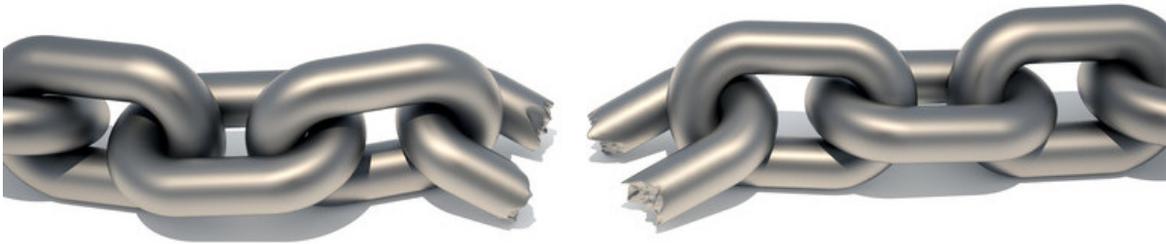


Dealing With Breakups: How To End Relationships With Dignity And Integrity

BRAND NEW SECOND EDITION

DEALING WITH **BREAKUPS**



HOW TO END RELATIONSHIPS
WITH DIGNITY AND INTEGRITY

SCOT MCKAY

X & Y COMMUNICATIONS
DESERVE WHAT YOU WANT

Direct Contact: scot@deservewhatyouwant.com
Website: <https://www.deservewhatyouwant.com>

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DEALING WITH BREAKUPS

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Introduction

Much has been written about how to get over the heartbreak of a failed relationship and move on. Probably even more advice exists out there on how to get your ex back if and when an unwanted breakup happens.

But what if it's *you* who feels like it's time to end a relationship? How do you break up with someone with dignity and integrity, all without fomenting more hurt and stress than is absolutely necessary?

This is a topic that simply isn't covered enough. Nevertheless, there's no doubt it's a major area of interest, given how many people have written to ask me about it.

The way I see it, the formula is this:

A Question People Are Actually Asking + Not A Whole Lot Of Answers Out There Already = Probably A Good Idea For A Free E-Book

So let's get on with it.

The logical way to break down this discussion is into four distinct parts:

- 1) When Someone Did Something Heinous**
- 2) When Nobody Did Anything Particularly Heinous**
- 3) Ending Short-Term Relationships**
- 4) Ending Long-Term Relationships**

Throughout all four sections, you'll get the "hows" and the "whys", featuring plenty of practical steps and ideas.

One caveat before we start, however: This is written in the spirit of dealing with dating relationships rather than marriages. When marital relationships, community property and small children are involved, some of the issues I discuss may require a different perspective (the notable exception being physical violence—my advice is *always* going to be to get out in those situations). As such, we'll save that discussion for another time.

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Website: <https://www.deservewhatyouwant.com>

Dealing With Breakups: When Something Heinous Has Happened [Part One Of Four]

So true to the plan, let's deal with breaking up with someone because a major breach has happened.

What we mean here is that one partner—or possibly both partners—has done something that is in clear violation of mutually agreed-upon expectations for how the relationship would flow.

Examples would include:

- **1) Unfaithfulness**

Defined as interacting with a third party in a way that violates the terms of the “exclusive” relationship. The concept of “cheating” can be a nebulous one, so there must not be any confusion between partners about what it means to them. For some, even looking at porn constitutes cheating, while other couples could theoretically agree to be full-swap swingers. There has to be communication on this subject from the outset, otherwise you're on the road to inevitable issues later.

- **2) Abuse**

Sure, if you're getting beat up that's abuse. But so is dealing with repeated verbal assaults, fits of rage, plate throwing, etc.

- **3) Manipulation/Double Standard**

If you've ever been “taken for a ride” before in a relationship, you know what I'm talking about already. When one person does all the giving while the other does all the taking, there's likely some heavy-duty manipulation going on. Similarly, if the “rules” are different for one partner compared to the other then a similarly negative state of emotional affairs is likely to result. A prime example would be when one partner enjoys the company of “friends” of the opposite gender frequently, while hammering the other for “flirting” any time he or she even looks at a member of the opposite sex.

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- **4) Damaging Habits**

One partner has a devastating addiction (e.g. drugs, gambling, expensive NYC call girls, carnitas burritos) and the other isn't willing to share the consequences.

- **5) Major Life Changes**

This one will stir some controversy, but so be it. But if a massive change occurs that essentially reshapes one partner into a completely different person in some way, I'd argue that something has indeed happened that deviates from the expected flow of the relationship. If someone's core world view changes (e.g. because of a spiritual conversion experience or even a traumatic experience), that's one example. Profound change in personality or attitude is another, as is wholesale alteration of appearance through severe injury or flat-out neglect and/or an unexpected requirement for one partner to move hundreds or thousands of miles away. If the other partner's love is deep enough to withstand these challenges, then that's a personal decision. But breaking up is also his or her prerogative, as it *always* is regardless of the reasons why.

When there's been a major breach of faith and trust in a relationship or there's a clear pattern of intentional manipulation, the first thing to remember is that you have every right to sever the relationship *without reservation*.

Should you decide to "forgive and forget" the first time, you absolutely have to understand yourself as fully capable of doing so. I'll tell you, this is practically a superhuman expectation and there is no shame in enacting a "one strike and you're out" policy. After all, a pact is a pact. And a breach is a crystal clear violation, provided effective communication has taken place.

The first thing to remember when there's potential for either short-term or long-term danger of any kind (let alone if catastrophe has already befallen the situation) is that you *must* sever the relationship *without reservation*.

Emily and I get e-mails all the time from men and women alike who are in dire straits at the hands of a poisonous boyfriend or girlfriend, and yet are writing us to ask what they should do. Most of the time, we understand these e-mails to be simple requests for validation of the decision to split up.

And although we gladly reply with a solid exhortation to end such devastating scenarios, our advice is pretty much a no-brainer.

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Website: <https://www.deservewhatyouwant.com>

The problem is that poisonous partners tend to prey upon those who are either weak-willed or very susceptible to manipulation. Their goal is to instill a feeling of *massive guilt*.

Don't let someone who is clearly wrong for you offload blame for the situation onto you...ever. As always, if you find yourself carrying guilt when you're all but sure it's YOU who is being mistreated, think "TGR-R", or "The Golden Rule, Reversed". Would you ever in a *million years* subject your partner to the kind of treatment you are being asked to accept? If the answer is "no way!" then that's really all the justification you need.

To stick around in a poisonous relationship is a clear indication that you do not respect yourself enough to demand better, and/or that you are needy and desperate enough to believe that you cannot "date up" beyond your current partner. All too often, the poisonous boyfriend or girlfriend is more than happy to help reinforce those crazy ideas in thought, word and deed. Don't let that get to you.

In such situations, you have every right to summarily end the relationship without reservation. Understanding ahead of time that a manipulative and/or emotionally-charged response may be likely, your resolve must be strong and your words few. This is especially true if the breach is particularly emotionally devastating or the consequence of physical abuse.

Simply put, ***you owe your poisonous ex nothing.***

If you've got a box full of valuables to send back, so be it. But make it quick and drama-free, preferably by parcel post.

Entering into a full-scale discussion on the matter (let alone a heated argument) invariably works against you in these situations. When you know the breakup is imminently necessary, you must not place yourself in a position to accept compromise.

Now, I completely understand, as should you, that the other person may not want to accept the breakup. Your resolve must be strong. If they call repeatedly, do not answer the phone. Text messages should be ignored. Any acknowledgment of their outreach to you is tantamount to feeding a stray cat. Seriously.

If he or she goes so far as to show up to your door, refuse entry. Clearly state that the next step is a restraining order.

Do not let the passage of time deaden your clarity. The decision has been made, and for good reason. So stick to it.

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Now granted, many potential breakup situations are a bit less dramatic, even when due cause is there.

For example, if personal changes or relocation are influencing you, then you've got to take inventory of your emotions. While some would pronounce decisions to break up under these circumstances as "shallow", I take a different view.

You may be the most philanthropic person on Earth. But there are no "charity cases" when it comes to choosing a lifetime partner. You must be 100% satisfied with that choice, and you have the freedom to be as picky as you want, even if that feels selfish. Anything less only leads to mutual bitterness and expensive divorces.

Think about that. This is the very essence of never, ever settling. When changes happen in a relationship that exceed your logical margin of acceptance and signal an impending drop in your standards, you have the right to break up. Moreover, you're really **never** "obligated" to stay with someone with whom you are not in a committed relationship. An agreement to date exclusively (let alone not exclusively) is by no means to be understood as a contract to stay together as long as your boyfriend or girlfriend says so. *Always remember that.*

When breaking up under less dire circumstances the best policy is still to use as few words as possible. Even so, I believe in having enough character to break up in person. The exception to this principle, of course, goes back to when there's physical danger or wholesale instances of cheating involved, when I wholeheartedly endorse ending the relationship with a phone call or even a letter.

Remember, however, that there's no real value in shredding someone's feelings on the way out, although the short-term benefit of getting stuff off your chest may be a very real one for you, as it is for lots of people. Try to resist self-serving rants and insults, and in a very civil manner explain nothing other than the fact that the relationship is over because of what has happened, and that the decision is final. My experience is that drawn-out discussions only lead to greater heartbreak if not emotionally loaded and ill-advised compromises.

In the next section, we'll tackle the somewhat more taxing subject of breaking up when both boyfriend and girlfriend are perfectly reasonable and even attractive people, but simply not right for each other.

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Website: <https://www.deservewhatyouwant.com>

Dealing With Breakups: When Nothing Particularly Heinous Has Happened [Part Two Of Four]

Ideally speaking, each of us should theoretically break up with everyone we ever date, except for one.

And as dark as it sounds, that's actually a good thing.

I understand that reality isn't always that uncomplicated, and believe me, I have the track record to prove it. But I think you get my drift.

And here's the deal: Provided you are the kind of person who is generally easy to get along with, and if you've had some practice at avoiding utterly poisonous MOTOS (Members Of The Other Sex), then you are going to be faced with the inevitable: breaking up with someone who hasn't really done you any harm whatsoever.

You've probably already been there before. You start dating someone who attracts you early on, but after some time has passed one of you has decided that he or she really isn't "feeling it" anymore. Someone is starting to feel a pull towards freedom—or someone else—but this creates a genuinely awkward situation almost every time.

You see, most of us are decent, upstanding people who really don't get off on trampling other people's feelings underfoot. Especially people we sort of, well...*like*. Right?

So what happens is when someone just "isn't feeling it anymore" for whatever reason, things tend to drag on for longer than they rightly should—all in the name of "not hurting anyone".

But protracting relationships that aren't going anywhere only really leads to greater emotional drama down the road. It's rather like sticking one's head in the sand.

Case in point. One well-worn "exit strategy" is to tell the other person that he or she "needs some space" or even that they "should date other people". Such euphemisms are universally code for, "I'm pretty much sick of you and want out, but I don't know how to do that without completely flooring you."

I see some of you nodding out there. Don't shout me down for telling the truth.

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Website: <https://www.deservewhatyouwant.com>

Other people may soldier on in a relationship that has grown stale, trying to tell themselves that “it’s just a phase”, or “we’ll work through this”, or “everyone’s just under stress lately”. But deep down, the longer these feelings of indifference persist, the stronger the indication that it just isn’t “meant to be”.

So how do we get into these situations?

Well, whether you are on the giving or the receiving end is actually peripheral to gaining understanding of what’s going on. So for the purposes at hand, we’ll operate under the assumption that each of us will at one point or another see such breakups from each respective side of the fence.

In fact, if your history is a particularly lopsided one in this area (i.e. you’ve either dumped everyone you’ve met or been dumped by everyone you met), you probably need to drop everything and grab a copy of *Deserve What You Want* using the link at the bottom of this page.

Back to the story...

We get into these situations for one of two main reasons. First, we jump into exclusive relationships too quickly, possibly due to pressure from the other person.

Or second, and ironically the opposite of the first reason, we fail to identify what our relationships *actually are*, which inevitably leaves one partner’s expectations very different from the other’s.

So ultimately, the issue here is one of taking the **high road** of being honest versus the more cowardly *low road* of just letting things hang indefinitely.

20/20 foresight involves being very plainspoken from the outset about intentions NOT to enter into a “serious” relationship if such is the case. This also requires that we listen when we hear those sentiments from someone, take them at face value, and not dream of changing the other person.

It’s easy to fantasize to the contrary when you really like someone, but people don’t generally tell you “they aren’t into getting serious” without reason. Do people fall head over heels and change their minds about that sometimes? Sure, it has been known to happen. You just can’t *assume it will*, that’s all.

But going into casual relationships with a level head mitigates the probability of heartbreaking issues later.

And therein lies a key lesson in and of itself. If you find yourself falling for someone with whom there is practically zero possibility of long-term happiness,

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Website: <https://www.deservewhatyouwant.com>

it's better to cut it off now rather than later. Waiting only intensifies the heartbreak.

But let's say you've entered into an exclusive relationship and you realize it's not going to work. Instead of procrastinating, have the conversation.

It's not like you have to invent something bad about the other person to justify the break up. Instead, explain that you simply don't believe that the relationship is meant to be, and that you believe there is someone else out there who would appreciate him or her more than you do. I've personally told a woman or two that she's someone else's dream woman, and that it's time to let that guy find her.

Though there's no perfect way to end what another person believes to be a perfectly good relationship, what I've described above is about as good as it gets. Nevertheless, you may get a stream of invective in response. Anticipate that in advance, just in case, and handle it with grace should it happen. Such is to be expected, even from high-quality people.

Have the conversation in person if you can, and be direct and sincere. As is the case when someone has done the other wrong, don't accept any bargains for getting back together. If "just being friends" is a future possibility, at the time of initial breakup really isn't the time to talk about it. This would only create a false glimmer of hope.

What is happening here is the start of a very real grieving process involving denial, anger, bargaining, depression and acceptance. You may get phone calls or even unexpected knocks on your door, each of which will serve to chronicle your ex's journey through all of this. We'll discuss this phenomenon in greater detail in Part Four.

Regardless of gender, most of us can handle the truth better than MOTOS think we can. And we can certainly handle that truth *now* better than we can handle divorce lawyers later, even if we don't realize it.

So what if you are on the receiving end of such a breakup? Though it may seem devastating at first, realize that you've dodged a very real bullet in the form of even more pain later. Though it's a hard expectation not to vent at the outgoing partner, try not to completely burn the bridge.

Once you've composed yourself, and if you have the character to endure it, you may be able to find out some constructive ways to improve future relationships from your ex. Or not. It's your choice.

But no matter what, the key is to not let one break up devastate you to the point of giving up on future relationships altogether. Just because one person wasn't

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Website: <https://www.deservewhatyouwant.com>

perfect for you doesn't mean you are doomed to loneliness. In fact, it's amazing how most of the time you end up "raising the bar".

As you do exactly that, you'll find yourself in control of your wildly successful dating life more and more. As you begin to enjoy increased options in the dating world, you'll find yourself calling the shots more in your relationships. It's all a part of deserving what you want.

In Part Three, we'll talk about the particular nuances associated with breaking off short-term relationships. Among other concepts, we'll cover why guys tend to disappear off the map without calling, along with some surprising thoughts about how sex early in the relationship potentially affects matters.

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Website: <https://www.deservewhatyouwant.com>

Dealing With Breakups: Ending Short-Term Relationships [Part Three Of Four]

In the first two sections, we focused mainly on the question of “why” a potential breakup would happen.

In this third part we’ll be talking more about the “when” factor.

You and I both already know that there’s a big difference between ending a relationship that hasn’t been going on for very long versus breaking up when you’ve been seeing each other (or married to each other?) for months or even years.

Or is there?

The answer may very well be, “It depends.” And what it depends on is generally the emotional state and/or maturity level of the partners involved.

People can get super wrapped-up in a relationship very, very quickly. In fact, if you are particularly solid in your ability to create attraction while projecting a tantalizing image of high character and irresistible charisma, then you may run into a *particularly* unsettling problem.

You see, once you become a person who genuinely deserves what you want, you are going to find that people you date even once or twice will literally go on a mission to lock you down. Preferably **now**, that is, if not as soon as possible.

As high-quality a problem as this sounds, it can get downright irritating if your own personal plan is to get to know as many MOTOS as you are comfortable with on the way to discovering (over a reasonable amount of time, please) who the right person for you is.

Or maybe you’d like to *just date lots of people* for now. Period.

I’ve known women who live a consistent pattern of seeing guys for two or three dates only to have them show up with engagement rings. We’re talking about situations here where they’ve known each other all of *a week or two*.

Crazy.

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But if you are a man who exhibits what I call the “big four” (masculinity, confidence, ability to inspire confidence, character) you may similarly find that women who meet you almost instantly decide they want to *keep* you.

If there’s no chance you are going to capitulate to the whirlwind courtship process here (and you shouldn’t), I have a very specific way to handle the matter for you.

First, reiterate to the person you’re seeing what you should have carefully explained from the very outset of the dating process: that you are not interested in rushing into anything. If you have been honest from minute one, then this is a perfectly reasonable discussion to have.

But don’t plan on that little talk solving anything, really. It’s usually at best simply a social courtesy or sorts, because if you are in such a situation the other person’s feelings are beyond your control. You can’t *make* someone feel (or not feel) anything, really.

Somewhere I read about the concept of doing the *exact opposite* of all the “attraction triggers” so as to get someone to lose attraction on their own and walk away. The concept of suddenly getting clingy, needy, pushy and/or flaky all in the name of getting someone else to opt-out first is hilarious, but largely impractical I’d say.

Ultimately, the only ethical way to handle this is to call off the relationship yourself. As much pain that is likely to cause now, you simply can’t let this fester into a situation where you’ve allowed yourself to settle for someone simply so you don’t “hurt their feelings”.

It’s like the old Fram Oil Filter commercials from the ‘70s and ‘80s: “You can pay me now, or you can pay me later.”

I highly recommend you pay now.

But wait, what if the opposite happens? What if *you* find yourself in a position of falling quickly for someone who you know is not interested in a committed relationship, or who you know is *all wrong* for you anyway?

Yes, you guessed it: the same solution applies. Forget the horrendous adage that “you can’t help who you fall in love with”.

The hell you can’t.

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Again, it's all about saving yourself a world of heartache later. Get out now before the emotions grow deeper and the ties become indelible. This involves discipline now, but you'll thank yourself in the long run.

Hopefully I don't have to talk about what should happen when you actually fall for someone who is falling for you back.

But wait...I do.

That's because I get weird e-mails from guys who have read some PUA book telling them they shouldn't let themselves fall in love with *anyone*.

Bury that thinking. What, you're finally happy and have found something real for once in your life and you're telling me that's why you should *break up with her*?

Where's that 2x4 when I need it. Some guys could use some "tough love" upside the head, huh?

Gentlemen. Ladies. Don't fear success. Please.

It's amazing how people will break up with someone not only because of advice that "players" shouldn't have steady girlfriends, but also because their own lack of self-esteem tells them they aren't worthy of having a quality person in their lives. So the breakup is a "preemptive strike" of sorts.

Now granted, as we begin to deserve what we want more and more we raise the proverbial bar. This can seem "too good to be true" at first. But don't throw in the towel simply due to fear. You've worked hard to deserve a great person in your life (or several). Now live with it.

Obviously, incongruence between partners when it comes to strong feelings early on is a *massive* issue, which is why I've covered it so thoroughly.

But there are other reasons why people break up after a short time.

An unfortunate truth is that some people are all about sexual conquest. Although this is a myopic way of viewing the world (and decidedly not a gender-specific one, by the way) it's how a lot of people operate.

I'm on record as saying I believe that how soon sex takes place in a relationship is *not* an absolutely reliable indicator of how long the relationship will last. I've known people who slept together on the first date and are still happy years later. I've also known couples who waited until marriage to have sex, only to disappoint each other and split up soon afterwards, unfortunately.

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But know this: If you are out there breaking up with people after the “deal” is “closed” you are not setting yourself up for success should you ever decide to *actually have* a long-term relationship someday. If it’s all about the sex, you *will* get bored with everyone you sleep with. It’s a fact. The novelty will wear off if that’s all there is to it.

If you are cycling through sexual relationships at a fast pace, you’ve got to ask yourself whether you are truly availing yourself to the fullness that MOTOS can bring to your life.

And by the way, if you’re dumped shortly after having sex with someone, please don’t sit around wondering how to get the person back and/or how to convince him/her to have real feelings for you. Live and learn.

Another common scenario is simple loss of attraction. Someone can be ultra-charming on “Day 1”, but turn out to be a completely different person under the surface on “Day 2” (or shortly thereafter).

This is usually what is going on when someone simply “falls off the map”, never having been heard from again after a date or two. Men in particular are prone to simply leave a woman hanging after a questionable date. In fact, sometimes the date could appear to have gone perfectly well and the guy doesn’t call back.

The reason for this type of behavior, as alluded to in the previous section, is that men are typically über-sensitive about hurting a woman’s feelings and absolutely detest dealing with drama. Guys would rather stick their heads in the sand and forever leave a woman wondering why than actually attempt to endure whatever happens in a phone call explaining why he’d rather not see her again for whatever reason.

Cowardly? Yes. Pandemic nonetheless? Absolutely.

Indeed, authenticity is a must if you want your relationships to last. If you are portraying a persona you cannot sustain long-term, don’t plan on sustaining long-term relationships either.

This goes double if you are into online dating. If you are misrepresenting yourself online, plan on *very* short relationships. We’re talking a matter of *seconds* here, in the most unfortunate cases.

And what to do if you are on the receiving end of someone who turns out not to be who he or she seemed to be?

Well, in the case of first meetings with people you meet online, you have the right to end it right upon meeting someone. You have just cause. But my style was

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usually to treat the meeting as “practice” and hopefully see if there was any networking to be done. Burning bridges unnecessarily is a bad habit to get into, and can come back and burn you.

Think I’m kidding? Check this out. One woman I met for lunch turned out to be a real disappointment. She also turned out to be the primary contact at one of my company’s largest customers. She had done her homework where I hadn’t, and knew that going in. Fortunately, I was gracious from the beginning and there was no harm done.

Whether you lose attraction or never felt any to begin with, my policy has always been to go with the flow and go the extra mile not to deal a devastating blow to someone’s feelings (even if they deserve it, in all honesty).

First meetings with people you meet online should be informal and with time constraints built in by design. Lunch hours or morning coffee before work are perfect, even if generic. When you aren’t feeling it, simply say, “OK, I do wish you well on your search. Have a great day.” If he or she doesn’t get that message, send them to me for a [Ten-Plus](#) program because we’ve got *lots* of work to do.

Now, if you have felt attraction at some point but lost it, you’re basically dealing with a variation on the theme of breaking up when “nothing particularly heinous has happened”. Firmly, but with genuine compassion, explain that you don’t think you and he or she are a match.

Please don’t give him or her the “Just Be Friends” talk unless you mean it though, deal?

In the next and final section we’ll wrap up with how to deal with break ups if you’ve been dating someone for a long time. Plan on some practical ideas you’ve never considered, and maybe even a surprise or two.

Direct Contact: scot@deservewhatyouwant.com
Website: <https://www.deservewhatyouwant.com>

Dealing With Breakups: Ending A Long-Term Relationship [Part Four Of Four]

For the fourth and final section in this report on breakups, we're going to deal specifically with what may be the absolute most difficult situation that anyone who is single ever has to face: breaking off a relationship that has gone on for a long time.

For the sake of clarity here at the beginning, it bears reiteration that this book is *not* about how to deal with divorce. As originally stated back in Part One, the concept of ending married relationships is replete with its own set of complications and therefore must be considered a separate subject. So we'll limit this particular conversation to ending long-term **dating relationships**.

So to kick this all off, let's get a handle on exactly what such long-term dating relationships might look like.

There are as many reasons why two people would remain together for a long time as there are grains of sand on the beach, really. Some long-term relationships are casual or even "off and on" gigs that have carried on for months or even years. And as long as both partners are honest and remain uncommitted to anyone else on a monogamous basis, this can be fine for everyone involved, of course.

But clearly, when one partner finds someone else other than the casual partner whom he or she wants to be monogamous with, such casual relationships should end. But man is it difficult to simply cut ties with someone who has been there for so long, even if on an offhand basis.

Truly, for many such a scenario represents "crunch time" insofar as deciding what it is he or she wants in life. Is it going to be to have a casual long-term relationship (or several), or go for stability with one person long-term? Unless an open long-term relationship with a primary partner is an option for you, you've got to be comfortable with "retirement" from casual dating if you decide to become monogamous with someone. Otherwise, your integrity (and your character, which is one of the "big four", remember) goes down the drain.

The problem with this whole scenario is that when long-term casual relationships end, it often comes out that one partner actually was holding onto unspoken hopes for something more.

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Website: <https://www.deservewhatyouwant.com>

Whether we like it or not, in the real world it's exceptionally difficult for two people to be together romantically without deep feelings developing. It's just human nature when attraction is involved. The longer that attraction incubates, the more likely it is to become unconditional love over time.

So notwithstanding something heinous happening, which we've already covered, the simple truth is that when a long-term relationship comes to an end one or the other of the two people involved probably had "living happily ever after" in mind. And someone is going to get his or her heart broken as a result.

The surprising and even disarming concept at play here is that virtually all long-term relationships that end likely could have been called off much, much sooner had more open and honest communication taken place. In doing so, the heartbreak could usually have been avoided, or at least severely lessened.

But as I've mentioned previously, breaking up with someone you really like simply because you are afraid of 'getting hurt' is not a healthy way to operate.

So that's where the "money question" comes into play, typically but not always asked by women: How long is "long enough" to date before having to come to grips with the fact that the relationship will likely never progress to marriage?

I mean seriously. What's the window of time for giving someone a chance to figure out what he or she wants from life?

The answer there is purely dependent on two discrete factors.

First, are you and your partner communicating? I remain flabbergasted by the number of couples who never get around to talking about anything of substantial depth, even after dating for a considerable length of time.

You can enjoy the first few dates without broaching "heavy" subjects, but don't let this become a long-term habit. You've got to make sure you are on the same page as your partner as soon as possible on major issues like children, religion, life-goals, etc. or else you are simply prolonging the inevitable. In all too many cases, I've seen breakups happen that are months or even years overdue, all for this reason.

Following logically from the first factor is the second. Are you and your partner on the same page with regard to marriage plans? If one partner would love to be married and the other could theoretically put it off indefinitely, then there's a serious disconnect, which typically can only result in either "settling" or a bitter breakup.

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Website: <https://www.deservewhatyouwant.com>

Ultimately, I'm reticent to slap an arbitrary timeline on this process. But that's not to say there aren't objective indicators to look for.

If you have heard promises from your partner that aren't being fulfilled upon, you are likely getting strung along. Again, this is not a gender-specific scenario. I met one 35-year-old woman who had just broken up with her boyfriend of *seven years* because "she wasn't ready for a commitment". Similarly, if your partner avoids the issue altogether or always seems to be postponing the conversation, you should take this as a clear message that he or she is not thinking about marriage.

No matter who you are, if you've invested a large block of time in a relationship that you thought had "forever" potential when your partner was merely along for the ride, the inevitable breakup is all the more bitter the longer it takes to happen.

Here it is: If you do not see linear, mutually intentional progression of the relationship toward a common goal of marriage, you simply cannot count on it happening. Attraction should remain even as emotional and cognitive closeness increases. Without all of that in place, you're flat-out kidding yourself.

So then, why would that other partner involved hang out in a long-term relationship that wasn't going anywhere, even under pressure from his or her partner to marry? I have "Three I's" that represent options to theoretically explain why that would go on.

Insincerity could be the culprit, as I've personally seen countless instances of one partner enjoying the "convenience" of what the long-term relationship is offering even while actively cheating on the other partner. At the very least, he or she might be waiting for a "better option" that doesn't seem to be coming along.

Insecurity could also be a factor, hinging largely on the negative feelings associated with having to "start all over again with someone else".

Finally, ***Immaturity*** could be a factor also, characterized by "living in the moment" for weeks that turn into months and years, all with no real idea of what he or she wants.

And you know, that third factor of immaturity contributes to another possible reason why a long-term relationship would end.

When two people enter into a relationship at a young age, both will undergo massive personal changes on the road to ultimately finding their respective identities. As people change, their priorities and attitudes change, which in turn has massive ramifications on the viability of a long-term relationship. This is why so few "high school sweethearts" end up happily married forever and ever.

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And this is also why anyone who is yet in their teens or early twenties should always expect to enter an exclusive relationship with the lights on—constantly in touch with how personal development is affecting things.

Ultimately, however, the fact remains: When long-term relationships end, one of the partners was expecting “forever”, and will walk away with a broken heart.

If you have to end a long-term relationship, do it in person if at all possible, and make it very clear-cut and objective. There’s no need to rant or recite a checklist.

After the break up happens, which we’ll assume is the result of serious soul-searching and a secure feeling in the desire to break up, your resolve must be strong. As related in the second part of this discussion, you have to stick to your guns once you know the decision has been made.

If you are the one broken up with after a long-term relationship, my guess is that you really, honestly did see it coming. And if not, then you’ve saved yourself a world of hassle later by breaking up with someone who is that controlled by whim and/or with whom you simply cannot communicate openly.

Finally, and significantly, when a long-term relationship ends you can indeed expect a full-on grieving process to ensue. A jilted lover will run the entire gauntlet of denial, anger, bargaining and depression before finally accepting the situation.

What this means is that the partner who is broken up with will not simply “go quietly”. Phone calls as if nothing has happened or even those unannounced knocks on the door are par for the course here.

After that stage, assuming the other partner hasn’t capitulated already to getting back together, more emotionally charged phone calls could begin taking place. If someone is hurt enough by what has gone on, you may even need to take legal action in the form of a restraining order in the interest of your own personal safety. I realize this sounds extreme, but after all “hell hath no fury like a woman scorned”. William Congreve got that one right, except that he missed the fact that dudes can also get rather miffed in their own right under such circumstances.

From there you may get calls laced with grandiose promises, or even handwritten ten page notes. In extreme (and particularly pathetic) instances, the ex may even propose a scaled-back version of the previous relationship as an alternative to flatly breaking up. This can take the form of offers to let the other partner “see other people”, or even to resume the relationship at a purely sexual level.

If you have broken up with someone and encounter this kind of “bargaining”, remain strong and stand your ground. If you have been broken up with, resist the

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urge to “bargain” as such. Long-term self-respect will serve your emotional well-being better than whatever is achieved in the short-term by making such deals.

One particularly dramatic example of “bargaining” happens when a woman claims she is pregnant by her ex very shortly after a breakup. Whenever confronted with such a situation, any man should first take a deep breath and understand the possibility that the woman is simply indulging in a gambit designed to keep him around a while longer.

I’ve personally encountered this predicament, having broken up with a woman whom I wasn’t even intimate with! When there certainly could be an actual pregnancy involved, the scenario should be handled with emotional care. Nonetheless, the man should insist on a pregnancy test being performed while he is present to observe rather than blindly assuming anything. It really is as simple as that.

When the depression phase kicks in, there may be sobbing phone calls, but more likely a period of “getting over” the other person that is unseen by the former partner. Finally, the good news is that most of us do get over our exes and move on. There’s an acceptance there. And in a staggering percentage of cases, we’re glad we did in retrospect.

If, however, you are still struggling with getting past a major breakup for years after the fact, know that you’re certainly not alone. That said, life is too short to live in the past.

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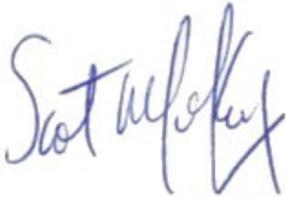
Epilogue

It is my sincere hope that this brief e-book on how to handle breakups has proven beneficial and meaningful to you. Breaking up is never easy, but having all the tools you can get to help make it go as well as can be expected always makes sense.

Are you contemplating a breakup? Have you just been broken up with? Do you suspect a break up is imminent? If so, and you'd like personalized attention in helping to resolve the matter, drop me a note at scot@deservewhatyouwant.com and tell me your story.

I can give you exactly the help you need to sort through all of that, up to and including moving on if you must.

Be Good,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Scot McKay". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Scot McKay

X & Y COMMUNICATIONS

Direct Contact: scot@deservewhatyouwant.com
Website: <https://www.deservewhatyouwant.com>

About The Author



Scot McKay has shared bad jokes with North Korean military officers, sipped coffee at Pablo Escobar’s home (served by his maid), survived a shark attack while surfing, held his breath as the pride of lions walked by his tent, and blitzed through California canyons with his knee on the double-yellow line at 140 mph. Yet somehow, he has also been referred to as the “sane one” on Twitter by Scott Adams, of all people.

But despite once being mobbed by the Dallas Cowboy cheerleaders, being able to back a 30’ travel trailer into its slot on the first try, and that time he beat the World Champion at his own sport (no details provided), he’s still the most objective and down-to-earth dating expert out there.

He’s also the most fluff-free fountainhead of original content in his field, if only because that’s what eighteen years of immersive geekery on the subject does for someone.

Scot’s wife Emily is his “proof of concept”, given that she’s just as sweet as she is smokin’ hot and still gets carded at her age. But you’ll never hear her brag about any of that, only Scot.

His show [The Mountain Top](#) has also been named a Top 10 Dating Podcast by DatingAdvice.com, and a long time ago Grader.com weirdly ranked Scot the #1 most influential Facebook user in the world.

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