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For Immediate Release

**WHY CAN'T I LET YOU GO?**

**Break Free From Trauma Bonds, End Toxic Relationships, and Develop Healthy Attachments**

By Michelle Skeen, PsyD and Kelly Skeen

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**FINALLY, A HANDS-ON GUIDE TO HELP PEOPLE BREAK FREE FROM THE TRAUMA BONDS AND TOXIC RELATIONSHIPS THAT ARE DESTROYING THEIR LIVES**

**In WHY CAN'T I LET YOU GO, Psychologist Michelle Skeen And Writer Kelly Skeen Offer Proven, Compassionate Advice For Transformation**

People trapped in toxic relationships don't know where to turn. Caught in a cycle of subjugating their own needs, making excuses for their partner's behavior, being pushed away and then pulled back in, it can be impossible to see a way out. **WHY CAN'T I LET YOU GO?: Break Free From Trauma Bonds, End Toxic Relationships, and Develop Healthy Attachments** (New Harbinger Publications; January 2, 2024), the new book by psychologist Michelle Skeen, written with her daughter Kelly Skeen, offers the advice and guidance people need to transform their lives.

Dr. Skeen, who has dedicated her practice to helping people build healthy relationships, brings years of experience to **WHY CAN'T I LET YOU GO?** The book, with its exercises, quizzes, and gentle prodding, is like a suite of private counseling sessions, offering a unique process for transformation. Illustrated with examples from a group of "composite patients" showing how each of them worked through the book's exercises, **WHY CAN'T I LET YOU GO?** encourages readers to reflect on their own situations. No matter how difficult a person's situation is, Dr. Skeen's process, described below, will help them gain clarity and confidence.

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**Attachment styles, temperament, and core beliefs** – The Skeens write that “understanding yourself and your deeply held and often unconscious beliefs is the first step toward liberating yourself from toxic relationships.” The authors help readers gain insight into the childhood experiences that laid the foundation for their adult relationships. Through questions and quizzes, readers learn to identify their innate temperament and to recognize the core beliefs they hold about themselves and others (Do you expect to be abandoned? Do you believe you are fundamentally flawed? Do you need to meet others’ needs at the expense of your own?).

**Trauma Bonding Coping Behaviors** – While a person’s attachment style and core beliefs can’t be eliminated, their power can be minimized over time. With awareness, a person can change their behavior. And when their behavior changes, their relationship dynamics will change. The authors show readers how to recognize their typical coping behaviors in response to triggering relationship events, and what outcomes those behaviors lead to.

**Toxic Types and Relationship Templates** – From the abandoner and the abuser to the controller and the critic, the authors describe some of the personality “types” vulnerable people may be drawn to, as well as the triggering behaviors that are used to suck people in, from love bombing to gaslighting and ghosting. The authors explain how the “repetition compulsion”—the unconscious need to re-enact early traumas – shapes relationships.

**Identifying Your Values** – Once readers understand where they’ve been, it’s time for them to flip the script. By identifying their core values, they can use them to experience new relationship choices and decisions.

**Ending Toxic Communication** – Communication patterns are established at an early age. The communication a person cultivated over the years becomes a predictable pattern—one that keeps them stuck in toxic relationships. The Skeens lay out behaviors that impede healthy communication, including placating, sparring and judging, and provide alternative approaches that allow authentic connections.

**Mindfulness and Grief** – “Mindfulness can change this unhelpful cycle by bringing awareness to the moment-by-moment experience,” write Michelle and Kelly Skeen. The authors provide specific techniques for practicing mindfulness, including journaling and spending time in nature. They also point to the need for acknowledging one’s grief—both from the past as well as from the end of a relationship.

**The New Dating Game** – Once someone has broken free from a trauma bond, they need to recognize that the traps are still out there. The Skeens point out some of the warning signs in potential partners, such as “coming in hot,” and emphasize the importance of awareness. “To avoid straying from your path, you’ll need to continue to be mindful of triggering situations and automatic behaviors in response to your triggers. You’ll also want to bring awareness to helpful new behaviors and promote healthy relationships and attachments,” they write.

Breaking out of the patterns that have led someone to toxic, trauma-bonded relationships is not easy, but, as the Michelle and Kelly Skeen write, “in time you will realize that it’s easier and less painful than the heartache, hurt, and self-doubt you’ve been enduring for years.” **WHY CAN’T I LET YOU GO?** provides the support and guidance people need to create the loving relationships they truly want.

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**Michelle Skeen, PsyD**, co-author of **WHY CAN’T I LET YOU GO**, has a doctorate in clinical psychology. She is author of seven books, including *Love Me, Don’t Leave Me*, all designed to enhance relationships by emphasizing the importance of identifying core values, limited thinking, mindfulness, self-compassion, effective communication, and conflict resolution skills. Dr. Skeen completed her postdoctoral work at the University of California, San Francisco. She co-developed a protocol for the treatment of interpersonal problems that resulted in two books: *Acceptance and Commitment Therapy for Interpersonal Problems* and *The Interpersonal Problems Workbook*. Her work has appeared in dozens of publications and she hosted a weekly radio show called *Relationships 2.0 with Dr. Michelle Skeen* that aired nationally. To learn more, visit [www.michelleskeen.com](http://www.michelleskeen.com).

**Kelly Skeen, co-author of WHY CAN’T I LET YOU GO**, is a writer and museum professional. With her mother, Michelle Skeen, she wrote two books for teenagers – *Communication Skills for Teens* and *Just As You Are: A Teen’s Guide to Self-Acceptance and Lasting Self-Esteem*. Kelly is a graduate of Georgetown University and currently works at the National Gallery of Art. To learn more, visit [www.kellyskeen.com](http://www.kellyskeen.com).