



Love and the Mystery of Betrayal

Sandra Lee Dennis , Christa Mackinnon (Foreword)

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This achingly moving chronicle and meditation on the mysteries of love and betrayal shows how faith and love can triumph even after the most life-shattering revelations and loss. What is it like to recover from betrayal of trust today in a culture that is blind to the trauma and impatient with grief? When her long-time partner abruptly left shortly before their wedding, the author found nothing had prepared her for the depth and duration of the pain.

She could not understand why this shock hit her so hard. Despite having endured her husband's death years earlier, she was stunned by the intensity of suffering. Her loss of faith in this one person precipitated an existential and spiritual crisis that called her very understanding of human nature into question. She wanted to know why.

As she wrested with what turned out to be unrecognized trauma and subsequent PTSD, she began to keep careful notes of her inner life. She was intent on capturing the paradoxes of love, grief and longing mixed with bewilderment and post-traumatic stress. With bracing frankness and fearlessness, she succeeds.

"Love and the Mystery of Betrayal" seamlessly blends research and reflection, love and heartbreak, rage and transformation, and the personal with the collective. The deep, engaging writing provides the type of solace only a kindred spirit who has been there can. This book blows the whistle on a culture that is blind to betrayal and denies and dismisses emotional suffering. Meanwhile, it guides you through the turmoil, pain and anguish with a gentle touch, understanding heart, and deep wisdom.

This is a multiple award-winning NONFICTION psychological/spiritual narrative book — not recommended for the general reader. It IS highly recommended for those suffering from betrayal and heartbreak or any interpersonal grief, and for healers, family and friends who want to help them get through the crisis.

Love and the Mystery of Betrayal Details

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Mackinnon (Foreword)

From Reader Review Love and the Mystery of Betrayal for online ebook

Alison says

This book is not my typical kind of read, but the author kindly requested that I read her work and offer up a review, giving my honest feedback. This review is my honest response after reading Ms. Dennis' work.

This book is about the kind of trauma a person experiences from a broken relationship. It is a combination of the author's personal memoir, her clinical research of trauma, and her spiritual journey to find healing. Sandra writes with gut-wrenching honesty and transparency, and I imagine many people who have experienced a similar betrayal will feel drawn to her book. The prose flows between personal narrative, to clinical information and psycho-education, to spiritual insight and guidance without much break between each topic, as each topic fluidly rolls into the other. She seems to have read and researched a great deal for creating this book, but I have to say I am astounded at the conclusions she came to.

The author comes from both a clinical and spiritual angle when looking at trauma and healing – a feat I found intriguing and why I agreed to read the book. However, I found her arguments and conclusions were down-right absurd. She seems to have done so much research and soul-searching for this book that I was incredibly disappointed that she landed spiritually pluralistic. I am all for clinical eclecticism, but religious and spiritual pluralism simply does not work. Hands down. The author uses a hodge-podge of "spiritual" babble, taking from any and all religions on her spiritual journey. Basically, if it sounds good to her, then it's truth. At one moment she will write about the Holy Spirit's work and healing in her soul, and at the next be talking about Greek archetypes or New Age healing practices. In her introduction she writes:

"Please be forewarned that I often use the word God in this writing. I use God to refer to the unknowable mystery that animates our world. Other terms that point to the same indescribable source of life include: Spirit, creator, Christ or Buddha nature, the Divine, Atman, Allah, Holy Spirit, source, Higher Power, Divine Mother, the Tao, the mystery, love, truth, silence, still-ness. Maybe these words should all be capitalized to indicate a compelling, alive presence, both independent and yet part of us. Some people by temperament experience this reality as a presence or a being, others as a place, or a state of mind. My inclination is toward the personal. In this writing, they are all pointers—to the living love that surrounds us, the creative source of all that is."

This paragraph offended me. Pluralism does NOT work. Pluralism says that all religions do not claim to have THE answer. Yet in actuality religions DO all claim to have the answer. All claim some sort of exclusivity; or else they would not be distinct religions.

You cannot say that all religions are and believe in the same things. They hugely differ on major issues such as human origin, the nature of God, sin, salvation, end times, and eternal destiny. All religions are NOT the same and do not point to the same God. To say they do is asinine and illogical, and offensive to me as I wholeheartedly side with Christianity. I was baffled and offended that she would lump Jesus Christ as the same as "Buddha" and the Tao. They are NOT the same. If she had really done her research and actually studied the religious books of these religions she would find they cannot mean the same thing.

Christ is Truth. In John 14:6 He claimed that He is the ONLY way to the Father. Not Buddha. Not New Ageism. Not pluralism. You can either trust that fact or deny it as false, but please do not say that He's just one way out of many others. Then that would make Him a liar, and nullify Him as a "way". Therefore, you really are denying Him. Please, readers, use your brain. You cannot practice bits and pieces of each religion as you see fit. By so doing you offend the teaching of each religion. Spirituality has to have authority and

truth. And truth is exclusive in nature. It means that there is untruth. And this book is riddled with untruth. I will not deny the power of Ms. Dennis' trauma, and the impact it had on her life. But I really do feel this book to be incredibly misleading as a guide to spiritual healing or insight.

Sandra Dennis says

What is it like to recover from betrayal of trust today in a culture that is blind to the trauma and impatient with grief? When her long-time partner suddenly left her shortly before their wedding, the author found nothing had prepared her for the depth and duration of the pain.

Despite having lived through her husband's death years earlier, she was stunned by the intensity of the suffering and could not understand why this shock hit so hard. Her loss of faith in this one person precipitated an existential and spiritual crisis that called her very understanding of human nature into question and she wanted to know why.

As she wrestled with what turned out to be a massive trauma, she began to keep careful notes of her inner life--she wanted to capture the paradoxes of love, grief and longing mixed with bewilderment and post-traumatic stress. With bracing frankness and fearlessness, she succeeds. "Love and the Mystery of Betrayal" seamlessly blends research and reflection, love and heartbreak, rage and transformation, and the personal with the collective.

The deep, engaging writing provides the type of solace only a kindred spirit who has been there can. This achingly moving chronicle and meditation on the mysteries of love and betrayal shows how faith and love can triumph even after the most life-shattering revelations and loss.

Amber says

I only got through half of this book. The first half kept me highly interested but the more the book referenced the ONE ex boyfriend who betrayed her with how it was being delivered, it seemed to become more of a book to harp on what he did. I understand the betrayal and how upsetting it can be but reading over and over what he did wasn't getting me anywhere in respects to recovering from such trauma.

Vicky says

This is an unusual book. While it touches on issues of grief, loss, betrayal and steps to recovery, the writing expresses the intense experience that the author went through with so much depth and courage. I was moved by the raw telling of such a personal tale. I think everyone of us has had glimpses of in our lives of either betraying or being betrayed—from telling and being told small lies to the heart-crushing betrayal described in this book, and can learn about ourselves from this book. I felt sad but hopeful at the same time that when we go through something like this it can deepen and open the heart if we have the courage to face it.

Pam Bonsper says

I was encouraged by the author herself to skim through the book, find the parts that were more applicable to me, an apology in a way that her dense undertaking might be weighty and unwieldy. I tried to take her advice, but was pulled into an incredibly compelling journey, which may have been her personal one, but which struck my heart and soul like an uncomfortable yet terribly important knife. You need not have experienced the betrayal of a partner, someone you once regarded as your soul mate, to benefit from the profound words and insights of this academically and spiritually enlightened author. Sandra speaks to anyone who has experienced the wounding of betrayal in all its many aspects, whether it be partner infidelity, abandonment, rape, child abuse, emotional abuse, suicide of a loved one, or any other traumatic event. By reading this book and following Sandra's own experience from devastation to despair to healing and peace, your own story may be impacted in ways you cannot possibly guess.

Susan Walker says

This book really makes the reader think about love and loss. I was impressed by the honesty that the author shows us. She takes the reader thru her emotions and makes you think of your own emotions.

Roger says

Fanmail to the author, Sandra Lee Dennis:

I want to most sincerely acknowledge the unique a-ha(s) I've found in your book.

It's not that they are new notions to me. Rather, you describe (so wonderfully clear and eruditely!) my own inner long-held insights / philosophies / experiences gleaned from my own dark nights.

I feared that my intuited metaphysical thoughts could be never be coherently expressed; further, that no one else now living shared my 'take' on Life, The Universe and Everything even remotely. Yay! I'm not the ONLY one who feels this way - it's icing on a cake that that I can have AND eat at the same time!

Whatever, thank you from the bottom of my heart for reaching out through your literature.

Jay says

I received this book as part of Goodreads Giveaways and First Reads.

I really didn't want to give this book a low rating. This book has a lot of helpful tips to those who have gone through a traumatic breakup, and I think Dennis' well-rounded approach that takes a variety of religious and philosophical beliefs to help the healing process is one that many people should look into. Hey, even I use some of the techniques that she uses when stressed, namely Mindfulness and meditative thought.

Unfortunately, the reason I gave this book two stars instead of three stars is that, quite simply, I was unable to finish reading it. Something about Dennis writing and the stories she told were very hard to digest and get through. I feel that Dennis was writing this while she was still recovering, and this was reflected in the writing.

Mostly, I found myself getting- I admit it- fed up with her sob stories. I am not at all dismissing what she went through, and I completely understand how hard it would be. I can't even begin to imagine the grief she went through. But I wanted to reach through the pages of the book, grab her shoulders and shake her. I wanted to tell her to *just get over it*. This sounds awfully harsh, I know, and I feel bad for saying it, but every time she spoke about something that happened, whether real or imagined (such as Rob's spirit raping her), I wanted to slap her and tell her to move on. It was reaching the point where I could only read a couple of pages before I set the book down.

I managed to get through to about page 200 when I decided I couldn't slog through it anymore. I feel absolutely awful when I don't finish books I've won through Goodreads Giveaways, but this book was making me upset. I do honestly believe it brings up some good points, though, and I feel if the personal stories were separated from the pieces of advice and ways to heal, this would be a better package.

♥ Susan says

This is simply a must-read for anyone who has been a victim of a cluster-b personality disorder. It goes into depth regarding the reasons why external social circles fall in line with the pathological narrative, and why the victim is punished (and why that is usually a female, though not in every case). The gas lighting, abuse, and outrageous behavior is well documented, as well as the unusual and significant, sometimes complex, PTSD response. It also highlights the gift of this experience, a profound spiritual awakening resulting from being brought to your knees by betrayal, abandonment, the devaluing and discard phase, as well as the world's inability not only to understand it, but believe it -- primarily because it is usually so sinister it is difficult to believe, in addition to these personalities being experts and veterans at crafting false realities full of projection, especially after the phenomenon known as splitting (good/bad, the rewriting of history, projecting one's faults onto the rejected to escape their own personal demons). It gives guidance on accepting that no justice will prevail, and no remorse will ever be felt, much less shown, by the perpetrators. The answer lies in grace, because no human could survive betrayals of this magnitude without it.

My only caveat is that she delves into some fairly mystical ideas at several points that I simply could not relate to. Whether these things happened, or they were a result of temporary insanity brought on by PTSD - it is irrelevant with respect to the profound and helpful message of hope and solidarity she provides to those who have also been through, as she sees it, the "dark night of the soul."

J. Ewbank says

Sandra Lee Dennis, has given us a book that should be read by anyone who has faced rejection and yes, betrayal. She not only has experienced deep betrayal, the forces that are unleashed, and the pull of them back together; she is able to verbalize her experiences in psychological and even religious terms. I am a male and so have not had the experiences women have. I did, however, go through some of this when my first wife died. Dennis has gifted us with her life experiences which are not always easy to share, and we appreciate greatly her work for us.

J. Robert Ewbank author "John Wesley, Natural Man and the Isms" "Wesley's Wars" and "To Whom It May Concern"

Kelly Owens says

God Bless you Sandra Lee Dennis for this brilliant, comforting book for the betrayed. I am still reeling from a brutal betrayal, and I am so grateful I found your book. Betrayal is a very severe trauma, which has not received the attention it deserves. Trauma trained mental health professionals are so very needed, especially for patients in need of inpatient treatment. The advice of well meaning friends, while we are in agony, unknowingly causes the victim of betrayal to question their inability to pull themselves together. "Early abandonment threatens laydown nervous system pathways that make us excruciatingly sensitive to rejection, especially in intimate relationships". We feel that there's something fundamentally wrong with us, which we associate with feeling of shame. The subtitle of this wonderful book offers hope when we can not see how we will ever have it again. It reads, "Recovering your trust and faith after trauma, deception and loss of love". I can not recommend it enough.

Craig Bergland says

An outstanding, in depth look at betrayal and it's impact in our lives. The author brings her extensive psychological and spiritual knowledge and experience to bear on her own response to being betrayed in love. Especially helpful to me was that our brain fails to distinguish between physical and emotional trauma, at least in terms of the impact of the trauma on our psyche and person.

While I do have a history of profound betrayal in childhood, I had (for me) an interesting insight into my current situation. Having struggled with significant and early onset (at age 45) physical limitations and increasing debility for the last eight years, this book got me in touch with a profound sense of being betrayed by my body - which seems to speak to the connection between physical and emotional trauma of which the author wrote. It's an interesting and powerful connection for me and, I suspect, others in similar circumstances.

More importantly, this book is outstanding for those struggling to cope with betrayal in love because it is honest about the struggle and the path of recovery. There are no easy answers here, no encouragement to use band-aid measures that mask the symptoms and in so doing leave an emotional time bomb rather than true healing in place. Highly recommended.

Disclosure: I was provided a copy of this book by the author in return for a fair, unbiased review.

Leila says

This book is a must for anyone who is in the throes of deep grief after a betrayal in love. The author grounds her own experience of betrayal in several contexts: that of a culture that is blind and contemptuous to "losers," that of the burgeoning research into trauma and PTSD, that of the particularly American belief that we control our own destinies and cause our own suffering, and most importantly, a spiritual context that feels very true to the depth of suffering that can follow from deception.

This is a spiritually-grounded approach to deep healing—a sincere and clear attempt to help us ground in the spiritual dimension of life when we are suffering, one of the most difficult times to do so. . .

The book has a ring of authenticity that touches the heart. It is both compassionate and lyrical in its writing, and practical in its outlook on the road to "recovery" from a betrayal...

Marisa says

This was a fascinating book. Though I am not in the midst of coping with betrayal I was intrigued to read Sandra's book. It is deeply personal and I believe it would be extremely beneficial for those going through trauma or PTSD. One thing I found thought-provoking was the comfort this book gave me thinking back on events many years previous. Though my personal experiences are not nearly to the extent Sandra's were, her commentary validated some experiences I previously had. I will note this book discusses many idea that were a little "out there" for me, so it is best read with an open mind!

Please note: I received a free copy of this book in exchange for an honest review as part of Sage's Blog Tours.

Who should read it? People struggling to recover from current or previous betrayal.

See all my reviews and more at www.ReadingToDistraction.com

Lily says

If you were ever deeply betrayed, stabbed in the back, through your heart - this is a book for you. Sandra knows your pain. You will get chills reading this book because she describes with great accuracy what you are going through.

I am very grateful to Sandra for writing this book. I went through something similar to what she went through and so reading this book made me feel a bit less crazy. It made me feel like there is somebody who understands exactly what I am going through. Not feeling understood in this pain is almost an unbearable torture and so having this book was an immense relief for me.
