

## SEPARATION - HELPFUL TIPS FOR ENDING A RELATIONSHIP

Helpful hints for ending a relationship because breaking up is hard to do

"Remember when you held me tight,  
And you kissed me all through the night.  
Think of all that we been through,  
And breakin' up is hard to do."

so sang Neil Sedaka in the 1960s.

Ending is a timeless, painful issue and a hard one to face. There is no Good Way to finish a love affair.

Many different circumstances can cause one, or both of you, to re-evaluate your relationship. It can be a particular, seemingly insurmountable, issue, but sometimes the yawning gap just quietly sneaks up, causing a mighty draft between the two of you.

Back in the day, there was the possibility that an ending could be just that .... finality. But now with social media feeds, there is every chance that an ex may show up from time to time, and sometimes apparently having all kinds of fun without you.

Try and have a face-to-face conversation, however painful.

Never, ever allow a relationship to end by text or email. Those clichés – 'it's not you, it's me' or 'I just need some space' are tired and confusing. The truth is that disappointment has overtaken hope and at least one of you now believes that there is no creative way forward together.

Treat each other with some respect and sensitivity if at all possible.

Anger is a useful way of exhibiting distancing behaviour and therefore a great defence ('I wish I had never met you' or 'I've wasted the best years of my life') and is a lot easier to manage than the underlying emotion: often great sadness.

Do avoid the 'Let's be friends' route. It is possible, but unlikely at this point and usually a lot easier once some time has passed to allow you to become separate individuals again.

If you have loved, then never allow an ending to eclipse what you have had. It does no justice to either of you or your relationship.

The wonderful songwriter Carol King celebrates this in the poignant 'It's Too Late' – singing, 'Still, I'm glad for what we had and how I once loved you'. But before the final blow, take time to evaluate. Relationship counselling is not always driven by the need to remain a couple, and insights can facilitate a less painful and more creative ending.

Sometimes it also becomes apparent that with time and kindness, people will come to realise that a little work can help them to understand the reasons underlying what has changed and to find a different and better way forward together.

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