

SURVIVING A BREAK-UP

Breaking up with a boy/girlfriend, being dumped, ending a relationship are common experiences for almost all people who engage in relationships. Overcoming is sometimes easy, but mostly one feels hurt, deceived, rejected and lonely; in short, it is heart-breaking. However, life goes on without him/her, just as it did before the relationship. Waking up and realizing that you can strongly stand on your own again is one of the most pleasant feelings but it is easier to say than do.

It is normal to feel bad when a valued person is gone and one should give him/herself time to overcome. This is a transition process. Each transition involves a loss and a novelty. A break-up can be dealt with in the same way that other transitions of life are dealt with.

Both during the relationship and in the break-up period, it is important not to be dependent and to avoid the feeling that "I can't exist without him/her". Do not make someone special your whole life. The following suggestions may help during and after your relationship:

- Keep your friendships active; do not neglect your friends during a relationship.
- Keep engaging in your hobbies and favorite activities.
- Try to continue your personal growth and keep moving towards your goals about your life and career.

By preserving your identity within the relationship, you will both enjoy the relationship more and still have things that make you feel good about your life after you break-up.

When a relationship ends you may experience the following:

Grief: It is natural to have negative feelings such as sadness, grief. Give yourself time to feel sad and adapt to the change. Accept the break-up and move on.

Anger: You may start thinking about his/her rudeness, the things he/she said that have hurt you, his/her lies and thus, you may get angry with him/her. You may have dreams of revenge. This is normal as long as you control your anger and do not harm him/her. Preoccupation: You may preoccupy yourself by going out too often, attending to courses and/or taking to new hobbies. This is the stage when you enjoy your freedom. All these activities may ease the break-up but do not use this preoccupation as a tool in order to ignore or deny your feelings.

Loneliness: You may be bothered by couples everywhere. You may feel abandoned and lonely; this is natural. You get used to his/her existence when you have a relationship, and it is difficult and painful to give up a habit. At this point, start thinking: Do you miss the person or having a relationship or your habits? When you feel lonely, try to spend time with your friends and family. Do not torment yourself by thinking about your loneliness. Relax, because you will get rid of this feeling very soon.

Blaming: You may blame yourself or your ex-boy/girlfriend. You may have thoughts like "It could work if I did.../she did...", "What was wrong about me?", "But he did ...". Think about the reason why your relationship ended, but be constructive not blaming.

Learning: Consider the break-up as a life experience and learn. It is not possible to change the past, but it is possible to make things different in the future. Learn about yourself and how you experience a relationship.

Being single: You have healed and you are moving on. Focus on yourself and the advantages of being single. Enjoy it. You may be uncomfortable around couples, but remember that you can turn being single into a pleasurable experience.

Suggestions for dealing with the break-up better:

- Cry, shout, write or say something. Whatever they are, openly express your feelings. This is the shortest and most powerful way of overcoming. As long as you keep negative feelings inside, they harm you.
- Activate your social life. Call your old friends. Organize boys'/girls' nights. See your close friends, siblings and cousins you like more frequently.
- Think positive.
- Do something new. Especially, do something that you could not while you had a relationship. Thus, you will display your independence.
- Spoil yourself.
- Maybe you will get together again someday, but do not spend your time by waiting him/her.
- Make a list of the qualities that you don't like about your ex-boy/girlfriend. It is simple but it may work.
- Remove the photos of him/her and the presents that he/she bought. You may even change the decoration of your room.
- Avoid places to which you often went together.

- Break-up is not something fun, but you can overcome by having fun. Do not listen to blue songs. Make yourself a CD of the songs that cheer you up and tell you that you can overcome (e.g. I will survive). See comedies.
- Buy a sand bag and a pair of boxing gloves.
- Be realistic about giving yourself time to heal. Do not try to do all at once.
- Take care of yourself although you don't feel like doing so. Eat and sleep well. Exercise.
- When you feel ready, think about what you have learned, what you have lost and what you have gained in this relationship.

Avoid doing the following:

- Do not mistreat your friends, family and the people who are trying to help, or do not isolate yourself.
- Do not lose your faith in people.
- Avoid rebound relationships. Do not immediately start something new with a new person.
- Do not use alcohol or drugs as a way for dealing with the pain. Next morning, you will feel worse, especially if you had done something that you'd regret while you were intoxicated.
- Do not try to communicate with your ex boy/girlfriend. First, pull yourself together. Acting too early may bring about more pain and complicate overcoming.
- Do not set time limits. S/he might have already found someone else. You keep your own pace.
- Do not try to take revenge. This extends and complicates the healing process.
- Do not quickly jump into the idea of "staying friends".
- Do not let doubt and insecurity to eat you up. If you are stuck with the same disturbing thoughts, do something fun or think about your strengths.
- Do not lose your hope. Break-up pain seems to be endless but everything will be much better in a very short time.

If you have difficulty with dealing with the break-up, if you are unable to do anything other than thinking about him/her, if you have thoughts about harming yourself or others you may consider getting help from a professional.

For More Information

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