

What to do to mend a broken heart?

Short of throwing yourself off the nearest bridge, you resort to hiding in your bed for days, comforted only by the fact that at least you have a year's supply of Moonpies by your bedside and your answering machine is on the alert in the hopeful case that your once loved one might call and beg to have you back. Only, that call never comes and that box of Moonpies? It's a constant reminder that the emptier it gets, the more bloated you are. But, you don't care. You wish the earth would open you up and swallow you whole. Sound familiar? Cases like this happens everyday. Falling in love has its risks and you've just experienced it first hand. You want your life back but don't know the first thing about how to get out of that black cloud that hovers over you, or even finding the energy to do it. What do you do? Acknowledge the fact that you have to go through three different stages during a break-up. Once you realize this, you can chart your progress and see that it's only a short trip to recovery. **STAGE ONE – The Hurting Stage**

Symptoms: This is the hurting stage. It's where you are now. It's your heart's way of telling you that you have just experienced the worse kind of hurt there is. You cry, you're depressed and you have no idea how you are going to live without him/her. You leave messages on his answering machine and text him to the point where you are becoming psycho. You drive by his house in the wee early morning to see if his vehicle is still at his house or he is – gulp – off with another woman. You drive by where he works and contemplate going in and crying your eyeballs out to let him know this has hurt you beyond repair. You either eat tremendous amounts of comfort food or you don't eat at all and your health suffers. You cry on your co-worker's shoulders and hope they can help you get out of this mess. You are, essentially, gone and a hopeless mess. **How to cope:** Now more than ever would be a good time to hang out with friends and watch a few comedies, even though you just aren't up to it. Rekindle family relationships. Talk to older family members about how they met their husbands/wives and how they coped with troubled relationships. Gain insight from them. Try to remember things that brought you happiness. Was it a bike ride through the countryside? A trip to the beach even in the cold of winter just to watch the waves lap against the shore? How about that closet that is in desperate need of rearranging/cleaning/sorting? Now is the time to focus on you. You have to acknowledge that this is the normal process of grieving a relationship that has died. Nothing can really help at this point because as with the death of a loved one, this is the same feeling. It's a natural process. Give it time and remember that soon you will enter the second stage.

THE SECOND STAGE – The Getting Even Stage **Symptoms:** Remarkably, when your heart begins to heal, your hurt turns to anger. What nerve he/she had to dump me! You vow you're going to make his/her life a living hell as long as you are alive. You start dating. Only, these are rebounds. Rebound relationships most times happen in this second stage. Some last, but most do not for the simple reason that you will do anything in your power to inflict pain on the one who did it to you. **How to cope:** Once you get to this stage, you're halfway there. Even though anger is not a healthy feeling to have, it is a normal reaction after you've gotten over the feeling of hurt. However, instead of going postal and risk the chance you may do something you'll regret later, take his/her picture and throw darts at it. Burn love letters. Finalize the break-up by getting rid of everything you have of his/hers. But keep in mind that years from now, you'll wish you did have some kind of remembrance of the relationship because it's all part of your life history. Whatever you do keep, look at it as a symbol of how well you did cope and can look at the relationship as a learning experience. **STAGE**

THREE – The Not Giving a Damn Stage **Symptoms:** You wake up one morning and ask yourself what you saw in this person in the first place. Nothing he/she does now bothers you. In fact, you are happy he/she has left because you are ready now to form new relationships, new loves. **How to Cope:** You are there. When you hit this last stage, you have finally come to the point where you can go on from here and form new relationships. Relationships that aren't rebound. When you finally get to this last stage, you will become the person you once were – full of happiness, hope and a quest for life. Once you realize the three stages of a break-up, it helps you to understand the process that is involved. Just as it took time to fall in love, you don't just fall out of it overnight. It helps to remember that there will always be a tomorrow and that there is always that second chance to find that special person who is meant to share his/her life with you. Life is full of second, third and even more chances. So, pick up your heart, go through the process to heal and chalk it all up to experience. You'll be glad you did. In the words of an unknown author, "Never forget what is worth remembering or remember what is best forgotten."

About the Author

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