

After The Breakup: Should You Stay in Contact With Your Ex?



By Natalie from Baggage Reclaim

One of the trickiest aspects of modern dating and relationships is the etiquette minefield that is keeping in touch with your ex.

There are two important things to consider:

Are you over them?: Have you worked through the loss of the relationship, grieved your feelings good, bad, and indifferent, accepted that it's over and reached a point of not being emotionally invested?

What is your *purpose* for staying in contact?: If it's friendship pure and simple, working together or sharing kids

necessitates contact, these reasons are understandable. Anything else is a hidden agenda.

Unless you were 'over' him by the time you broke up, you need space before contact.

Many people believe that the mark of a good person is one that can remain friends with an ex...even one that didn't treat them well in the relationship. As a result, often the 'dumper' pushes for contact because gaining agreement makes them feel less guilty. The 'dumpee' might push for contact so that they can be validated and try to potentially 'win' their partner back.

Those who break up pretty amicably and understand and accept why the relationship ended are often OK with letting a friendship evolve naturally. Those who want to ease their conscience or keep a foothold in case they change their mind or who are seeking validation and don't want to let go will not have the patience for space. They're afraid of their partner moving on without them.

If your motives are not purely friendship or for professional/civil reasons, evaluate what you're doing because your agenda will create expectations that your ex cannot or shouldn't meet. You're likely to seek emotional and affectionate displays that are not appropriate for a friendship, and you may inadvertently try to control their agenda so that you don't have to let go. If you're keeping in contact in case you change your mind, you could be wreaking havoc in their lives. If you still look for things such as sex and attention from them, you are using them.

Remember if you have any other agenda beyond being friends or professional/civil, it means you're not their friend so you shouldn't be keeping in touch.