

A Better Way to Break Up!

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As unique and individual as every relationship may be, there are sound and effective rules of disengagement and strategies that lead to a new chapter while minimizing hurt and harm. Let's explore a kinder, better way to move forward at the end of a relationship.

The decision to end a relationship is, more often than not, a difficult one. Ending a relationship is often fraught with disappointment, a sense of failure, resentment, anger, and loss. No wonder breaking up is hard to do. And when we're in pain and dealing with loss and uncertainty, it's hard to do it well. Of course, every relationship story is unique. Whatever made a relationship work — or is making it fall apart — the way forward need not cause even more pain.

In some cases, where there is a history of physical or emotional abuse, safety, and removal from harm are the only way forward. In cases such as this, there is often little by way of choice, or opportunities to choose kindness over personal safety and security. But in the majority of break-up situations, where a relationship is no longer working despite all efforts, we can choose a kinder, more compassionate way forward, one that minimizes hurt and harm, frees us from remaining stuck and in pain, and leaves both parties whole and able to move on.

The golden rules of breaking up

Break-ups are challenging and difficult. And when the going gets tough, we can become tough to deal with, quick to anger, blame and shame. Golden break-up rule number one is the golden rule— treat others as you would like others to treat you. Golden break-up rule number two: behave impeccably, at your highest and best... at every stage of the break-up. And golden rule number three: make your faith in your ability to handle whatever comes your way — including the emotional rollercoaster of the end of a relationship — bigger than your fears. Faith in yourself, and a belief that you can handle whatever comes your way, versus fear of not

handling things well and being alone, will carry you through the challenges of a break-up.

Before breaking up

Relationships are vulnerable entities. Sometimes, even when we give a relationship our best, and invest time and effort, they do not work out. Before ending a committed, long-term relationship, where both parties have invested a great deal of time and effort to built a life together, it is important to do everything possible to see if make the relationship work. Try to save the relationship so you have no regrets. If in the process of trying to keep a struggling relationship together, it becomes apparent that it is not possible, you can transition out of the relationship knowing that you and your partner did everything you could to make it work. When you behave impeccably and choose to honor your relationship with the time and effort — no matter what the outcome — you can move forward and minimize self-doubt and resentment.

During the break-up

At the end of a relationship, we can find ourselves flooded with negative emotions, like disappointment, blame, shame, a sense of failure, and fear of an uncertain future. For example, we could feel deeply disrespected and humiliated if our former partner has moved on with a new partner while we are still struggling with loss. Or we can feel shamed and blamed by our partner, who might resent our choice to end the relationship.

Whatever negative emotions arise, it is important to remember that people, through their choices, actions, and reactions, show us not who we are, but who they are. Even when you're feeling hurt, humiliated, or fearful, remember to treat your former partner as you

would wish to be treated. Just as behaving at your highest and best while in the final weeks before deciding to break up allows you to move forward with no regrets, dealing impeccably with the many bumps in the road that arise through the challenging weeks and months in the aftermath of a break-up, will free you from prolonging the painful post-break-up phase.

While dealing with the fallout of a break-up, it is extremely important to treat yourself with kindness and compassion. Allow yourself to feel bad, somewhat sorry for yourself, and a little afraid. But watch out for negative self-talk, self blame and doubt, prolonged low moods, and negative forecasting about your future. Take a break when you're feeling emotionally drained. Remember that you're not alone. Reach out to friends for companionship and consolation as you are grieving a loss. And if you're struggling with feelings of guilt, shame, failure, or fears of an uncertain future, seek professional help.

Beyond the break-up

Once a relationship has ended, let it go. It is important to allow yourself — and your former partner — the time and effort to recover and regroup and move on. The story of most relationships — including relationships that have ended — includes many good times, shared values, and a level of comfort in the company of a former partner. Remember to treat your former partner as you would like them to treat you — with respect and compassion. Remember there was good in the relationship and your choice to break up is from the challenges and negative aspects of the dynamics between you two.

Ending or limiting your contact with your former partner allows you both to move on. Set boundaries and keep them. While

backsliding into contact with a former partner can be tempting and feel familiar and comfortable at a vulnerable moment, more often than not it negates a great deal of genuine work and effort to move forward, and results in prolonging hurt and harm to both parties.

Whether you are looking for love, in the midst of a committed relationship, or ending a relationship that is no longer viable, we are here to live our lives fully, and with integrity, compassion, and respect for others and for ourselves. You end relationships to live a higher better version of your life. It is important to pause and reflect on how you can make an unhealthy relationship work by changing yourself, avoiding and sacrificing important values and needs, but our healthy life goal is to find a partner dynamic that serves your highest and best version of you with ease and accepting who we both are, as we are.

The golden rules of breaking up

Treat others as you would like others to treat you. This can be challenging during a break-up, but treating your former partner with respect and compassion will leave you feeling healthy and whole.

Behave impeccably. Make every effort to make your relationship work, and when all efforts fail, be on your best behavior as you transition out of your relationship, no matter how challenging. When you behave impeccably, at your highest and best, you can move on without regrets and self-doubt.

Make your faith in yourself and your ability to handle whatever comes your way, bigger than your fear of what lies ahead as you begin a new chapter of your life.

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About the author

Dr. Monica Vermani is a Clinical Psychologist specializing in treating trauma, stress and mood & anxiety disorders, and the founder of Start Living Corporate Wellness. She is a well-known speaker, columnist and advocate in the field of mental health and wellness.

*Her book, A Deeper Wellness, is currently available for pre-sale on Amazon, <https://www.book.a deeperwellness.com/> and her in-depth online self-help program, **A Deeper Wellness**, offers powerful mental health guidance, life skills, knowledge and healing, anywhere, anytime. <https://www.a deeperwellness.com/> <https://www.drmonicavermani.com/>*