

Lost Love

Psychological Issues Related To Separation / Divorce

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If you have ever been left or felt betrayed by a spouse or lover you know the sinking feeling in your stomach and the racing thoughts about being on your own, facing the future alone. Even if you broke up / filed for divorce, the sense of betrayal, disorientation and feelings of hopelessness can be devastating for your sense of self and leave you feeling powerless. To regain empowerment and land on your feet, you'll need to deal with some intense feelings and face some difficult issues.

5 Stages To Acceptance And What To Do If You Get Stuck

- 1) **Denial.** You are in a state of emotional shock thinking, "This can't be happening to me!" You feel numb, denying that there was something amiss in the relationship. You might feel depressed, with loss of appetite, loss of sleep and inability to find pleasure in things you usually enjoy. If this is how you feel, you need to reach out to family and friends. Ask them to give you the support you need. At this point you need people around you that you trust and that can *listen* to you sharing your thoughts and feelings.
- 2) **Anger.** You feel an intense anger towards your former partner wishing that some kind of punishment would befall her/him. It feels better being angry, blaming your former partner. If you are the one who left, you might feel guilty that you caused so much pain. If this is how you feel, you need to find safe ways to vent and release anger / guilt. You don't want to act on this kind of intense anger. Non-destructive ways are: Talk to friends, imagine punishment - don't do it in real life! Release anger by screaming and crying. Use humor by imagining your ex being in an embarrassing situation.
- 3) **Bargaining.** You regret being angry, thinking there must be something you can do to get your love partner back. You promise to change. You say you won't complain or be difficult. You are overwhelmed with fear of being alone. If this is how you feel, you need to focus on what you can do for yourself. Remember times where you felt strong and able to take care of yourself just fine. Build up your pool of friendships. Take up old interests or start something new. Be aware- Pursuing a former love partner is most likely going to make her/him run further away from you!
- 4) **Letting Go.** You have realized that your love relationship has indeed ended. You are trying to adjust, although still feeling depressed, asking yourself what the purpose of life is, and wondering if you can be happy again in another love relationship. This can be a rough time, full of doubt about yourself and the meaning of it all. If this is how you feel, you need to focus on connecting to others in friendships. Take a look at the advantages of being single, and on what you need and want in relationships.
- 5) **Acceptance.** You have accepted the loss of your former love relationship. You no longer feel depressed, betrayed or angry. You feel capable of coping with the future alone. You have no need to contact former love partner. Your self worth is not dependant on whether you are in a love relationship or not, and you have no need to rush into a new. If this is how you feel, you are free to choose to stay single or establish a love relationship of your own desire. Be careful that you don't choose to stay single out of fear of rejection. If this is the case, you haven't fully accepted your loss and might benefit from rethinking previous stages.

This article is inspired by “Rebuilding, when your relationship ends.” By Bruce Fisher and Robert Alberti.

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