

5 Celebrity Exes Who Became Famous After Their Break-Ups



By Petra Halbur

A nasty break-up can leave you feeling pretty hopeless and sad. During your alone time you have two options: You can either convince yourself that you'll never be happy alone, or you can enjoy success without that special someone in your life. Many famous couples have gone through splits, but that wasn't the end of fame for these [celebrity exes](#). Plenty of stars have emerged from a painful celebrity break-up or celebrity divorce and gone on to achieve amazing professional success. Sometimes, it is within only a few years of the split. Here are a few to consider:

Stars Who Became Famous After a Celebrity Break-Up

1. January Jones: Jones' first famous boyfriend was Ashton Kutcher, who she dated from 1998 to 2001. She met singer-songwriter, Josh Groban, in 2003 and had a Hollywood relationship for three years before calling it quits in 2006. Just one year later, Jones was cast as Betty Draper Francis on the hit show, *Mad Men*, and in 2011, she joined the Marvel universe as Emma Frost in *X-Men: First Class*.

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2. Johnny Depp: In all fairness, Depp wasn't exactly languishing in obscurity when he and *Edward Scissorhands* co-star, Winona Ryder, broke up in 1993. Still, Depp's success starring in off-beat films like *Cry Baby* and *Benny & Joon* in the early 90's was nothing compared to what he has achieved since playing Captain Jack Sparrow in 2003's *Pirates of the Caribbean: The Curse of the Black Pearl*.

3. Robert Downey Jr: Few people remember the days when Downey and *Sex and the City* star, Sarah Jessica Parker, dated in the 80's. Neither actor enjoyed major professional success during their seven-year famous relationship. One year after their celebrity break-up, Downey struck Oscar gold (well, almost) when he was nominated for Best Actor for his performance in *Chaplin*. He has since gone to achieve Marvel film immortality as Tony Stark in the *Iron Man* and *Avengers* franchises.

4. George Clooney: It's hard to believe that Hollywood's favorite bachelor was once a husband. Clooney hadn't achieved much in the way of fame when he married actress Talia Balsam in 1989. The Hollywood couple divorced in 1993. Just one year later, Balsam's celebrity ex had his big break when he was cast as Dr. Doug Ross in *E.R.* The rest is history!

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5. **Angelina Jolie**: Long before her relationship with **Brad Pitt** came into existence, Jolie was Mrs. Jonny Lee Miller. Jolie and Miller tied the knot in 1996 and went through a celebrity divorce 18 months later. The separation was finalized in 1999, and in early 2000, Jolie won an Oscar for *Girl, Interrupted*. She went on to become an action icon in 2001 when she was cast as the titular character in *Lara Croft: Tomb Raider*. Needless to say, things have only gotten better for the actress and humanitarian.

Who is your favorite celebrity ex? Tell us below!