



## **Surviving A Break-Up**

Whether you're 16 or 60, breaking up is hard to do. A relationship dissolution can happen for countless reasons including an affair, relocation, betrayal, desertion or abuse. When it happens, one can feel loss, loneliness, desperation, fear and intense pain over the situation. But as Winston Churchill said: If you're going through hell, keep going."

At the outset, dominant feelings involve denial, numbness and shock. The reality that your relationship is over can be a difficult adjustment to make. Some people go into auto-pilot, completing everyday tasks as if nothing happened. Many people wonder what they could have done to change the circumstances or how they could've held it together. They hope it's merely a phase, or that reconciliation is just around the corner.

The next phase involves intense anger and fear. Once the reality sinks in, it can feel like these emotions will never end. Physically, your stomach cramps, your short of breath and feel a heavy weight on your chest or stomach. Many lose their appetite and their ability to concentrate.

This can lead to depression, despair, loneliness and withdrawal. Anger turns to sadness and idealization. As you work through your feelings, most people go through ongoing ups and downs. One day you may feel fine, and the next the sadness or anger returns. In time, meaning and zeal for life return. You begin to see shared responsibility and start to focus on self-improvement.

Many people find traumatic events become empowering and lead to growth. Take time to nurture yourself and your heart, knowing the feelings you're going through are normal in the grieving process. While you may be tempted to skip sleep, meals or exercise, pay attention to your health and ensure you get the proper care and nutrition you need. Exercise regularly and avoid alcohol. Allow yourself the time to feel the pain and uncomfortable emotions associated with your breakup before moving on to another. Activities can help fill in the empty space where your relationship used to be.

Support systems are invaluable during a break-up. Find friends and family members who are considerate, patient and non-judgmental. Talk, cry and vent your feelings. Focus on relationships and projects you've always wanted to do, but your partner never encouraged. This will help you work through your grief and survive the pain. If you have nobody to turn to, try visiting a counselor or therapist to work through your feelings in a trusting and productive environment. If you experience intense chest pain, heart palpitations, lightheadedness or dramatic changes in your appearance, seek professional assistance.

Breaking up is a universal experience, and the emotions are felt by countless people time and time again. Books, songs and screenplays have all been developed around this emotion. In time, and with work, you can move past the uncomfortable feelings and become a much stronger, healthier individual.

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