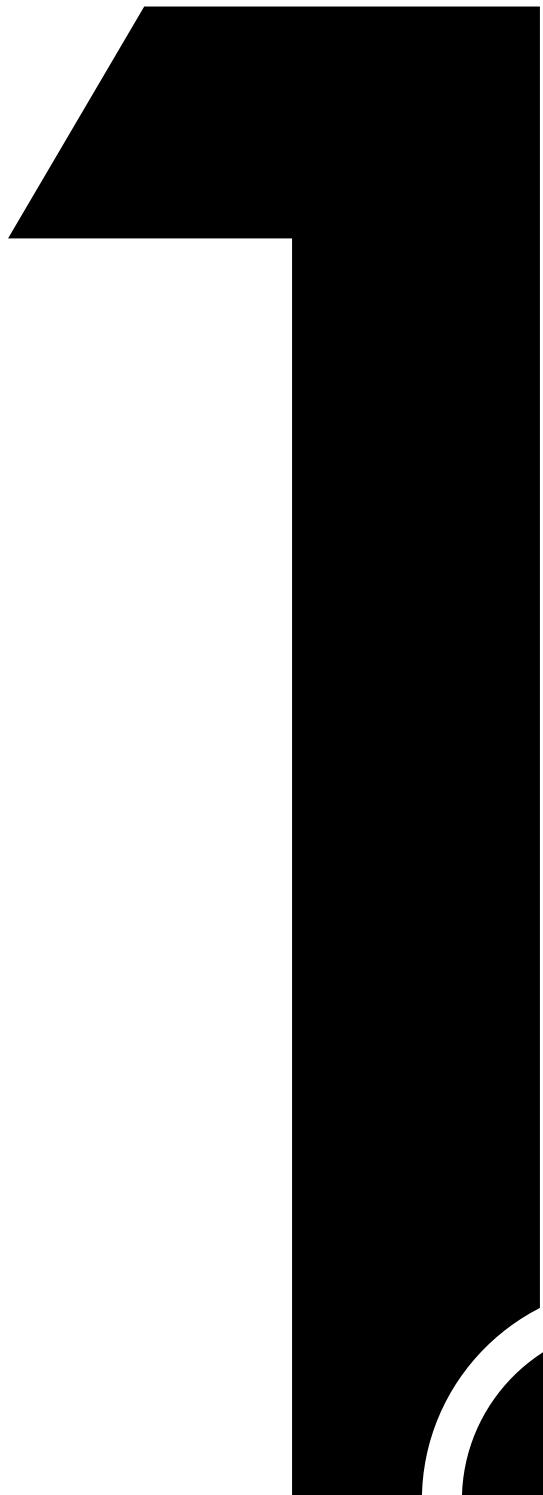
# bandonment

a

## **1. Abandonment**

Frantic efforts to avoid real or imagined abandonment.

**Note:** Do not include suicidal or self-mutilating behavior covered in Criterion 5.



She's not texting back. Ok. Did I do something wrong? I can't remember. Did she get my message wrong? I mean I can see she saw my message. Did she just forget to answer? Was she busy? Did I upset her? I shouldn't have used that emoji, maybe she thought I was making fun of her. I should send another message to ensure her I wasn't making fun of her. That may remind her to answer. But what if she wouldn't reply though? Am I constraining her? Maybe my insecurity is annoying her. I should stop. Or did something happen to her? Is she ok? She normally replies right away, even if it was just an emoji. I should ask if she's fine. Perhaps she had an accident. I should call her mom. But if she's ok she'd probably think I'm stalking her. I shouldn't call her mom. I hope she is fine. I can not lose her. Oh, nevermind. She just replied with a smiley.





# idealisation & devaluation

## **2. Idealisation and devaluation**

A pattern of unstable and intense interpersonal relationships characterized by alternating between extremes of idealization and devaluation.

### **Life comes in shades**

Life comes in shades  
But I rarely recognise.  
The world as I see it  
Is either black or white.

Bright days can shine  
During daytime.  
But as sure as sundown comes  
Night absorbs light,  
reciting mad tongues.

Are you my best friend  
Or quite to close, yet?  
Is this a helping hand  
Or another painful threat?

Today I may love  
Anyone I think of.  
When at once out of the blue,  
Without apparent reason,  
I hate them, too.





### Life comes in shades

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But I rarely recognize.  
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identity

identity

**disturbance**

disturbance

**identity**

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disturba

identity

**disturbance**

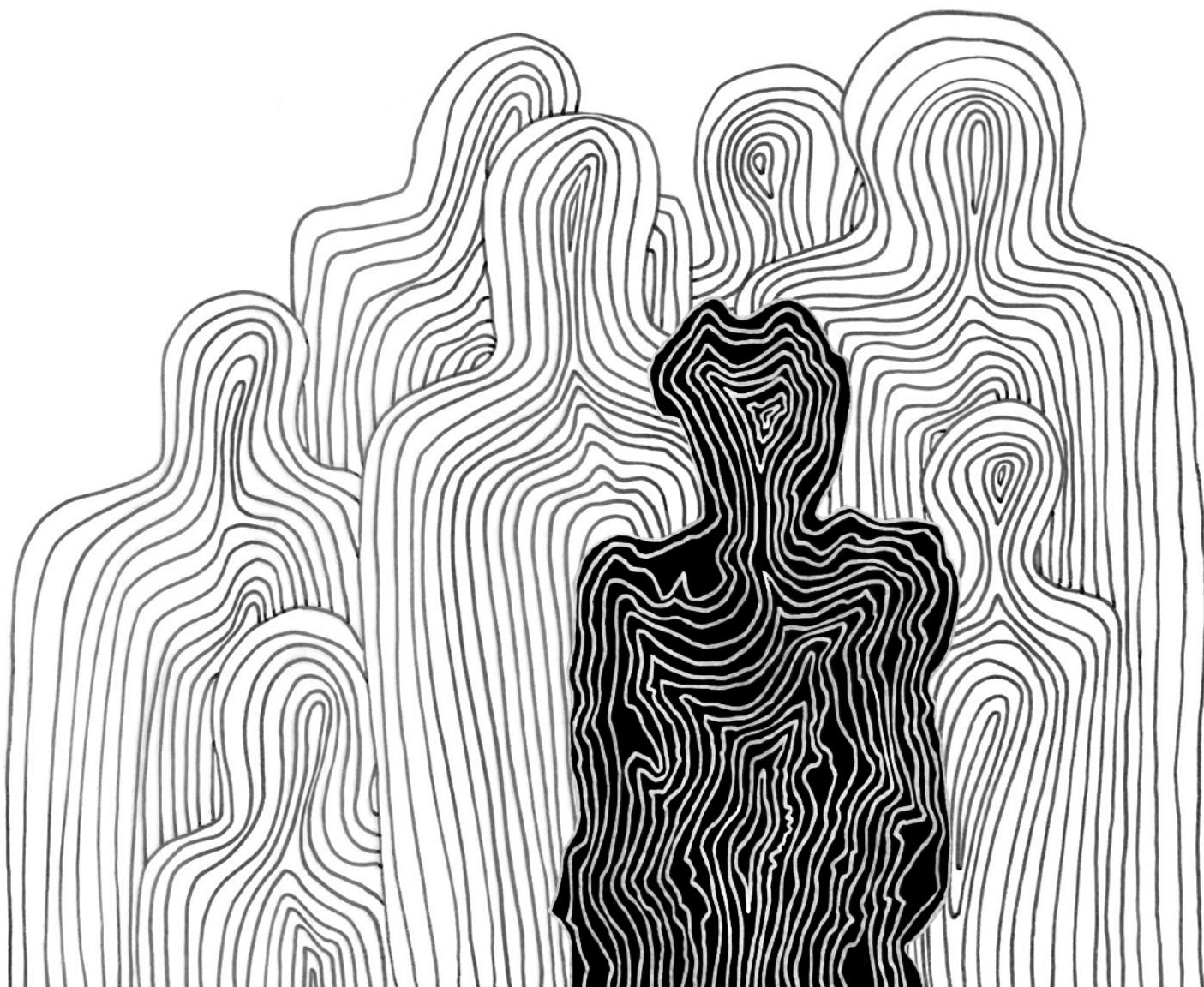
identity

disturbance

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### **3. Identity disturbance**

Identity disturbance: markedly and persistently unstable self-image or sense of self.



When I'm asked how I feel  
I have no proper answer.  
In my wardrobe, there is no  
piece fitting to one another.  
The hair colour growing  
on my head is not mine,  
neither I know which one  
is. I am scared of people,  
though I need them to  
breath. I know I need help  
but I am unable to ask for it.  
My body hates me. Or was  
it the other way around?  
People think I am extroverted  
though not at all I am.  
Pleasing my environment  
is the task I can never  
accomplish. I want to make  
my life end but then people  
would think I'm weak. I am  
afraid of my emotions but  
sometimes I don't know if I  
feel. Do I eat to compensate  
or do I compensate to eat?  
Did I really think I would  
look nice in this? I don't think  
suicide is an option for me.



# impulsivity

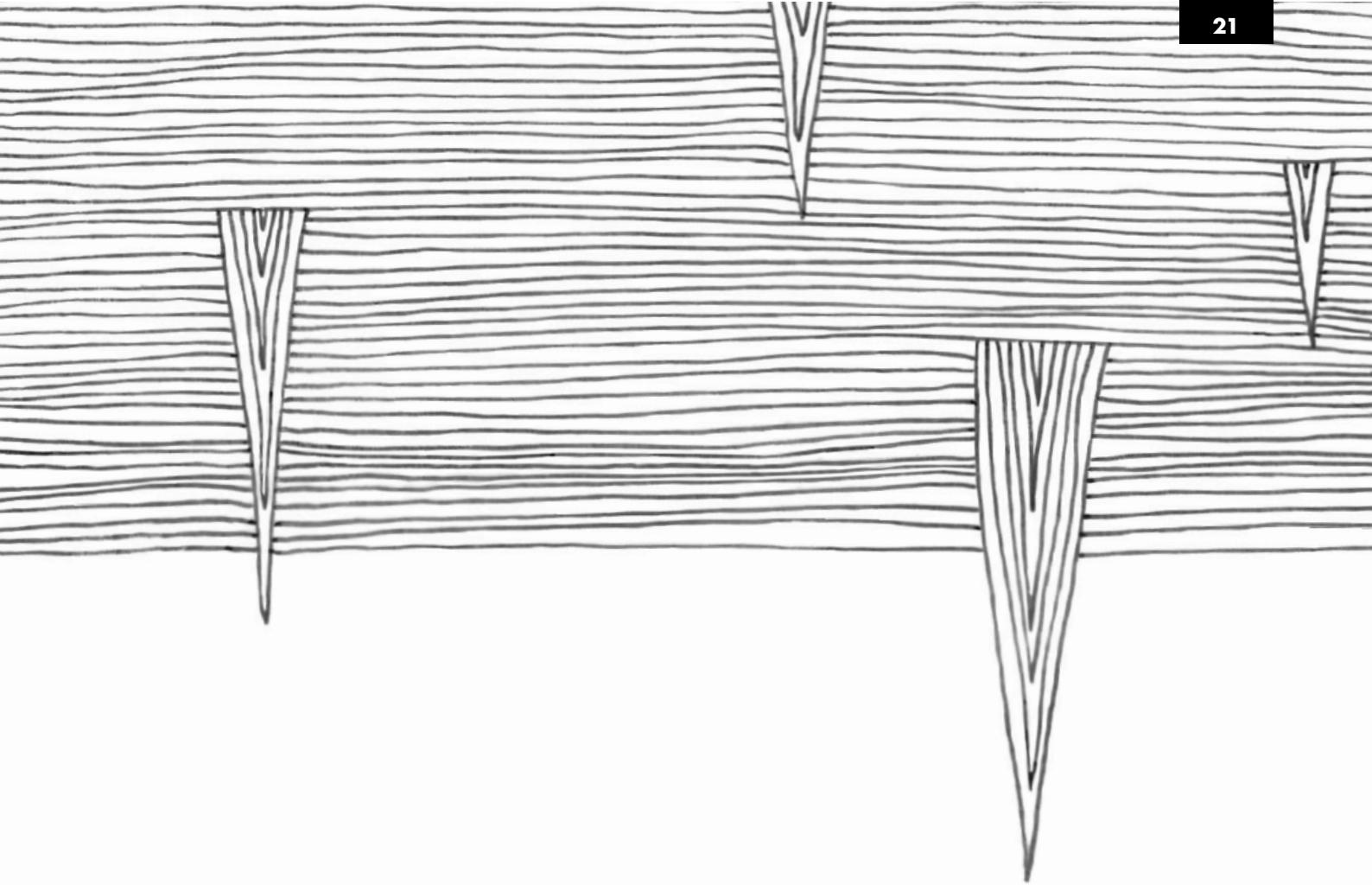
## **4. Impulsivity**

Impulsivity in at least two areas that are potentially self-damaging (e.g., spending, sex, Substance Abuse, reckless driving, binge eating).

Note: Do not include suicidal or self-mutilating behavior covered in Criterion 5.

Fast. Faster. I floor the accelerator. The road is even. The view is clear. Wide fields to the right and the left. The world is blurring. The engine's vibrating but I barely notice. Forward. Further.

The road signs tell me to slow down. A turn in the road is ahead of me. My muscles tense, I prepare for the centrifugal force. The steering wheel firmly in my hands. I won't slow down. Am I in control?

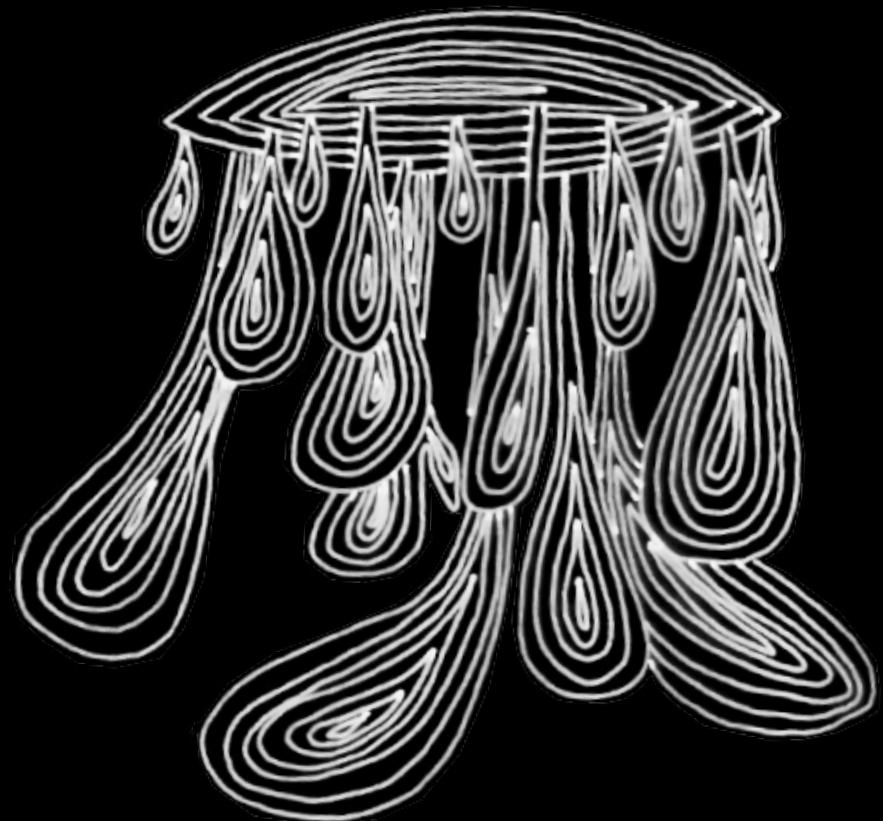


self-mutilating  
behaviour



## 5. Self-mutilating behaviour

Recurrent suicidal behavior, gestures, or threats, or self-mutilating behavior.



**Feel**

I can't,  
I can't,  
I can't,  
I ...  
I have to.

I can't take it. I have to do it. I'm so  
worthless. Piece of shit. Just die. Make it  
end. You deserve punishment.

The wall, the wall, the wall. Smash my  
head. Do I bleed? Smash more. The pain.  
Can you already stop? Smash it. Pain.

Pain.  
Pain.  
Pain.

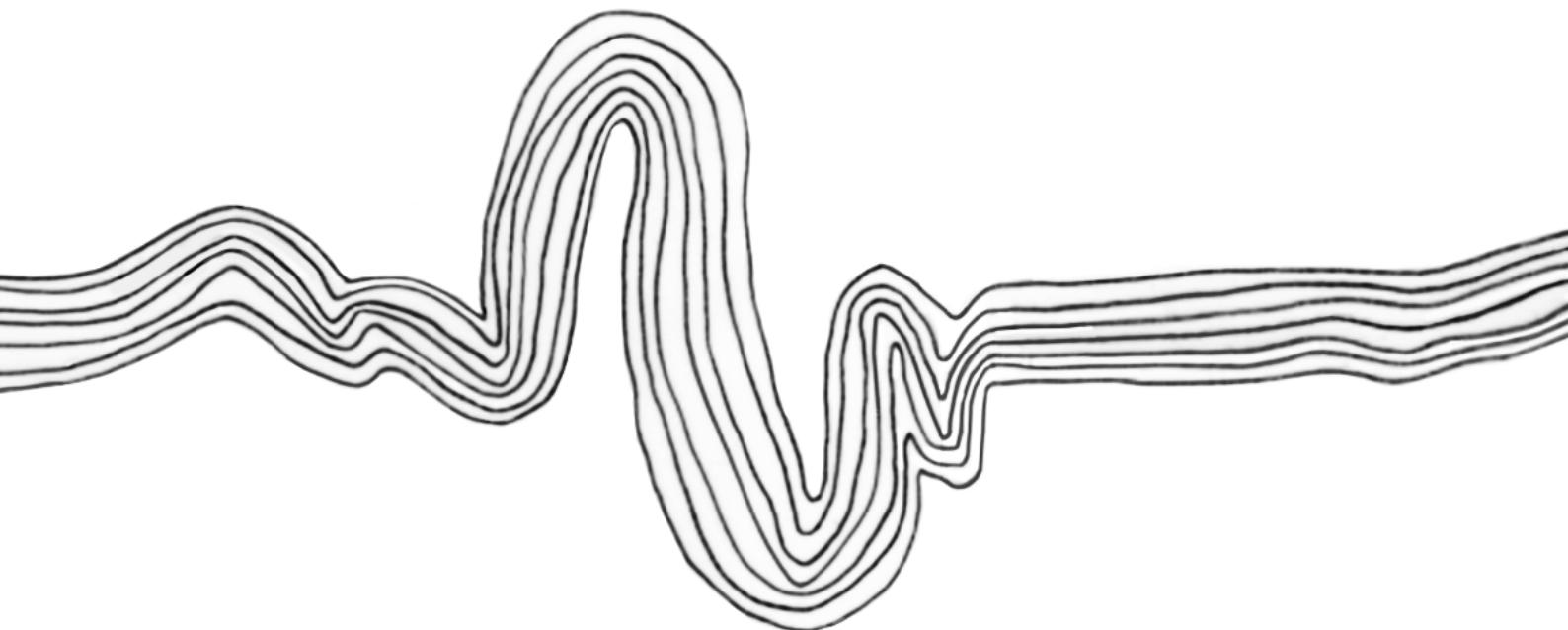
Calm.  
Much calmer now. Breath. Can you  
feel the pain? Am I bleeding? Oh,  
blood. Get a towel. Wash it off.  
You'll be fine. Does it hurt? It does.  
Ok. I'm fine, better now.



# mood instability

## **6. Mood instability**

Affective instability due to a marked reactivity of mood (e.g., intense episodic dysphoria, irritability, or anxiety usually lasting a few hours and only rarely more than a few days).





You go through your day  
Your bad moods faraway  
You eat breakfast and shower  
You know all your power  
You feel good today

As lunchtime comes closer  
You head for the grocer  
As back home in your kitchen  
You forgot spice for addition  
And anger takes over

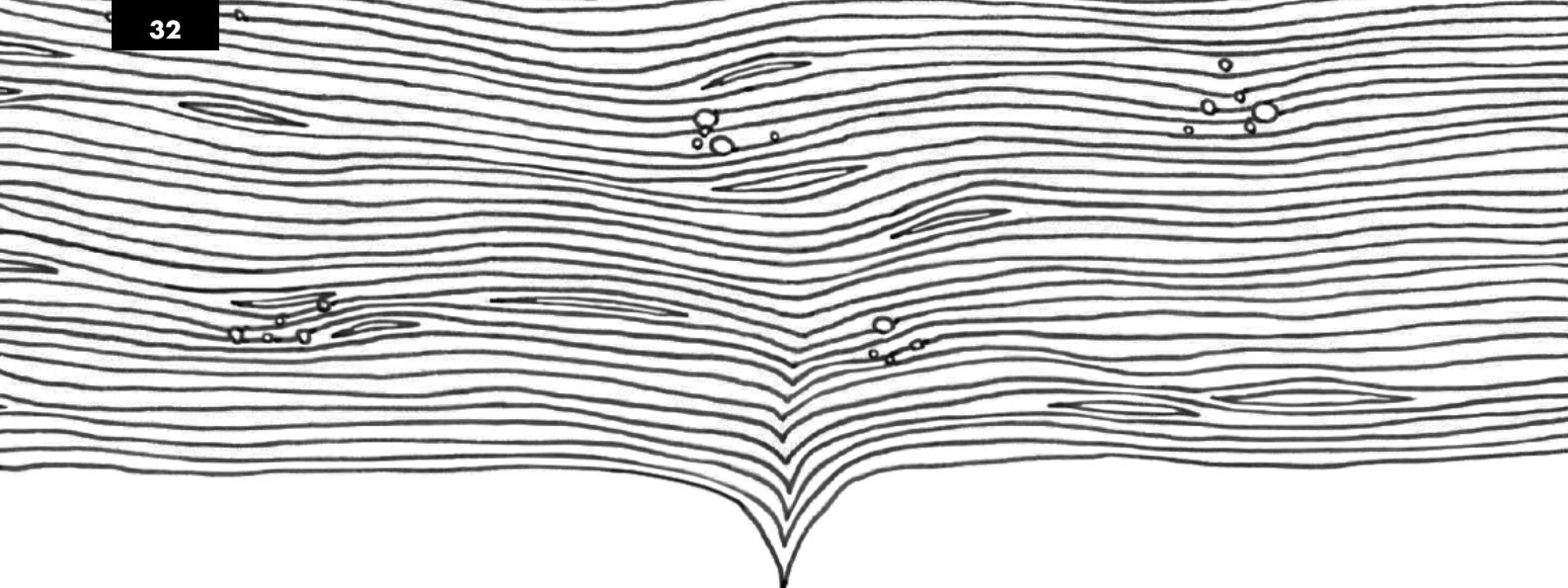
You pass through your day  
Your good moods faraway  
You succumb to grief  
You see no more relief  
You feel bad today

emptiness ...



## 7. Emptiness

Chronic feelings of emptiness.



Drip. Drip. Drip.

You all know this scene from the movies. A leaking water tap. Everything quiet except for the water drop bursting in the sink.

Drip. Drip. Drip.

It's so quiet though it's not. And it's uncomfortable. You want it to stop though you can't. You can't fix it. You can't! And it continues dripping.

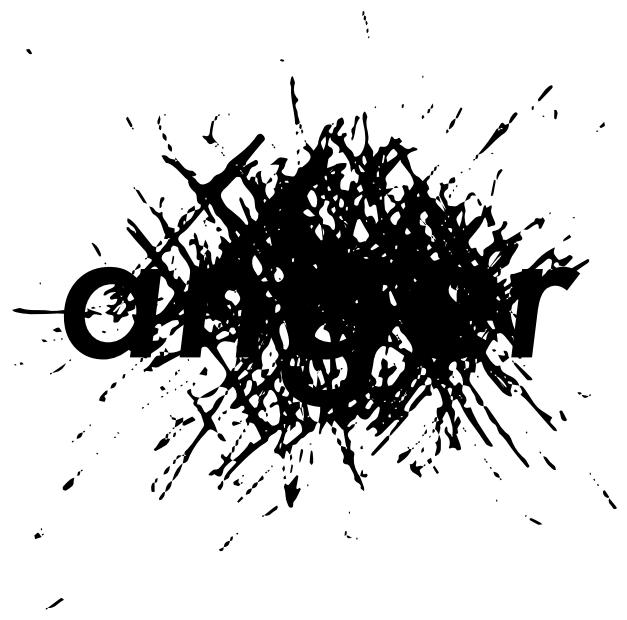
Drip. Drip. Drip.

You can't! You can't take it! You have to do something! Fill the void around the sound of this leaking water tap! Drown it out with sounds!

Drip.

You can't hear it anymore.





### **8. Anger**

Inappropriate, intense anger or difficulty controlling anger (e.g., frequent displays of temper, constant anger, recurrent physical fights).

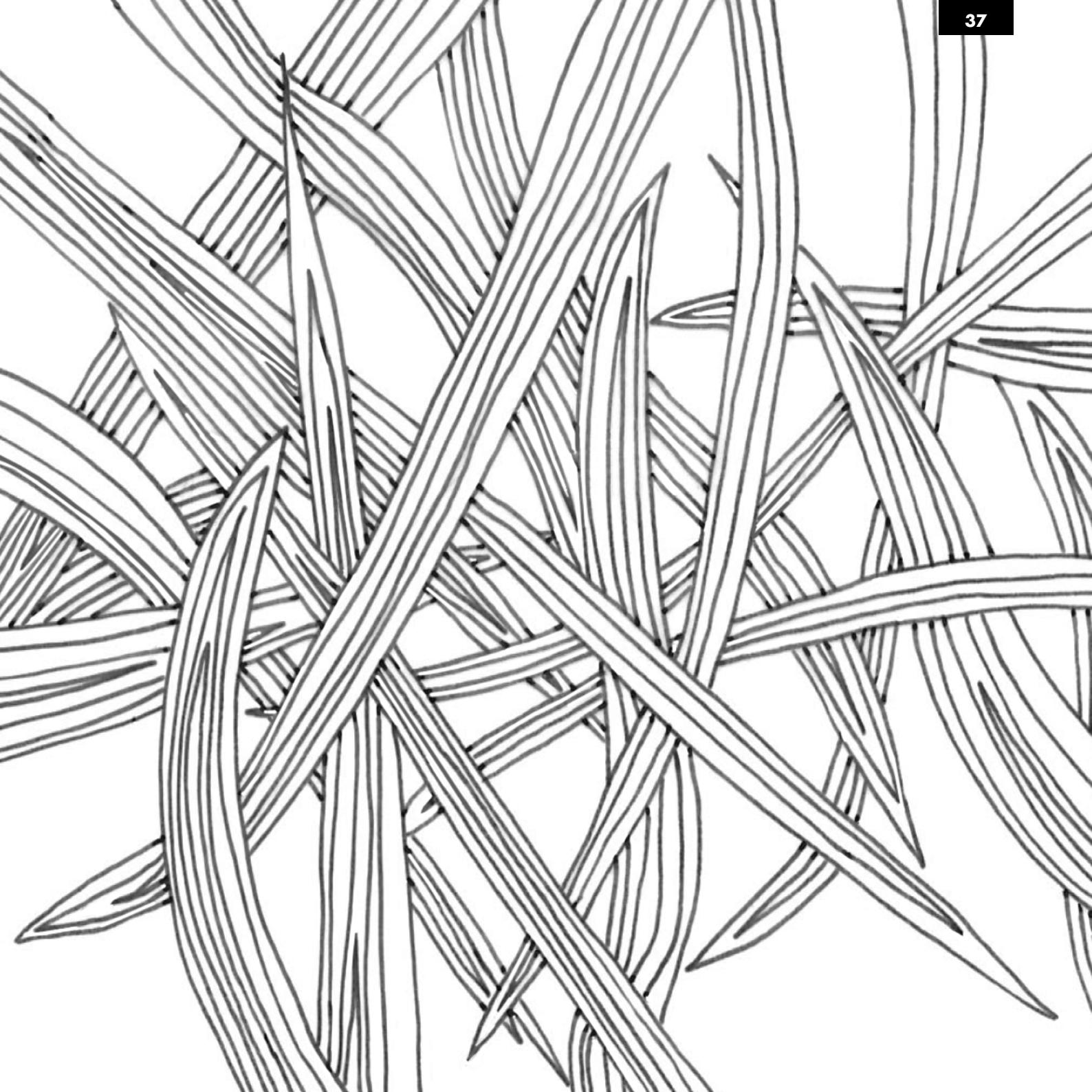
Anger, anger  
Sets me up  
Anger makes me chafe and scrub

Pressure rises  
Fury loads  
Until I think my head explodes

Hands in a hurry  
Mind is mad  
Looking for a fast outlet

Break up  
Break down  
I am about to drown

Anger, anger  
Wildest sea  
I drowned within your killing spree

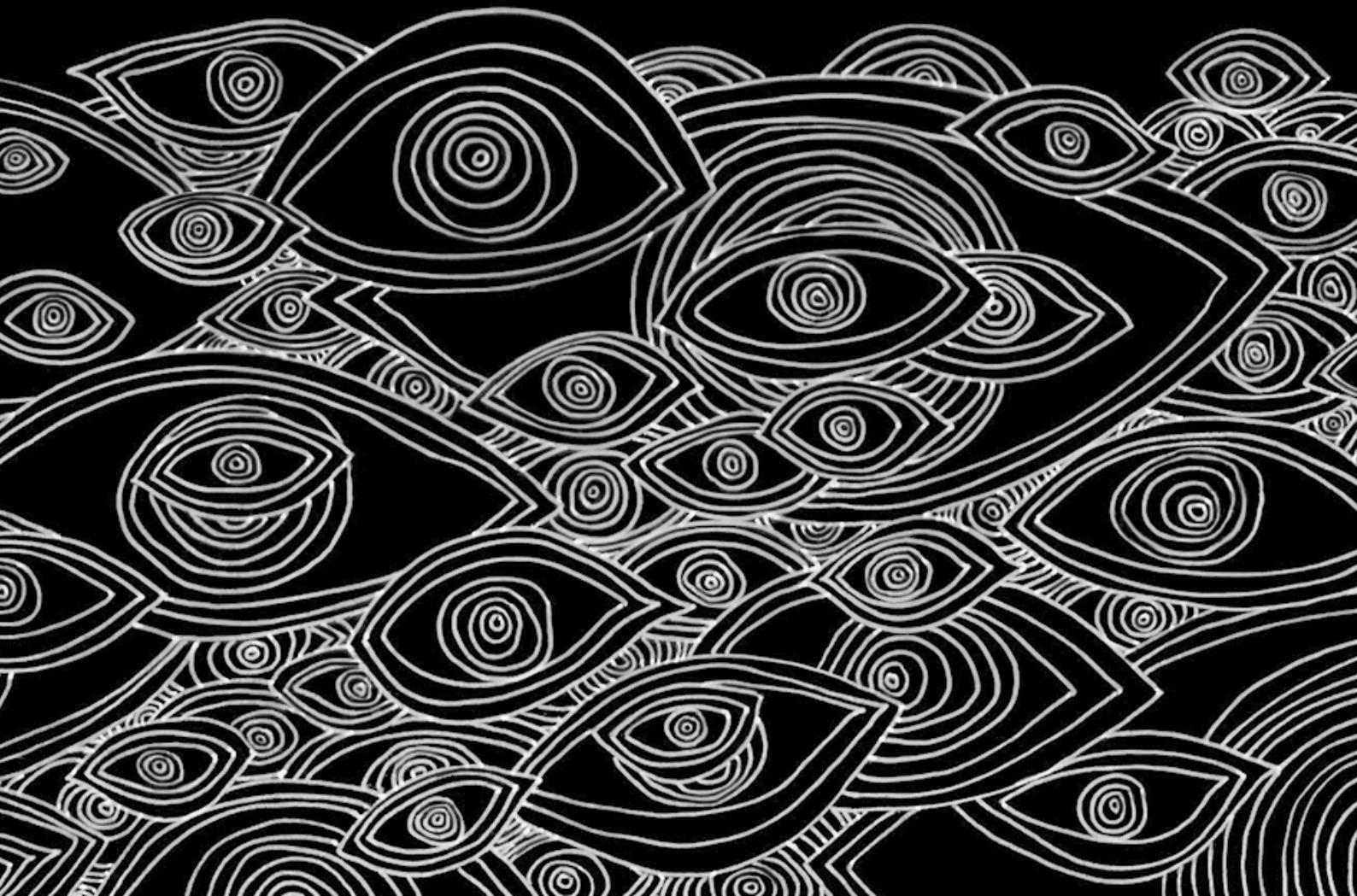


# paranoia and dissociation

## 9. Paranoia and dissociation

Transient, stress-related paranoid ideation or severe dissociative symptoms.





He sits there. His body is slightly shaking. I can see the muscles in his arms cramping. Some seconds ago he was talking to his friends via voice chat. Everything was fine. They were talking about childhood memories. At least that's what I can remember.

His breathing gets heavier. His friends notice he's not talking anymore. They ask if he's fine. He can't answer. He can't hear them. I think he's not aware of his ability to speak. Right now he's somewhere else.

I can see his empty gaze. I know he doesn't know what's going on. I am cold. I can feel the tension in my body. What happened? Where am I? My desk, my computer. I hear my best friend's voice. He sounds annoyed and asks if I'm still there. 'Yes'. He asks me to answer. I don't know what he asked.

**FIND HELP**

## **There is help**

Even if you can only find yourself in one of the 9 shown traits, you should consider seeing a professional. Each of the traits can be equally harmful to yourself and your environment. Even though you would not be categorised within borderline personality disorder (BPD) (according to the DSM-5) since it is diagnosed when you match at least 5 of 9 traits.

If there are people in your environment telling you that you are fine ignoring your feelings, avoiding those individuals could be healthier for you. Your feelings are real and should be taken care of if they impair you! It is hard leaving toxic relationships, friendships and even family members behind but sometimes necessary.

When looking for help, there are different paths you can take. Most countries offer free helplines. Likewise, many self insurances list psychologists for emergency interviews or you can contact them directly. Via social media, you can find self-help forums and fellow sufferers to connect to.

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### **Diagnosis and treatment**

BPD is unique in everyone. It is a very versatile and challenging disorder with a vast influence on the lives of affected individuals and their relationships with other people. It can be found in around 2% of the world's population and therefore is more common than for example anorexia, bulimia or autism. The illness's origin is seen in genetic aberration as well as the social environment and traumatic experiences. Though first symptoms often occur with the beginning of puberty, it will usually not be diagnosed before reaching the age of 18. A diagnosis should only be made by a professional, preferably by a BPD specialist since it is often misinterpreted with other personality disorders.

Another aspect of BPD that must be analysed carefully concerns comorbidities. Comorbidities are disease patterns which can appear next to another illness. For BPD, eating disorders, OCD, substance abuse and even other personality disorders as for instance bipolar disorder (BPAD) are common.

It is important to know that BPD can be treated! There are several forms of therapy as for example dialectical behavioural therapy (DBT) and mentalisation-based treatment (MBT) with quite high chances of success. Also, prescribed medical treatment can make life easier for affected people. Self-medication is explicitly not recommended.

# **CURF?**

# ABOUT US

## **About BLACKBOX**

BLACKBOX is a non-profit organisation dedicated to education, clarification and support for people affected by BPD.

Also, we are no professionals! BLACKBOX is an association of people affected by BPD. We see confrontation as a tool for educational work, offering chances to find out more about yourself.

For our self-help book, we have chosen illustrations, typography and poetry to give people an insight into the emotional world of BPD. It is supposed to be available for free online and displayed at social workers offices, psychologists anterooms and similar places. If you want to find out more visit our website: <https://kaddikanndas4.wixsite.com/website>.

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A self-help book for people affected by  
borderline personality disorder



For more information check out  
our website and social media:  
[www.cutt.ly/6ybaDuD](http://www.cutt.ly/6ybaDuD)  
[instagram.com/b.lackbox](https://instagram.com/b.lackbox)

