



Julianne Cantarella

## THREE WAYS TO OPEN UP YOUR HEART TO LOVE

When I was working in hospice as a social worker many years ago, it was then that I learned an unfortunate truth ... no one escapes pain and sorrow. Just about everyone I encounter in my practice today has experienced some sort of painful relationship ending, and I've seen firsthand how it has impacted his or her ability to trust and love again.

No matter how the relationship ended - divorce, death or just a romance that fizzled out - the loss can be enough to negatively impact one's ability to love or consider loving again. However, we all know the benefits of a loving committed relationship and the rewards are always more favorable than the risk.

Below are three ways to help you move forward and once again open your heart to love.

Allow yourself to heal. Clearly, there will be pain when a relationship ends. There will be tears, sadness and grief. The best way to heal is to allow yourself to feel the pain, don't resist it. It's happening for a reason, and if you stuff your emotions you won't heal. Pain is natural and ultimately it helps us grow and become stronger.

Allow yourself to forgive. As Gandhi once said, "The weak can never forgive. Forgiveness is an attribute of the strong." Let's be honest, it takes a strong person

to love. It takes a strong person to be vulnerable and allow himself or herself to take a chance, knowing they could be hurt, again. That said, we both know the only one you are hurting when holding on to anger is you. It's time to forgive and allow yourself the opportunity to open your heart and find love again.

Change your narrative. While I am the first to acknowledge the need to process one's experience, I will caution you to allow your experience to define you and your future. While we need to review in order to heal, sometimes hanging on to the story can block us from creating a new story or moving forward. After you've allowed yourself to heal, it's time for you to change your narrative and work towards creating a new story. There is something freeing by closing one chapter and starting a new one. Look at it as a new beginning if you will, where everything is bright and new, filled with possibilities of what could be.

I hope that once you heal, forgive and let go, you are able to move forward and open your heart to love. Sometimes it's as simple as choosing love. I am not going to tell you it will be easy, but I am going to tell you it will be worth it. I know firsthand the joy of a loving committed relationship and it is the motivation behind the work I do everyday as a matchmaker and dating coach. Love is possible, if you are willing to make the emotional investment.

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*Julianne Cantarella, MSW, LSW, is a licensed social worker with a deep passion for people. Her personalized approach to matchmaking and date coaching has earned her the title of New Jersey's TOP Relationship Expert. A professional matchmaker and dating coach since 2005, Julianne has the skills to successfully match her clients with their perfect partner or coach them into a loving committed relationship. Julianne is the owner, principle matchmaker and dating coach at New Jersey's Matchmaker, located in Northern New Jersey.*  
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