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8 Steps to get over a breakup as fast as possible

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How to gracefully bounce back from a bad breakup when it feels impossible

Breaking up sucks. No one likes to do it. We do everything we can to avoid it. But once the inevitable happens, is there anything that can be done to cushion the blow?

At different times in my life, I have been the dumper and the dumpee. Being the dumper is never fun because of the anxiety, awkwardness and conflict that is sure to follow. If you're the dumper in a serious relationship, it's not like you don't have a heart: It hurts to see someone you love in pain, even if you believe the relationship has expired.

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But being the dumpee — well, that's a whole new level of suck. The majority of us have had the "pleasure" of experiencing the ultimate heartbreak, being dumped out of the blue by someone you are head over heels in love with. And when that happens, what are you to do? Yes, you can dive right into an ice-cream-and-crying-TV-marathon, but that's only going to get you through the first few days.

If you really want to grow, heal and [move forward after a bad breakup](#), here's where to begin:

1. Accept the empty feeling

That moment when you realize you've been dumped by the love of your life feels like death. And as actor and comedian Jim Dailakis points out, it should. The key is to allow yourself to embrace the grief if you ever want to move past it. Dailakis tells SheKnows, "Breaking up is very similar to a death because it is in fact the death of a relationship. For at least a couple of days, remember the good times and allow yourself to cry like mad. An exorcism if you will."

2. Cut off all contact *for real*

In this case, absence does not make the heart grow fonder. Absence is exactly what you need to cool off, process your feelings and change your perspective at the end of a relationship. Laura Yates, a UK-based [relationship and dating coach](#) who specializes in heartbreak, explains, "Something I recommend is a period of no contact. No texts, emails or social media messages because you need time and distance to get emotional clarity. When you just break up with someone, your emotions are all over the place — you will likely miss them desperately and overlook all the reasons why the breakup happened in the first place just to have them there with you again."

3. Feel your feelings

I'm a big believer in feeling your feelings until you are done feeling them. But sometimes raw feelings, especially after a breakup, can get overwhelming, and that's where cognitive behavioral therapy fits in. According to [Dr.](#)

[Simon Rego](#), Director of Psychology Training at Montefiore Medical Center/Albert Einstein College of Medicine in New York, cognitive behavioral therapy, or CBT, is your best bet to manage intense and possibly destructive feelings after a relationship ends.

He explains, "Often when people are going through a breakup, they experience certain feelings (sad, anxious, angry, hurt, betrayed, etc.) that influence the way they think (e.g., It's all my fault! I'll never find someone else! I can trust people anymore! etc.) – and vice versa. So, in order to move past a breakup, CBT would have people allow themselves to experience their feelings fully. Don't try to avoid or suppress feeling what you feel – emotions have a function and are there for a reason, even if unpleasant!"

4. Challenge your negative thoughts

If I've done it once, I've done it a thousand times. I start to allow myself to feel my saddest feelings after being dumped, and then my thoughts take a sordid turn into Crazytown, population: me. Dr. Rego says that this type of post-breakup thought pattern is to be expected. Cognitive behavioral therapy can help challenge thoughts that are spinning out of control.

Dr. Rego recommends, "Don't buy into the thoughts that emerge (e.g., challenge predictions about the future, correct distortions in beliefs, etc.) and slowly but steadily reengage the world (i.e., reach out to social supports, make plans that get you out of the house, exercise and eat well, return to healthy sleeping habits, take risks again when it comes to dating)."

More: [Can a breakup be good for your health?](#)

5. Be brutally honest with yourself

The only effective way to challenge your thoughts is with brutal honesty. This is the portion of post-breakup recovery that I like to lovingly call "ripping off the Band-Aid." It hurts. It sucks. It's the only way out of this funk you've been living in. April Masini of [AskApril.com](#) explains, "To process the breakup more quickly, be brutally honest about why it occurred. Just because you love someone doesn't mean you're compatible or that you have a future together. Chances are, this breakup happened for a good reason, and if it didn't happen now, it would have happened down the line."

6. Do you

OK, by this point, you've been crying your eyes out for days, and you've forgotten to wash your hair. While it may seem like nothing could comfort you more than your tear-stained and snot-soaked pillow, Masini argues that this is the perfect time to get out of the house: Your mental health depends on it. She says, "Go get a great new haircut — completely different style! Put the focus on a new improvement, not a loss."

More: [7 Refreshing truths about heartbreak](#)

Dr. Jane Greer, New York-based relationship expert and author of [What About Me? Stop Selfishness From Ruining Your Relationship](#), adds, "Use the breakup as an opportunity to strike out on your own in the world, and you can discover new hobbies and interests that can make you feel better and more confident about yourself."

7. Get back out there

No, you don't have to sign up for a dating website with a quivering chin and tear tracks still fresh on your face, but you *do* have to make an effort to spend time with people you care about. This step is critically important to bring back a sense of normalcy to your life — and to remind you of all the people you have in your corner.

[Sue Coleman](#), author of *Breaking Up Is Hard To Do*, says, "Go out and have a good time even if you're not ready. Take a trip to do something entirely new. Go to new places and meet new people. Have fun. Be happy that you're alive and free. You will have good days and bad, but take each day and know it will get better as time goes by. Just don't wind up in another undesirable relationship to replace the old. Give yourself the time you need to heal."

8. Look toward the future and *don't* look back

After an especially bad breakup, it may seem impossible to think that you will ever love again — trust me, I know. But Dr. Dain Heer, author of [Being You, Changing the World](#), believes that this sense of loss can open the door to great possibility. When you find yourself at the end of a relationship, Heer urges you to ask yourself this compelling question: "What else is possible now that wasn't possible when we were together?"

Heer points out that, even in the midst of heartbreak, the end may be just the beginning. He says, "Move forward to create your life, and if the relationship can be created again with that person you desire to be with, it will be created from a greater, deeper place and not the same old place that made you break up in the first place. In my point of view, a breakup, especially stemming from an unhealthy relationship or perhaps just one that wasn't meant to be, always leads to something greater."