

Clean Breaks

Four Steps to a Better Breakup

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Breakups can be difficult, even if you were the one initiating the end. If you weren't the one who initiated, then you know it can be especially painful. During my time as a grief counselor, I can tell you that grieving has no time limit. There is always a grieving period after the breakup—even if you wanted it. Some men find themselves mourning the loss of what could have been, or playing out the relationship over and over in their minds. Perhaps it was marriage, kids, travel, or the inability to grow a committed relationship. Now, the foundation of the life you began to grow together will never come to fruition.

It could take weeks or months before you start to move past the effects of the breakup and begin to embrace the next stage of your life. You might experience depression, anxiety or one of the many faces of grief as you heal. Below are several steps you can take to make the breakup process easier.

Re-Establish Those Lost Relationships

Many times when we invest in our relationships and grow them, we do so at the peril of our friendships. It is a common occurrence, and truth be told, you should make your relationship a priority. You *should* grow it and nurture it. However, if you suddenly find

yourself single, there is no better time to reconnect with old buddies and to start doing the things you once loved to do with the guys. Without a doubt, your friends will help you recall all the fun you can have even if she isn't a part of your life anymore.

Eliminate the Pain

The best way to do this is to completely terminate the relationship. You need to cut all ties. I just heard you gasp, but what is the purpose of hanging on? Perhaps you are one of those people who believes you can remain "friends," but really that's nothing more than a self-sabotaging behavior, with the underlying intent of not let-

ting her go. Delete her information from your phone, Facebook, and any other social media sites. This might seem a bit harsh, but I have seen more men believe there is a glimmer of hope because of this unconscious connection. The last thing you need is to see her status change from single to “In a Relationship.” Why would you want to rub salt in the wound? Engaging in this behavior will only undermine your ability to move forward, and we want you to move on.

Reclaim Your Interests

Our interests often fall to the wayside when we enter a relationship. Our time and attention is limited and the new relationship takes precedence. Those fun things you once loved to do become less interesting and your newfound relationship can take up all your time. Now that you’re single, you will have the time to invest in personal interests again. Investing in you is a

wonderful way to heal those wounds. Depending upon your interests, you might find someone new!

Start Dating Again

You’re probably thinking, “Really?” Yes, really. I would advise you to engage in the dating process again. Now, you shouldn’t start the day after the breakup, but I would not recommend waiting too long. If you wait too long, you could end up wallowing in self-pity or idealizing the past relationship. If you do that then no one will ever measure up. Give yourself a chance to catch your breath, and then return to the dating scene with great awareness. Return to dating slowly, and with the intention that you are dating and not looking to dive right back into a relationship. Relationships take time to grow anyway; your intention is to date.

We can all agree that breaking up

is hard to do, but keep in mind that sometimes rejection can be a true protection. It may not be what you expected, but in the end, it can truly be a blessing. If you are faced with the loss of a relationship, whether you wanted it or not, allow yourself time to grieve. When you feel the time is right, start taking these small steps toward recovery. Be sure to take the opportunity to learn from the relationship and apply the positive points to future relationships.

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