



FALLING OUT OF LOVE: SURVIVING A BREAK-UP

Don't take your love away from me

Don't you leave my heart in misery

And if you do then I'll be blue

`Cause breaking up is hard to do.

Song by Neil Sedaka (1962)

It happens to almost everyone. You meet. You like each other. You have a relationship. Then something happens. Maybe one or both of you stop liking the other and you break up. Sound familiar?

Sometimes you can accept it. You feel O.K. But usually it's not O.K. You feel:

hurt
betrayed
rejected
lonely
all of the above

These are the feelings that go by the name of "heartbreak." No one ever knows quite how to deal with them.

First of all, we must realize that the feelings of hurt, rejection, and loneliness are normal feelings when you lose something or someone you value. Allow yourself a reasonable amount of time to get over these feelings. But while you're going through it, here are some things you can do to help yourself.

Probably the best way to look at any break-up is to see it as a "transition" in your life. One wise person once said, "A transition is simply a stage between one state of certainty and another state of certainty."

If put into the proper perspective, a break-up can be dealt with much like many other transitions in our lives, like the transition between living at home to living on

your own. All transitions involve some form of loss and the insecurity of going on to something new.

But what gets us into "heartbreak hotel" when a relationship breaks up can be summed up in one (long) word: over-dependency.

If you are now in a relationship in which you can not exist without your boyfriend or girlfriend, you are probably over-dependent on that person. And, you could be headed for trouble if the relationship ends.

So, the key to dealing with a break-up is in the way you developed the relationship while it was going on. Know how to avoid over-dependence:

Keep valuable friendships alive.

Don't alienate yourself from family or others who have served as your support system.

Keep up with hobbies and activities you have always enjoyed.

Maintain your own development and career/life goals.

In short, don't give up your whole life for that one special person.

When a break-up occurs, we all need friends to talk to, to console us, and friends to agree with us that it was not our fault.

And we need familiar activities to remind us that we are still worthwhile and likeable.

Regardless of how close a relationship is each person should always have some identity apart from the other. There are two very good reasons for this:

While you're in the relationship you will feel better about yourself.

If the relationship ends, you will still have that part of your identity to feel good about.

A broken relationship is a genuine loss. It is going to require some adjustment, but somehow we must try to deal with it as a natural transition.

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