



The Buddha and the Borderline: My Recovery from Borderline Personality Disorder through Dialectical Behavior Therapy, Buddhism, and Online Dating

By Kiera Van Gelder

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Kiera Van Gelder's first suicide attempt at the age of twelve marked the onset of her struggles with drug addiction, depression, post-traumatic stress, self-harm, and chaotic romantic relationships—all of which eventually led to doctors' belated diagnosis of borderline personality disorder twenty years later.

The Buddha and the Borderline is a window into this mysterious and debilitating condition, an unblinking portrayal of one woman's fight against the emotional devastation of borderline personality disorder. This haunting, intimate memoir chronicles both the devastating period that led to Kiera's eventual diagnosis and her inspirational recovery through therapy, Buddhist spirituality, and a few online dates gone wrong. Kiera's story sheds light on the private struggle to transform suffering into compassion for herself and others, and is essential reading for all seeking to understand what it truly means to recover and reclaim the desire to live.

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

Discovering the enlightenment of Buddhism comes pretty late in this shaky, ultimately triumphant account of coping with an elusive mental disorder. Van Gelder had been plagued by suicidal tendencies, drug addiction, chronic instability, feelings of entrapment, and mood swings since she was a young teen growing up in Concord, Mass.. Although off drugs for more than 10 years and a veteran of therapy and hospitals, Van Gelder was only diagnosed with borderline personality disorder (BPD) when she was 30 and seesawing wildly in a relationship. Finally putting a diagnosis to her illness was "like a religious conversion," and she instantly delved into the literature and treatment, including a rigorous multistage process of dialectal behavior therapy, conducted in groups. The first half of this densely detailed memoir chronicles the author's continued yo-yoing into self-destructive behavior and hospitalization; eventually, with intensive BPD treatment zoning in on her six-year-old self molested by a babysitter, she moves through issues of trauma and vulnerability to a desperate need for validation from her parents, divorced early on and in deep denial about her psychic neediness. Studying Tibetan Buddhism confirmed her desire to embrace a nurturing community of compassionate seekers away from hospitals and diagnoses, well documented in this useful work.

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Review

"*The Buddha and the Borderline* is a cross between *Girl, Interrupted* and *Bridget Jones's Diary*. While reading it, I found myself admiring Kiera's talent for vividly describing borderline hopelessness and pain while keeping me laughing with her tales of life as a 'lonely and increasingly horny receptionist.' While this book has something for everyone, Kiera's detailed account of how she recovered from this deadly disorder will be enormously inspiring to people with borderline personality disorder and their family members."

—**Randi Kreger**, author of *Stop Walking on Eggshells* and *The Stop Walking on Eggshells Workbook*

"With wit, clarity, and candor about her sex life, Kiera chronicles her coping with the pain and emptiness of borderline personality disorder while proving that the road to recovery is usually under construction."

—**Jim Payne**, board member of the National Alliance on Mental Illness

"Kiera creates a window into the soul of one coming to grips with severe mental illness. Fully exposed, she shows us the pain, pleasure, and finally, the redemption of the borderline experience. Her gripping story sheds new light upon one of the most misunderstood and stigmatized of all human conditions, and for that, I am deeply grateful. Her words will quite possibly be shocking to some, but will validate and comfort those with the disorder and those who are trying to understand them. Welcome to our world: the pain, shame, and pleasure, and then, finally, the insight and skill-building that leads to healing, love, and happiness. Kiera captures the experience brilliantly."

—**Tami Green**, internationally recognized speaker, life coach and advocate for those in recovery from

mental illness

"*The Buddha and the Borderline* is a strikingly candid and comprehensive account of the author's personal experiences of the effects of borderline personality disorder spanning more than two decades. Van Gelder is a very well informed, engaging, and talented writer. She reveals the multiple and complex symptoms of borderline disorder as manifested in her life with great honesty, revealing the devastating pain with moving and insightful vignettes that are tempered on occasion with a finely tuned sense of humor. This is a must-read for people with this disorder, their families and loved ones, and mental health professionals."

—**Robert O. Friede, MD**, author of *Borderline Personality Disorder Demystified*

"*The Buddha and the Borderline* is a masterpiece. Kiera shares her road to recovery in a captivating way that brings a unique understanding to a confusing, challenging, and controversial disorder. Having the privilege to personally know Kiera, I applaud her on so many levels, least of all this must-read book. She is an inspiration to all who strive and hope for recovery from borderline personality disorder."

—**Perry D. Hoffman Ph.D.**, president of the National Education Alliance for Borderline Personality Disorder (NEA-BPD)

"Kiera's book is destined to become a classic in the growing literature on borderline personality disorder. I expected to get a somber account of a transformation from suffering to enlightenment, but the book I read was not only entirely entertaining and revealing, but also had me up way past my bedtime in stitches. *The Buddha and the Borderline* is seriously funny, authentic, and sublime in its wisdom. The book embodies the Four Noble Truths of Buddhism and integrates the world of core unrelenting suffering with the world of freedom from suffering. Transcendent stuff."

—**Blaise Aguirre, MD**, medical director of the Adolescent Dialectical Behavior Therapy Residential Program at McLean Hospital in Belmont, MA

"*The Buddha and the Borderline* is a gripping, authentic, and ultimately inspiring portrayal of one woman's triumph over borderline personality disorder. An intriguing, riveting, and compelling read, the depth and complexity of both character and story are to be savored. Kiera Van Gelder has shared the private depths of her heart and soul and, in doing so, has bestowed upon the reader a great and sacred gift."

—**Roy Krawitz**, author of *Borderline Personality Disorder: The Facts*

"A very educational and insightful look into the inner world of borderline personality disorder and its treatment. Kiera Van Gelder's witty tone and engaging journey brilliantly chronicles the dialectic of profound suffering and how that suffering can be transformed into a life worth living."

—**A.J. Mahari**, author of *Life Coach and Mental Health Coach*

"*The Buddha and the Borderline* by Kiera Van Gelder is captivating, literary, and insightful. Van Gelder's use of metaphor enhances the haunting nature of her journey through life. As I read the book, I recognized her pain, and cheered her on. Her insights led me to a better understanding of myself and the nature of borderline personality disorder."

—**Lisa Dietz**, owner of www.DBTSelfHelp.com

"Out of a profoundly painful experience, Kiera Van Gelder has written a brave and hopeful book exploring her recovery from borderline personality disorder. Kiera's story will undoubtedly touch countless lives and be a source of inspiration to those who have been diagnosed with borderline personality disorder, their families, and the mental health professionals who play a crucial role in the complex nexus of education, treatment, and support. *The Buddha and the Borderline* is a compelling and invaluable narrative for anyone wanting to learn more about the difficult, yet ultimately rewarding, process of recovery."

—**Amanda L. Smith**, Florida Borderline Personality Disorder Association

From the Publisher

The **Buddha and the Borderline** is a riveting, first-person account of one woman's struggle with borderline personality disorder (BPD)-a diagnosis some have called a psychiatric death sentence-and her eventual triumph over her symptoms through dialectical behavior therapy and Buddhist spirituality.

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Janice Perry:

Why don't make it to become your habit? Right now, try to prepare your time to do the important behave, like looking for your favorite reserve and reading a guide. Beside you can solve your short lived problem; you can add your knowledge by the reserve entitled *The Buddha and the Borderline: My Recovery from Borderline Personality Disorder through Dialectical Behavior Therapy, Buddhism, and Online Dating*. Try to stumble through book *The Buddha and the Borderline: My Recovery from Borderline Personality Disorder through Dialectical Behavior Therapy, Buddhism, and Online Dating* as your friend. It means that it can to be your friend when you feel alone and beside regarding course make you smarter than ever before. Yeah, it is very fortunated in your case. The book makes you a lot more confidence because you can know everything by the book. So , let me make new experience as well as knowledge with this book.

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