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Elmon Prier: Why does Rihanna stay? Could be many reasons

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Over the years, I've learned an awful lot about domestic violence from two friends named Jim and Elsa Croucher, founders of Citizens Against Domestic Violence. They have tirelessly and unselfishly dedicated their lives to educating the public about domestic violence because of the loss of their beautiful daughter years ago.

If I could, I would fly singer Rihanna Fenty to Middletown to sit at the feet of Jim and Elsa to heal and to learn why she ought to leave that abusive relationship with pretty boy Chris Brown. What I have learned over the years is that it's easy to say, "I'd leave Chris in a minute!" But many persons — abused many times — do not or cannot leave their abuser, who may eventually kill them.

At a domestic violence conference many years ago, I picked up a pamphlet titled "What Keeps Women In Abusive Relationships." Rihanna may not know why she isn't leaving Brown after he beat her the way Mike Tyson pummeled Mitch "Blood" Green into submission. There are 52 reasons why women decide to stay with their abusers, rather than leave them.

For some reason, Rihanna may feel guilty and cannot seem to leave Brown. Many of us may not understand this but guilt is a real response on the part of many women who have been victimized or abused.

Another reason, according to the pamphlet, is "hope it's going to improve" or "hope he'll change." Rihanna believes that by just keeping Brown close to her, he'll morph into a role model of love. Here the woman sincerely believes that they can change an abuser into a choir boy.

Wrong.

Then there is the "history together" reason for Rihanna to stay with Brown. Because they are in show business and are the All-American hip-hop/R&B couple, Rihanna doesn't see her life complete without Brown.

"Not wanting to look for someone else" is a reason why women like Rihanna do not leave their abuser.

Even though she's been physically abused, Rihanna has been seen frolicking at Diddy's Miami mansion. She says that she and Brown will cut an album, singing love songs to one another.

Then there is the old "self-blame for the abuse" reason for not leaving the abusive relationship. Here, for some unexplained reason, Rihanna may just be blaming herself for getting beaten up by Brown. Women rationalize with thoughts of "If only I had not done such and such, he would not have harmed me."

Sex — yes, sex — is a major reason why some women do not choose to leave their abusers. Sex continues to be a most powerful motivator to lock women into an abusive relationship. Many times the abuser demands sex just after he's beaten his wife or girlfriend. The female victim doesn't see herself being involved sexually with anyone else — despite the lumps, bumps, bruises and lacerations.

Perhaps the "not identifying what is going on as abuse" reason may keep the Rihannas of the world locked into abuse. Some women have come to believe that being abused is an acceptable part of their relationship. They feel that when their men beat them up, it is a sign that they love them. What they don't seem to understand is that there are many other men who will love them without abusing them.

Despite the 52 reasons why women stay in abusive relationships, Rihanna will have to do some soul-searching to determine why she'll stay in a toxic relationship with Brown.

For more information about abusive relationships, contact Citizens Against Domestic Violence, 2105 Central Ave., Middletown, OH 45044. The phone number is (513) 423-0044.