



References:

Anderson, S. (2000). *The Journey from Abandonment to Healing: Turn the End of a Relationship into the Beginning of a New Life*. Berkley: Penguin.

Kingma, D. R. (2000). *Coming Apart: Why Relationships End and How to Live Through the Ending of Yours*. San Francisco, CA: Conari Press.

Seeking Professional Help

The University provides counseling services for undergraduate and postgraduate students. You may check out our Counselors' profiles on our webpage and make an appointment with them online. Two weeks' advance booking is allowed. Please be reassured that all information shared and anything discussed during counseling sessions will be strictly confidential.

Counseling and Wellness Center

Room 5003 (via lift 3)
Email: counsel@ust.hk

<http://counsel.ust.hk>
Tel: (852) 2358-6696

24/7 HEARing: (852) 8208-2688

This is a helpline exclusively for all HKUST students.
Counselors are from Christian Family Service Centre.



Meet Our Counselors

Breaking Up, Not Breaking Hearts



Saying good-bye to someone is inevitable, such as at the end of a gathering, breaking-up with a boyfriend or girlfriend, or divorce. Terminating an intimate relationship can be a mutual and calm agreement, but it can also be unexpected and painful. Saying good-bye inappropriately can cause pain or even trauma for the people involved.



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Common Emotions:

Rejecter: Embarrassed, lost, sorry, guilty, annoyed

The one being rejected: Shame, pain, angry, shocked, betrayed, lost, abandoned

The key to a graceful break up and a healthy recovery depends on a variety of factors. A healthy break-up enables acceptance. It terminates the relationship unambiguously and honorably without devaluing oneself. All we need to learn is how to manage a break-up with grace and dignity.



1. Make it clear

Think seriously if you really want to break up and think through your reasons for breaking up before saying it. Try not to give ambivalent messages and false hope to your partner.

3. Do it face to face

Some people may think breaking the news by email, text or even through a Facebook message is less cruel than speaking face-to-face. However, saying good-bye face-to-face gives you a chance to respond to your partner's feelings and share your own feelings about the relationship. It helps a healthy closure.

2. Get prepared

Think about what you will say and how you will say it. Find out how your partner feels about the relationship and how does he or she perceive or understand the problems in the relationship.

4. Do it in a private and personal place

It will be easier and more appropriate for both of you to express your emotions and ideas, facilitating better communication.

5. Be gentle

Breaking up can stir up a lot of emotions and attachment issues. We need to be gentle and sensitive when talking to our partner about it. Try not to evoke anger by blaming each other in the relationship. Breaking-up is just a sign of incompatibility; it is not about right or wrong, good or bad.

6. Be true to your emotions

Whether you are initiating a break-up or on the receiving end of a break-up, it is normal to feel bad. Breaking-up may cause negative emotions. Emotions, even negative emotions can be healthy and normal. Allow yourself to be sad, angry or upset. Weeping may release and ventilate your pain and it starts the healing process.

8. Talk about it

You do not need to go through the break-up alone. Talk to your trusted friends and family to get comfort and support from them. It surely helps to heal your wounds.

7. Cut off all contact for a short period of time

We all need time to digest and accept a break-up. Cut off contact with your ex when you are still feeling vulnerable which will allow you time and room to calm down and avoid giving and receiving any false hope messages. It helps you get over the break-up faster.

9. Seek professional support

It is always good to seek for an objective opinion from someone. Talking to a professional counselor about your relationship and pain may help you get a better understanding of your needs. You may learn how to achieve a better relationship in the future too.



Breaking-up a relationship does happen at times. When it is time to break up with your partner, always do so with dignity, clarity and firmness. Be **OBJECTIVE, MATURE, CALM** and **RESPONSIBLE**. A break-up is sad but it is not the end of the day. It is just a "snap-shot" in your life.