

How to End a Relationship the Right Way (Advice)

7 steps to minimize the pain of breaking up with someone

Ending a Relationship - Cruel to Be Kind?

To end a relationship is a big decision, worsened by that heart-sinking feeling of knowing you have to tell them. The actual *thought* of breaking the news to your soon-to-be-ex can make you feel anxious, even terrified. Sometimes it seems easier to continue with what isn't working than to 'upset the applecart'. But if the relationship isn't right for you, then, ultimately, it's not right for them either, and the longer an unfulfilling relationship continues, the less chance we have of finding better, happier relationships.

Let your partner hear it from you first. Instant messaging, texts, and social media make keeping secrets harder than in previous centuries. So tell no one (or a very few trusted people) before you break the news. Hearing it on the grapevine from a third party is pretty awful.

It may seem impossible to end the relationship *and* keep your partner's dignity intact, but it isn't. First, here are some practical do's and don'ts. Then we'll talk about how to handle your emotions during the break-up.

How to End a Relationship in Style

Ending a relationship is never going to be pain-free, but here are some very practical ways to lessen the pain:

Step 1: Tell your partner you need to talk to them. Don't let them think that you are planning a nice intimate afternoon, only for them to be hit by a bombshell. Do this as close to the actual date and time as possible. It's unfair to leave them stewing for longer than necessary.

Always end the relationship in person. Phone calls, texts, emails, or getting other people to tell them are unkind and cowardly ways of breaking up, *unless you fear violence from your partner*.

Step 2: Make sure you will not be disturbed by interruptions by arranging to break the news in private. If they do become emotional,

it can be embarrassing to have any strangers around, even if it's in a quiet park.

Choose a neutral place rather than somewhere you share. Avoid breaking up with them in a place that has past romantic associations for the two of you.

Step 3: Avoid ending the relationship during an argument or when highly emotional. This just sends the signal that it was said "in the heat of the moment" and perhaps you didn't mean it.

By ending the relationship calmly and clearly, you convey you're serious, that it's definitely over.

Step 4: Don't be swayed by their emotional response. If they become upset it may be tempting to try to comfort them or even tell them that you didn't mean it just to stop them from hurting. Don't send mixed messages. This will make it more painful in the long-term.

Step 5: Avoid blaming your partner or criticizing them. Talk about the relationship as if it is an object outside of you both. "*It* has stopped working" is better than "*you* have stopped bothering with me" or "*you* never say anything nice!" Keep language as non-emotional as possible. Keep the word "*you*" out of it as much as possible. Express regret that things didn't work out. And remember, if things are wrong for you, then they too could actually have a better relationship if released from this one.

Step 6: Avoid clichés. No one wants to hear: "It's not you, it's me!" or "You're really nice, but..." or "We can still be friends" (you may be, but now is not the time to discuss that). Nor does anyone want platitudes like: "You're bound to meet someone really special who is more right for you than I am..." Just stick to the facts of the matter.

Step 7: Now the above steps are all good and well, but if you are so overwhelmed with anxiety when actually ending the relationship that sensible advice flies out the window, then something else needs to happen. You need to *prepare your emotions*, to be calm and clear. Being too emotional "swamps" the thinking brain, making it harder to talk and think clearly.

If you were going to do a play, you wouldn't expect not to rehearse! Likewise, the more you rehearse in your mind, while very relaxed, telling your partner it's over, the easier it's going to be to find yourself naturally feeling calm when you actually do it.

Find yourself a quiet space, perhaps in the bath or some other place you naturally relax. Close your eyes. Focus on your breathing slowing down. And when you are nice and relaxed...just begin to imagine watching yourself from the outside looking composed and poised as you calmly tell your partner that it's over. The more strongly you do this, the more you'll prime your mind and emotions to feel the right way about doing the right thing.

And lastly, remember: tough decisions now will make for a better life in the future.

Article written by [Mark Tyrrell](#).