



Managing Your Feelings After A Break-Up

Ending a relationship is one of the most avoided and feared human experiences. As a culture, we have no clear-cut rituals for ending relationships or saying good-bye to valued others. We are often unprepared for the variety of feelings we experience in the process. Some common reactions are as follows:

Denial- We can't believe that this is happening to us and that the relationship is over.

Anger- We are angry and often enraged at our partner or lover for shaking out world to it's core.

Fear- We are frightened by the intensity of our feelings. We are frightened that we may never love or be loved again. We are frightened that we may not survive our loss, but we will do so.

Self-Blame- We blame ourselves for what went wrong. We replay our relationship over and over, saying to ourselves, "If only I had done this. If only I had done that."

Sadness- We cry, sometimes for what seems an eternity, for we have suffered a great loss.

Guilt- We feel guilty, particularly if we choose to end a relationship. We don't want to hurt our partner, yet we don't want to stay in a lifeless relationship.

Disorientation And Confusion- We don't know who or where we are anymore. Our familiar world has been shattered. We've lost our bearings.

Hope- Initially we may fantasize that there will be a reconciliation, that the parting is only temporary, that our partner will come back to us. As we heal and accept the reality of the ending, we may dare to hope for a newer and better world for ourselves.

Bargaining- We plead with our partners to give us a chance. "Don't go," we say. "I'll change that if only you'll stay."

Relief- We can be relieved that there is an ending to the pain, the fighting, the torment, and the lifelessness of the relationship.

While some of these feeling may seem overwhelming, they are all "normal" reactions. They are necessary to the process of healing, so that we can eventually move on and engage in other relationships. Be patient with yourself.