

4 Ways to Exit a Relationship Gracefully



By Dating Diva, Jennifer Oikle, Ph.D., for GalTime.com

how to break up with your head held high

You know it's time to move on from your current relationship, but every time you think of it, you cringe.

You hate to be the bearer of heartache, so you've been putting it off. But now things are getting worse: he knows something's up, the irritations are piling up, or the energy is draining you.

Bottom line? You've got to woman up and get the job done so you can both move on with your lives.

But not just any break up will do. *How you call it quits is important.* It can either be so ugly that it makes it hard to move on or, if done elegantly, it can be a useful springboard to your next relationship. Thankfully, there are some savvy exit strategies which will ensure that both you and your new ex are able to transition as smoothly as possible from one romance to the next.

EXIT STEP 1: CHANGE YOUR VIEWPOINT

As long as you think about breaking up as breaking his heart, it's hard to take the plunge. But the truth is, if you aren't the right match, then splitting now is the biggest gift you could possibly give him *and* yourself. Because then you'll both be free to pursue the right relationship that can last. So take a moment to adopt a new mindset and go into the next steps knowing you are giving him the most precious gift possible: his freedom to be loved.

EXIT STEP 2: GIVE A HEADS-UP

Nothing, and I do mean nothing, is worse than being blindsided by a breakup. When it seems like a breakup comes out of the blue, it's truly traumatic. People hate to feel out of control, like something is being done *to* them, rather than participating in a decision. So never let The Conversation be the first time you've talked about going your separate ways. When things start to get hairy, be sure you bring it up clearly, and attempt to problem solve. Then, if the problems aren't resolving, it won't be a surprise to anyone, and emotional preparations will have paved the way to separate.

EXIT STEP 3: HAVE THE CONVERSATION, GRATITUDE-STYLE

These days, it's so easy for people to wuss out and break-up the weenie way: via email, text, or voice message. You don't want to be that person. Value yourself and your new ex enough to end it, face to face. But not with just any sad or angry conversation, you want to part ways with graceful gratitude.

So prepare ahead of time by thinking of the things you appreciated about your partner, the lessons you learned, and the gifts you offered to each other. Then at a good time, sit down and be super clear about your decision to move on. Provide whatever level of detail your partner needs to understand the why's. But do so in a gentle, kind way by sharing all of the things you are also thankful for during your time together. Invite your partner to share in a similar way, despite the pain or discomfort of the circumstance.

EXIT STEP 4: MAKE A CLEAN BREAK

Break ups have a way of being messy, on again-off again affairs, which only end up causing more pain. So once you've celebrated your relationship for what was good, and shared the reasons you no longer can be together, it's time to agree to a No-Contact Period. In the weeks immediately following a break up, it's really hard to move on if you keep touching base via email, text, or phone. It's like pulling the scab off your wounds- they take longer to heal than if you just leave it alone. By agreeing to not connect with each other for a period of time, say 2 weeks to 2 months, you give each other the space to grieve, begin emotional separation, and let go to stand on your own two feet again. Be sure you agree on a time frame you can each live with, and if you both wish to remain friends, you can reconnect after that time.

After your parting, give yourself time to heal and move on before dating again and you should be ready to start from a fresh, clean, positive place!

What's the BEST break-up you've ever had? Comment below.