


Love Lessons: How to Break Up

by Susan Piver



It's not easy to end a relationship. Our love expert shares a plan for getting through it

IT'S OVER
When you're ready to part ways, know what you want to say and why.

Once I was in a relationship with the perfect man. He was cute. Funny. Had a great job. Our parents were friends. He made it clear that he was looking for something long-term. After a few months, he asked me to move in with him, and I did, leaving my yucky apartment for his beautiful house with leather couches and rosebushes. Friends started placing bets on when we would get engaged. Perfect, no?

No. Sadly, we had zero in common. It became obvious to me one night as we were eating dinner that we simply had nothing to talk about. The only sound in the room was his rather noisy breathing. “Why does he have to breathe so loud?” I wondered, and realized that this relationship didn’t have much hope if his breathing drove me nuts. It was time to end it.

As we enter into a new year, it’s customary to sit back and take stock. We think of losing weight, doing yoga, learning to ski. But what about facing an even bigger issue, like—deep breath—the relationship that just isn’t working anymore? If you know in your heart that it’s time to make a clean break, there’s usually only one good option: Be honest. But do it in a way that you won’t have to duck into a doorway if you see him walking down the street a year from now. You might not feel comfortable running into

him, but you’d feel the dignity of someone who did the best she could to own her truth. Here’s how.

+ Set your intention. The secret to holding your own in difficult conversations is knowing what you’re going to say and why. If your goal is to honor yourself and him, your words will come across that way. If it’s to punish or hurt, those same words will land quite differently. So before you open your mouth, connect with your intention. Remember the openness and longing for love—not the frustration or rage—that has led to your decision. It is easy to forget all of this once the conversation gets going, so bring a little on-the-spot reminder: Before you talk to him, pick out a bracelet or a ring that you don’t wear often. Hold it in your hand, close your eyes, and imbue it with your heartfelt wish for real love. Then put it on. During the actual conversation, use it as a fo-

What If You’re Not Sure?

Don’t know if your relationship is really working? To gain some clarity, answer the following questions. A few days later, go back and answer them again. As you reread your responses, see what patterns emerge. Then you’ll know what actions, if any, you need to take.

- + Who has a higher opinion of the relationship, my friends or me?
- + When I imagine what our relationship will be like in 10 years, what I most look forward to is _____ and what I least look forward to is _____.
- + What I love most about myself is _____. What he loves most about me is _____.
- + The best thing about our relationship is _____. The most difficult thing is _____.

Bach's
Original Flower Remedies

You Can with Larch

ONE OF THE 38 BACH ORIGINAL FLOWER REMEDIES

Look for us in Whole Foods or your favorite natural product store.

From the makers of **RESCUE** REMEDY

“Try Bach Larch to find your confidence.”

www.BachRemedies.com

cusing tool; touch it whenever you feel that you are getting lost.

+ Do a dry run. Ask a girlfriend to rehearse with you until you're confident about what you'll say. Enlist her to be on-call by the phone in case you need to talk to her afterward.

+ Be direct and keep it uncomplicated. Start the discussion with a headline. For instance, "I want to talk to you about our relationship. It's really not working for me, and I want to explain why." Forget the small print. ("You're not going to want to hear this," or "Did you hear that Bill and Cathy broke up? It made me think.") Don't feel you have to have it all figured out before you talk to him. Say what you feel directly and honestly—and without aggression.

+ Be genuine. It's totally okay to say, "Look, I have mixed feelings about this because I really love (value, admire, care for, like) you, but I think our re-

lationship has become somewhat unhealthy. Instead of feeling charged up by being together, I feel depleted. I think I need to take a break." If, during the conversation, you become frightened, upset, loving, or angry, let it show. Be sensible; don't act phony. Authenticity engenders a more direct and honest communication.

+ Don't blame him. No matter how disappointing or frustrating his behavior may or may not have been, own your decision based on your feelings, not his actions. The truth is, your reactions may have been sparked by his actions, but ultimately the shape they take is completely your own doing. Keep the emphasis on "I": "I'm not happy" or "I want different things from a relationship," as opposed to, "You don't make me happy" or "You just don't do it for me anymore."

+ Don't feel guilty. Go ahead and feel sad, remorseful, relieved, discombobu-

lated, or uncomfortable, but don't feel ashamed. You have a right to your vision for your own life.

+ What you wish for yourself, also wish for him. No matter how angry, disappointed, or "over it" you may feel, genuinely wish for him to find true love after you part ways. It's the best way to remain focused on the positive reasons you're ending the relationship. Here's how: Take a moment to connect with your longing for love; really *feel* that ache in your chest. Imagine what it would be like if that ache dissolved because you were getting exactly the love you needed. Now take that feeling and extend it to include him. Imagine him also feeling loved and respected. And then, let go.

SUSAN PIVER is a Buddhist meditation teacher, practitioner, and author. Her latest book is *How Not to Be Afraid of Your Own Life*. Visit her at susanpiver.com.

Take To Heart.

When you add Bob's Red Mill® Flaxseed Meal and its nutty goodness to your favorite recipes, you may decrease the risk of heart attacks, lower cholesterol and improve your circulation all thanks to flaxseed's Omega-3 essential fatty acids. That's the kind of news that should really get your heart pumping.

Whole grain foods for every meal of the day.*

www.bobsredmill.com/bs 1.800.349.2173