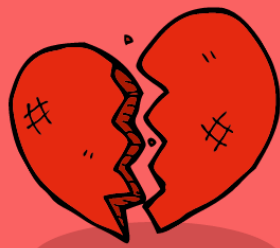


# Getting Over Breaking Up



by Angela M. Doel, M.S.



25 Therapeutic Techniques to Heal  
Your Heart & Help You Rediscover Happiness

# **Getting Over Breaking Up**

**25 Therapeutic Techniques to Heal Your Heart & Help  
You Rediscover Happiness**

**By Angela M. Doel, M.S.**

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## Table of Contents

Introduction .....	3
Coping Strategies for Recovering from a Breakup .....	4
Avoiding Rebound Relationships.....	6
Become the O.W.N.E.R. of Your Distressing Feelings .....	14
Understanding Your Emotions .....	15
Building a Support System .....	25
Coping with Depression .....	28
Coping with Living Alone.....	32
Coping with Grief and Loss .....	36
Coping with Negative Thoughts .....	43
Silencing Your Inner Critic .....	49
Creating a Post-Breakup Self-Care Routine .....	55
Dealing with Excessive Thinking & Worrying with the TRAC Technique.....	60
Embracing Self-Compassion and Practicing Self-Forgiveness .....	63
Exploring Your Identity.....	69
Developing Healthy Communication Skills.....	73
Letting Go of Grudges .....	78
Managing Your Anger.....	82
Healing Through Mindfulness.....	88
Navigating Social Media and Relationship Memories.....	91
Building Your Confidence .....	95
Rediscovering Intimacy and Rebuilding Trust After Betrayal .....	98
Rebuilding Self-Esteem and Self-Worth .....	105
Reframing Your Relationship Narrative .....	112
Reimagining Your Future .....	119
Are You Ready to Date?.....	123

## Introduction

The end of a romantic relationship can be a challenging and emotionally turbulent time. It's normal to feel a range of intense emotions, from sadness and anger to confusion and even relief. This workbook is designed to provide you with a structured framework to navigate the complex journey of healing after a breakup.

Breakups can leave us feeling lost, questioning our self-worth, and struggling to regain our sense of identity. The aftermath of a relationship ending can impact various aspects of our lives – our emotional well-being, self-esteem, social connections, and future expectations. However, it's important to remember that the end of one chapter paves the way for new beginnings, growth, and rediscovery of self.

This workbook is not just a collection of exercises – it's a supportive companion on your path to healing and transformation. Whether you're experiencing a recent breakup or are still grappling with the lingering effects of a past one, this workbook will guide you through the stages of recovery, helping you process your feelings, gain insights, and develop a renewed sense of self.

### What This Workbook Offers

- **Emotional Exploration:** Understand and acknowledge the range of emotions you're experiencing, from grief and loss to anger and acceptance. Learn healthy ways to cope with these emotions and prevent them from becoming overwhelming.
- **Self-Discovery:** Reconnect with your identity outside of the relationship. Rediscover your passions, strengths, and values as you work toward building a stronger foundation for your future.
- **Healing Strategies:** Explore effective strategies for self-care and emotional healing. From mindfulness exercises to journal prompts, you'll discover tools to help you cope and recover.
- **Reflection and Growth:** Reflect on the lessons learned from the relationship and breakup. Use these insights to foster personal growth and create healthier relationship patterns in the future.
- **Rebuilding Confidence:** Rebuild your self-esteem and self-confidence as you develop a more positive self-image. Break free from self-limiting beliefs that may have been reinforced during the relationship.
- **Navigating Relationships:** Learn how to navigate future relationships after a breakup. Discover healthy boundaries and effective communication skills.

Remember that healing is not a linear process – it's a journey with ups and downs. By engaging with the exercises and reflections in this workbook, you're taking an important step toward reclaiming your emotional well-being and embracing a brighter future.

Angela M. Doel, M.S.

Between Sessions Resources

# Coping Strategies for Recovering from a Breakup

## Objective

To identify ways to cope following the end of a romantic relationship.

## What to Know

When a relationship ends, it can be challenging to recover your emotional balance. Here are some typical reactions you might experience after a breakup, with some strategies for coping with difficult feelings. Check off the items that apply to your situation, and then check the strategies you will use to help you cope more effectively. Add your own thoughts and ideas.

### LONELINESS

- Tell yourself it is normal to feel lonely after a breakup, and that you can get through this. Breathe slowly until the feeling passes.
- Identify supportive people in your life and make a plan for increasing your contact with them, such as a weekly lunch date with a good friend.
- Use an online meet-up group or join a local organization to find people with common interests (not for romance – just for friendship and activity).
- Your idea: \_\_\_\_\_
- Your idea: \_\_\_\_\_
- Your idea: \_\_\_\_\_
- Your idea: \_\_\_\_\_

### OBSESSING ABOUT YOUR EX

- Talk to a therapist, counselor, or coach about your past relationship.
- While you grieve the loss of your relationship, identify at least two positive things in your life and spend equal time on them (for example, playing with kids or grandkids, spending time with a pet, or doing a hobby).
- If you cannot stop thinking about your ex, give yourself a specific time to write in a journal. Then put the journal away and distract yourself.
- Practice focusing on the present. Do a challenging task and keep your mind on it.
- Your idea: \_\_\_\_\_
- Your idea: \_\_\_\_\_
- Your idea: \_\_\_\_\_
- Your idea: \_\_\_\_\_

### FEELING BAD ABOUT YOURSELF

- Make a list of your positive qualities.
- If you know you made mistakes in the relationship, write out action steps for behaving differently in the future.

- Find a way to help someone else. Volunteer in the community or help a friend or family member with a project. This will boost your self-esteem better than almost anything.
- Your idea: \_\_\_\_\_
- Your idea: \_\_\_\_\_
- Your idea: \_\_\_\_\_
- Your idea: \_\_\_\_\_

After you engage in some of the activities, write about your experience.

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### **Reflections on This Exercise**

Do you have a better understanding of what you can do to cope with your breakup? Why or why not? Explain.

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How helpful was this exercise? \_\_\_\_\_  
(1 = not very helpful, 5 = moderately helpful, 10 = extremely helpful)

What did you learn from this exercise?

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# Avoiding Rebound Relationships

## Objective

To identify the signs of a rebound relationship and avoid this situation following a breakup.

## What to Know

If you recently ended a relationship and are now entering the dating scene, you might be tempted to rush into a new relationship. But getting involved too quickly after a breakup may not be best for your emotional wellbeing.

A rebound relationship refers to a situation where someone who recently ended a serious romantic relationship gets involved with someone else despite not being emotionally healed from the breakup. The person's reactions might be based on how they conducted themselves in the previous relationship, and they are still working through issues raised by that breakup. They might compare dating partners to their ex, fear commitment, or feel insecure about being single. Rebound relationships often involve the following problems.

- You are unable to see your situation clearly because you badly want to be in a new relationship.
- You confuse sexual chemistry with love.
- Fixating on someone new can be a way to deny or ignore your distress.
- You do not put in the time getting to know the other person or allow the relationship to grow in a healthy and organic way.
- You say things you do not mean, including, "I love you," because you confuse infatuation with love.
- You make promises you cannot keep, like committing to be "together forever" before you even know them.
- Your expectations are not reality-based.
- You spend too much time with the person you are dating, ignoring other important relationships.
- You quickly get bored because you initially got caught up in the emotional thrill or lust.
- The need for stability and love can lead to ignoring or missing "red flags."

While most rebound relationships are harmless, they can postpone your recovery. In other words, escaping through a rebound relationship prevents you from gaining insight into the reasons your relationship ended and the lessons you need to learn.

Is it impossible to avoid rebounding after a breakup? Rebound relationships are, by definition, almost always brief. If you are free from your past relationship, you focused on healing, and you feel ready, you might begin dating while being mindful of the following tips that can help you avoid a rebound relationship.

- 1. Avoid dating newly-divorced people – especially if they have not recovered from their divorce.** You can certainly date people who are divorced, but if they seem bitter about the divorce or fixated on their ex, they might not be ready to date.
- 2. Avoid recreating your past.** One or more aspects of your last relationship did not work. You might not want to pursue new partners because they remind you of your ex, but remember – your new partner cannot replace your ex.
- 3. Put yourself and your needs first.** Avoid compromising your needs because you feel vulnerable. If you find yourself repeatedly compromising your wants, needs, feelings, or finances to keep your new partner happy, you might be involved in a rebound relationship.
- 4. Play the field.** You may not know what you want after your breakup, so the best way to avoid a rebound relationship is to explore. Before you settle down or make a commitment, go on a few dates, and identify what you like (and what you dislike!).
- 5. Focus on recovery.** Find a new hobby, join a gym, and enjoy the company of loved ones. Coaching or counseling can help you through the healing process. It takes time to recover and gain a healthy perspective on why your last relationship ended.
- 6. Stop focusing on your ex.** Venting about your ex to a new partner is a sign you are not over your ex. If you find yourself doing this, you might want to consider the new person a friend rather than a romantic partner.
- 7. Gain insight into why your relationship ended.** This can help you establish healthy romantic relationships in the future.
- 8. Become comfortable with being alone.** Feel at ease being alone and enjoying your own company.
- 9. Give yourself time.** If you enter a new relationship too soon, you might have more difficulty establishing trust and a strong emotional bond with your new partner.

If you find yourself in a rebound relationship, consider ending it. The breakup was both painful and a learning experience, and this breakup will be a learning experience as well. Spend time learning about you, your life, your values, who you want to be, and what you want.

## What to Do

Answer the following questions.

Have you actively processed the breakup in a healthy manner? Why or why not?

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Have you learned from the experience? What did you learn? Be specific.

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Do you feel ready to date? Why or why not?

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Are you uncomfortable being alone? Are you lonely? Explain.

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Are you insecure about being single? Describe what you are experiencing.

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Do you rely on others to validate your worth?

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If you are involved in a relationship, do you think you are rebounding? Why or why not?

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Are you are involved with someone you suspect is on the rebound? Why?

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Are your needs being met in this relationship?

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Does the relationship make you feel like your best self?

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Does this person have the capacity for the kind of connection you want? What kind of connection *do* you want?

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Do you feel lonely in this relationship?

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If you decide to start dating soon after your breakup, have an honest and direct conversation with your new partner. Some questions you might ask of yourself are:

- What are my intentions?
- Are my expectations realistic?
- Is there a chance this might be a rebound?

What are some questions you want to ask your new partner?

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# Become the O.W.N.E.R. of Your Distressing Feelings

## Objective

To acknowledge, process, and own your distressing feelings after your breakup.

## What to Know

Breakups can trigger unsettling and uncomfortable feelings, including grief, loneliness, despair, guilt, frustration, anxiety, hopelessness, anger, and devastation, to name a few. All these feelings are enough to make you depressed, and you might be tempted to blame your ex-partner for putting you through this.

Painful as they are, these feelings are natural reactions to a difficult situation. However, you can cope with them and gain wisdom, self-compassion, and strength. Instead of avoiding and repressing your feelings – or blaming your ex – become the O.W.N.E.R. of your feelings to effectively cope with them and begin to recover. This process includes the following steps:

**O**pen up your awareness to your feelings and begin to take responsibility for your choices.

**W**here in your body do you experience your feelings? For example, maybe you feel heaviness in the pit of your stomach.

**N**ame your feelings. Try to be specific. For example, at the root of your anger might be hurt and disappointment.

**E**mbrace your feelings, even if it is difficult, and comfort yourself with the knowledge that they will pass. Journaling or practicing mindfulness exercises can help.

**R**esist the temptation to evaluate your experience as good or bad. Instead, take a neutral stance, offer yourself compassion, and avoid self-judgment.

When you experience distress, be the O.W.N.E.R. of your feelings and use the above strategies to acknowledge, process, and own them.

## What to Do

First, answer the following questions.

Are you willing to be open to your distressing feelings and take responsibility for your choices? Why or why not?

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Where do you typically experience feelings in your body?

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What specific feelings are you experiencing? Is it sadness, hurt, anger, guilt, fear, or something else?

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What are some things you can do to embrace your feelings, reminding yourself the feelings will pass?

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In what ways can you be self-compassionate and avoid judgment?

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Use the chart on the next page for two weeks. Record when you have distressing feelings related to your breakup. Write down the date, describe your feelings (be specific!), and note what you did to manage or cope. Write down if you used one of the O.W.N.E.R. strategies described above. Finally, describe how you felt afterward.



## Reflections on This Exercise

Did this exercise help you become the O.W.N.E.R. of your feelings? Why or why not?

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Did you feel better when you implemented these strategies? Explain.

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What are some ways you can remind yourself to practice the O.W.N.E.R. strategies?

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How helpful was this exercise? \_\_\_\_\_

(1 = not very helpful, 5 = moderately helpful, 10 = extremely helpful)

What did you learn from this exercise?

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# Understanding Your Emotions

## Objective

To identify fifteen different emotions and record details about how you experience those emotions.

## What to Know

Emotions are an important part of your life, and the goal is to become aware of them, understand them, learn to regulate them, and express them appropriately.

If you are aware of your emotions, you can learn to manage them better and express them in healthier ways. In addition, you will be able to recognize other people's emotions and handle them appropriately. This worksheet will help you explore fifteen emotions you may have experienced at some time in your life.

## What to Do

1. **Despair and hopelessness** are often associated with tragic events. If you are desperate, you might stop wishing and planning for the future, because you have lost hope. You may even feel like giving up on life.

Describe a time when you felt despair or hopelessness.

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What did you do in that situation? How did you think and act?

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Have you ever noticed when other people are hopeless? What did you do?

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How do despair and hopelessness influence your relationships with others?

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2. **Sadness** appears when you lose something very significant. You may grieve as you process your loss. Sadness can be accompanied by suffering, fear, and other feelings, like disappointment.

Describe a time when you felt sadness.

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What did you do in that situation? How did you think and act?

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Have you ever noticed when other people are sad? What did you do?

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How does sadness influence your relationship with others?

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3. **Anger** refers to being upset, displeased, or annoyed because of something perceived as wrong or bad. It involves a strong or hostile response to a threat, provocation, or hurt.

Describe a time when you felt anger.

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What did you do in that situation? How did you think and act?

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Do you notice when other people are angry? What do you do?

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How does anger influence your relationship with others?

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4. **Fear** is an uncomfortable emotion you feel when you perceive danger or a threat.

Describe a time when you felt fear.

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What did you do in that situation? How did you think and act?

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Do you notice when other people are frightened? What do you do?

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How does fear influence your relationships?

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5. **Disappointment** occurs when things fail to go your way. When someone does not meet your expectations, you might feel frustrated, sad, or angry. Expectations that lead to disappointment may be realistic, based on a fair and honest giving and receiving process. Or they can be unrealistic, as in a situation when you expect others to fulfill all your desires and needs.

Describe a time when you were disappointed.

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What did you do in that situation? How did you think and act?

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Do you notice when other people are disappointed? What do you do?

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How does disappointment influence your relationship with others?

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6. **Spite** is the desire to hurt, annoy, or offend someone. You might feel malicious, mischievous, or angry.

Describe a time you felt spiteful.

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What did you do in that situation? How did you think and act?

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Do you notice when other people are spiteful? What do you do?

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How does spite influence your relationships with others?

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7. **Shame** is a feeling of embarrassment or humiliation that arises because you think you did something dishonorable, immoral, or improper. It is a self-conscious emotion associated with a negative evaluation of yourself.

Describe a time you felt shame.

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What did you do in that situation? How did you think and act?

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Do you notice when other people are ashamed? What do you do?

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How does shame influence your relationships?

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8. **Guilt** may occur when you think you did something wrong. You may believe (accurately or not) you have compromised your moral standards or values and have a significant responsibility. Guilt can be irrational, powerful, and sometimes destructive.

Describe a time you felt guilty.

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What did you do in that situation? How did you think and act?

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Do you notice when other people feel guilty? What do you do?

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How does guilt influence your relationships?

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9. **Boredom** refers to lacking interest and concentration. You believe you have nothing to do, you cannot find anything interesting in your surroundings, or your day is dull and tedious.

Describe a time you felt bored.

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What did you do in that situation? How did you think and act?

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Do you notice when other people are bored? What do you do?

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How does boredom influence your relationships?

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10. **Anxiety** is a feeling of nervousness or unease, typically about an imminent event or something with an uncertain outcome. It is a state of inner turmoil, of generalized and unfocused worry. Anxiety can increase feelings of weakness and helplessness when faced with danger.

Describe a time when you were anxious.

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What did you do in that situation? How did you think and act?

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Do you notice when other people are anxious? What do you do?

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How does anxiety influence your relationships?

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11. **Happiness** includes positive emotions ranging from contentment to intense joy. You feel life satisfaction and subjective approval of yourself. It can be associated with fulfilling your wishes or hopes, having pleasant expectations for the future, and sharing that satisfaction with others.

Describe a time when you felt happiness.

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What did you do in that situation? How did you think and act?

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Do you notice when other people are happy? What do you do?

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How does happiness influence your relationships?

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12. **Empathy** is the capacity to understand and feel what others are feeling from their point of view. You may respond with care and compassion.

Describe a time you felt empathy.

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What did you do in that situation? How did you think and act?

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Do you notice when other people are empathic? What do you do?

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How does empathy influence your relationships?

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13. **Pride** results from positive self-evaluation when you think you or your actions met the approval of others. It is a reaction to success in achieving a goal and it is associated with feelings of accomplishment and increased self-esteem.

Describe a time when you felt proud.

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What did you do in that situation? How did you think and act?

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Do you notice when other people are proud? What do you do?

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How does pride influence your relationships?

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14. **Gratitude** is the quality of being thankful and the ability to show appreciation for and to return kindness. When you feel gratitude, you might have more positive coping strategies, your personal worldview might be more optimistic, and you may be altruistic.

Describe a time you felt gratitude.

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What did you do in that situation? How did you think and act?

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Do you notice when other people are grateful? What do you do?

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How does gratitude influence your relationships?

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15. **Trust** is the firm belief in the reliability, truth, ability, or strength of self, someone, or something. Underneath the feeling of trust is the belief that people will follow through on their promises and do what they say they will do.

Describe a time when you trusted yourself or someone else.

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What did you do in that situation? How did you think and act?

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Do you notice when other people are trustworthy? What do you do?

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How does trust influence your relationships?

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Describe any feeling(s) you have experienced that are not mentioned above.

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### **Reflections on This Exercise**

How helpful was this exercise? \_\_\_\_\_  
(1 = not very helpful, to 10 = extremely helpful)

What did you learn from this exercise?

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# Building a Support System

## Objective

To empower you to proactively establish a personalized network of support to aid in your healing following a breakup.

## What to Know

Navigating life after a breakup can be an emotionally charged and isolating experience. The end of a relationship brings about a range of feelings, from sadness and confusion to anger and relief. During this time, having a solid support system in place can provide immense comfort and encouragement as you move forward.

Recognizing that you do not have to go through this journey alone is an important step toward recovery and personal growth. By identifying sources of support and creating a plan to engage with them, you will enhance your ability to cope and foster a sense of connection.

Remember, reaching out for help is a sign of strength, not weakness. Building a support network does not mean you are burdening others. It means you are allowing others to be there for you in meaningful ways.

Your support network will evolve over time. New connections can be made, and existing relationships may deepen. As certain relationships fall away, you will have space for new connections.

By developing a support system, you are taking an important step toward healing, growth, and discovering the strength within you to navigate challenges.

This worksheet will guide you through the process of identifying potential sources of support, defining your support needs, and reaching out to individuals or groups.

## What to Do

Using the questions below, identify trusted friends, family members, coworkers, and anyone else that you can turn to for support. You can write a person's name, or just the person's relationship to you (sister, mentor, clergy).

Who is a good listener? \_\_\_\_\_

Who has similar experiences? \_\_\_\_\_

Who can always brighten your mood? \_\_\_\_\_

Who have you been meaning to reconnect with? \_\_\_\_\_

Who is someone active you can join for bike rides, walks, or other physical activities?  
\_\_\_\_\_

Who is someone who has known you for a long time? \_\_\_\_\_

Who is a good problem-solver? \_\_\_\_\_

Who is someone you consider to be wise? \_\_\_\_\_

Who is someone known for kindness and compassion? \_\_\_\_\_

List other individuals or groups that could provide emotional, practical, or social support during this time. Think about friends, family members, coworkers, therapists, mentors, coaches, support groups, or community organizations. Be open to both existing connections and opportunities to make new ones.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Relationship: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Relationship: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Relationship: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Relationship: \_\_\_\_\_

Reflect on the specific types of support you need. Are you seeking a listening ear, advice, distraction, or help with practical tasks? Consider emotional, informational, and instrumental support. Be honest about your needs to help you identify the most suitable sources of support.

Emotional Support Needs: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Informational Support Needs: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Practical Support Needs: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Choose two individuals or groups from your list to reach out to. Consider the nature of your relationship with them and how comfortable you are sharing your feelings. You can use the template below.

“Hello [Name], I hope this message finds you well. I wanted to share that I'm going through a challenging time after a recent breakup. Your presence and support mean a lot to me, and I believe your [mention the type of support you need, e.g., listening, advice, company] would be incredibly helpful. If you're available, I would appreciate connecting and spending time together. Please let me know what works best for you. Thank you for being there for me. Warmly, [Your Name]”

**Contact 1**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Relationship: \_\_\_\_\_

Support Needed: \_\_\_\_\_

Planned Outreach Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Contact 2**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Relationship: \_\_\_\_\_

Support Needed: \_\_\_\_\_

Planned Outreach Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Next, research local support groups or online communities related to breakup recovery. These groups offer a safe space to share experiences and gain insights. Explore options and make a commitment to participate in at least one group.

Support Group Name/Platform: \_\_\_\_\_

Scheduled Meeting/Participation Date: \_\_\_\_\_

How did it go? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Remember, building a support system takes time and effort. Be patient with yourself and those around you.

**Reflections on This Exercise**

How helpful was this exercise? \_\_\_\_\_

(1 = not very helpful, to 10 = extremely helpful)

What did you learn from this exercise?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

# Coping with Depression

## Objective

To increase your coping skills to manage breakup depression.

## What to Know

Stressful life events like romantic breakups can significantly impact your emotional wellbeing, triggering sadness, anger, bitterness, regret, anxiety, and stress. All these emotions are normal after a breakup, but if they lead to prolonged feelings of sadness and apathy, there might be something more serious going on. Researchers actually found that “normal” post-breakup emotional states closely resemble clinical depression.

Feelings of grief and sadness can be mild to severe following a breakup. Sometimes these feelings are strong for a brief period of time, but in other cases symptoms linger. Because emotional responses vary, it might be hard to tell if what you are feeling is normal or something more serious. Post-breakup symptoms that may indicate depression include:

- hopelessness or helplessness.
- body weight changes.
- change in appetite.
- sleeping too much or too little.
- loss of pleasure and interest in activities you previously enjoyed.
- feeling worthless.
- sadness or feeling “empty” inside.
- intense self-blame or guilt.
- fatigue and lack of energy.
- listlessness.
- apathy.
- loneliness.
- restlessness or irritability.
- body pain, headaches, or digestive problems.
- trouble thinking clearly or making decisions.
- loss of self-esteem.
- thoughts of death or suicide.

Circle any of the above symptoms you currently experience. Provide additional details below.

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If you are experiencing any of the above symptoms, they usually begin to subside on their own around six months after the breakup. As time passes, you will begin to recover and gradually

feel better. Whether you are having normal post-breakup sadness or clinical depression, there are steps you can take to cope.

- Give yourself time to grieve the loss of the relationship.
- Avoid checking up on your ex on social media.
- Avoid your ex, or limit contact as much as possible right after the breakup.
- Set thought boundaries to avoid rumination (when you repeatedly think about something). Gain some control over your thoughts by reserving only a certain amount of time each day to process the breakup.
- Meditate and focus on the present moment.
- Exercise at least 30 minutes per day, five days per week.
- Avoid isolating yourself. Connect with others in-person, by text, or in a video chat.
- Look to the future and find a sense of purpose.
- Build a strong social support network.
- Practice good self-care habits.
- Learn problem-solving skills.
- Work on improving your confidence and self-esteem.
- Set goals.
- Write about your emotions, things you are grateful for, and positive experiences.
- Find ways to stay occupied to keep your body and mind busy.
- See a therapist, counselor, or relationship coach to help you gain perspective, address negative thought patterns, and establish coping skills.

*If your symptoms get increasingly worse, you are using alcohol or drugs to cope, or you are considering suicide, contact your doctor or call the 24-hour National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 1-800-273-8255 or Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) National Helpline at 1-800-662-4357.*

If your symptoms are mild to moderate, you may be able to handle them on your own by practicing the above steps.

### **What to Do**

Choose some of the above activities to try over the next month. Using the following chart, write down your experiences. Include the date, describe what you did, and note how you felt after doing the activity.

Date	Activity	How did you feel after?



## Reflections on This Exercise

Did practicing any of the activities decrease your feelings of depression? Explain.

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What was your favorite activity? Will you continue this activity? Why or why not?

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Who is supporting you during this difficult time? Has it been helpful? Why or why not?

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After completing this exercise for one month, would you say your symptoms have decreased? Explain.

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What else can you do to feel better following the breakup?

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How helpful was this exercise? \_\_\_\_\_  
(1 = not very helpful, 5 = moderately helpful, 10 = extremely helpful)

What did you learn from this exercise?

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# Coping with Living Alone

## Objective

To identify ways to cope with living alone following a breakup.

## What to Know

One major adjustment following a breakup is learning to live alone again. It takes time to adjust while managing loneliness. Perhaps the transition will be easy, or it might take months before your new place feels like home. Here are some tips for living alone after a breakup.

**Enjoy quiet time to yourself.** Learn how to enjoy quiet time alone. Use this time to engage in a pleasurable solo activity, like watching a movie, solving a puzzle, journaling, or other activities. Living alone might involve extended periods of silence. Embrace the quiet. Research has shown that silence is essential for brain health. Just an hour of silence replenishes your cognitive resources, relieves stress, and develops problem-solving abilities.

**Establish a routine.** You might not be used to living your life by a schedule, but it is a helpful when you live alone. Being on your own involves freedom, but that can lead to neglecting certain parts of your life. Putting things off means tasks pile up, and those projects, errands, and duties will impact your mental health. So, write down all the tasks and chores you need to complete each week and designate a time and day for each.

**Make your bed each day.** This is an essential first step in your new daily routine, and you will start your day feeling like you accomplished one small task.

**Avoid planning for what “might” happen.** First, focus on necessities and what you require. Initially, try not to spend a lot of money on expensive furniture or items you might not need. Identify what living alone is like and adjust accordingly.

**Learn to cook (if you do not already know how).** You might be tempted to eat out frequently if you live alone. Learn how to make meals for a single person. Watch cooking shows or search online for delicious recipes for one.

**Say “yes” more often.** You might be tempted to say “no” when people make requests for your time, or when you are asked to do things you do not really want to do. Start saying “yes” to events that get you out of the house.

**Get social.** Ask friends to stop by to see your new home or meet with co-workers for lunch. Volunteer, get a side job, exercise, join a local club, and put yourself in situations that require you to socialize.

**Learn about yourself again.** Identify ways you can improve yourself. Try a hobby you put off because you never had enough time. Start with something simple like reading, drawing, DIY hobbies, or even learning an instrument.

What else can you do to cope with living alone?

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It will take time to get used to the added responsibilities, the quiet, and the sudden absence of your partner. But it will get easier over time. This worksheet will help you identify ways to cope.

### **What to Do**

First, answer the following questions.

What are some activities you can do to enjoy and appreciate quiet time?

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Write down all the tasks and chores you need to complete each week, like food shopping, cleaning your home, or paying bills, and designate a time and day to do each task.

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What are some necessities you need in your new home?

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What are some things you can do for self-improvement?

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What are some hobbies or other activities you put off doing when you were in a relationship? Are you interested in pursuing them now? Why or why not?



Did this activity help you begin to cope with living alone? Why or why not?

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**Reflections on This Exercise**

How helpful was this exercise? \_\_\_\_\_

(1 = not very helpful, 5 = moderately helpful, 10 = extremely helpful)

What did you learn from this activity?

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# Coping with Grief and Loss

## Objective

To provide you with a structured framework to navigate the process of grieving and healing following a significant relationship ending.

## What to Know

Facing the aftermath of a breakup can be a deeply emotional and challenging experience. The end of a relationship often leads to feelings of grief and loss, mirroring the mourning process that occurs when you lose something significant. These emotions are valid and deserving of attention.

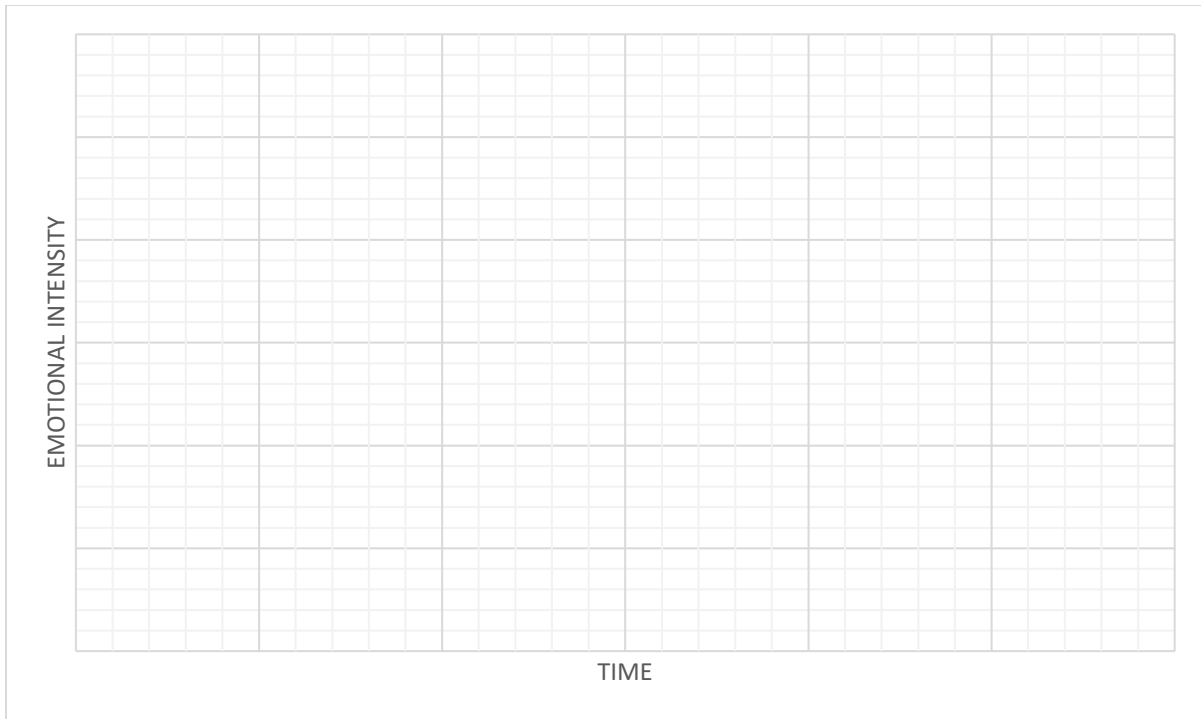
Grief is a complex and individualized experience, encompassing a range of emotions, from sadness and anger to confusion and even relief. The path through grief is not linear because it is marked by ebbs and flows, moments of clarity and confusion, and a mixture of emotions that may change from one day to the next. It is perfectly normal to experience an array of feelings.

Seeking support and engaging in self-care are crucial during this period. By completing the exercises included in this worksheet, you are taking a meaningful step toward healing and growth. Allow yourself the space and time you need to process your emotions and integrate the lessons learned from this experience.

## What to Do

Coping with the grief and loss that accompanies a breakup requires acknowledging and processing complex emotions. This worksheet is designed to help you navigate the grieving process in a healthy and constructive manner. Take your time to complete each exercise thoughtfully and reflectively.

**1. Mapping Your Emotions.** Draw a simple chart or use the chart on the next page. Plot your emotions on this chart over the course of two weeks. Be honest about the fluctuations in your emotions. This exercise can help you identify patterns and triggers.



**2. Identifying Grief Reactions.** List the various emotions and physical sensations you have experienced since the breakup.

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What has been the most difficult to cope with?

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**3. Letter of Release.** Write a letter to your ex-partner, expressing your feelings, thoughts, and anything you wish you had said. This letter is for your personal reflection and healing – you do



**4. Remembering the Good Times.** Reflect on the positive aspects of the relationship that you cherish. Write down your favorite memories, lessons learned, and qualities you appreciated about your ex-partner. This exercise can help you find closure by acknowledging the positive impact the relationship had on your life.

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**5. Letting Go Ritual.** Create a ritual to symbolize your intention to let go of the past. This could involve writing down negative emotions on paper and burning them, planting a symbolic object in a garden, or simply meditating on the idea of releasing. Describe your chosen ritual and how you plan to perform it.

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When will you do it? \_\_\_\_\_

**6. Constructive Self-Care.** List at least five self-care activities that help alleviate stress and promote emotional well-being. Choose activities that nourish your mind, body, and soul, such as journaling, exercise, spending time with loved ones, or engaging in a creative hobby.

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**7. Setting Realistic Expectations.** Grief does not follow a linear path, and healing takes time. Reflect on your expectations. Are you pressuring yourself to "get over it" quickly? \_\_\_\_\_

Write down three realistic expectations for yourself as you work through your grief.

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

**8. Cultivating Meaning and Growth.** Consider the lessons you learned from this relationship and breakup. How have you grown as a person? What aspects of your life do you want to focus on moving forward? Describe how you can use this experience as a catalyst for personal growth.

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**9. Future Self-Compassion.** Write a letter to your future self, offering words of encouragement, self-compassion, and hope. Address this letter to the version of you that has healed and moved forward. Remind yourself that healing is a journey, and you have the strength to overcome challenges.

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Take a moment to reflect on the insights you gained from completing these activities.

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**Reflections on This Exercise**

How helpful was this exercise? \_\_\_\_\_  
(1 = not very helpful, 5 = moderately helpful, 10 = extremely helpful)

What did you learn from this activity?

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# Coping with Negative Thoughts

## Objective

To reduce negative thinking by using several coping strategies.

## What to Know

Perhaps you cannot stop the flow of negative thoughts since your breakup. In addition, you might be experiencing grief, uncertainty, anger, and many other emotions. Coping strategies that worked in the past might not be up to the task this time. Here are some strategies you can use if you are struggling with any of these common negative thoughts.

**“I’m not good enough.”** The end of a relationship often brings with it a sense of failure. This thought is particularly common when the other person cheated on or abandoned you. If you are struggling with feeling like you are not enough, try the following actions.

- Collect old letters, cards, emails, texts, and so forth from people who love and care about you. Create a “smile file” (either physical or digital) and spend a few minutes each day reviewing it to remind yourself how others see you.
- Build your physical strength or endurance. When you feel strong and capable, you will begin to believe in yourself.
- If you cannot stop thinking about all the negative things your ex said about you, write down the statements and refute each one. This exercise helps remove the power their words have over you.
- Spend time volunteering or giving back to others. You will benefit from seeing the positive impact you have on those who are less fortunate.
- Limit your time using social media if you find it upsetting.

**“I wish things could be different.”** Maybe you wish you could go back to the way things were, or you imagine your ex acted or responded differently. If you are focusing on the past or ways you could change the situation, do the following.

- Start a daily gratitude practice. Use a journal, app, or even an audio or video recorder. Keep it brief and simple and do it consistently to remind yourself that even though you are experiencing a challenging time, there is still good in your life.
- Divide a piece of paper into two sections and label them *Things I CAN Change*, and *Things I CAN’T Change*. Then write down at least 5-6 items under each column. Spend your time and energy on the items in the first column.
- If you tend to reach out to your ex when you shouldn’t, make it more difficult to contact them. Delete their number from your phone or block them.

**“I can’t move on without closure.”** Do you feel stuck because you believe you require closure? Perhaps you tell yourself you need answers before you can let go and move on. If this is a problem for you, try some of the following actions.

- Use a journal to write about the questions that still haunt you. Explore likely explanations and keep writing until you come up with what might be the truth. Come to terms with the idea that you might never have all the answers.
- Create a closure ceremony by burning old letters or photographs, or repurposing jewelry from your ex. Bury something that had meaning in your old life.
- On a piece of paper, complete this sentence: “Because this happened, I have learned...” Once you identify what you have learned from an experience, you can move forward.

**“I’ll never be happy again.”** It is easy to recall “the good old days” and assume you will never find happiness again. If you are mourning the loss of the relationship and feel hopeless, do the following activities.

- Spending time in nature will remind you that death and renewal are natural cycles.
- See a live comedy show or rewatch favorite funny movies.
- Each week put one small thing on your calendar that you look forward to. Every 1-3 months, schedule something bigger that you enjoy.
- Have a conversation with an elderly person who has a positive outlook. Ask about their experiences. You will probably find they experienced things in their life they worried they would not recover from.
- Write down the expectations you had for your life and analyze them. How many are actually outside the realm of possibility now?

**“Why did this happen to me?”** Maybe you are wondering what you did to deserve these circumstances. Life might feel unfair. If you are feeling victimized or consumed by self-pity, do the following.

- Read a book that features people overcoming obstacles. It will remind you that bad stuff happens to good people, and people overcome great obstacles.
- What can you do to create a sense of purpose from your pain? Maybe you can reach out and help others or apply your knowledge and skills to assist people that are also coping with the end of a relationship.
- Write down some traits that make you capable of handling your circumstances. You might be a great problem-solver or networker. Whatever your strengths, focus on how they can help you now.
- Apply structure to your days and limit down time. Include activities that keep you busy.

**“Life is too overwhelming.”** Moving on after a breakup and rebuilding a new life is a big deal! If you feel paralyzed by the challenges in front of you, take the following actions.

- Identify a small step you can take right now – and act on it.
- Find ways to tap into your determination.
- Create accountability in your life. Set reminders on your phone to tackle one small task each day or make a list and cross off one thing every day.
- Do a required task while doing something you want to do. For example, make important phone calls while you are enjoying a cup of tea.
- Create a doable but challenging goal for yourself.

## What to Do

First, answer the following questions.

Write down some of the negative thoughts you have about your breakup.

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What are some of the coping strategies you have used in the past that are not working for you now? Why are they no longer working?

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Who can support you during this difficult time? Write down the names and phone numbers of at least four people.

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Write down some ways you can practice self-care. Be specific.

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What specifically triggers your negative thinking?

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What can you do to be of service to others?

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Next, examine what you have written down and review the suggestions above. Write down all the actions you can take to cope. Brainstorm ideas – you do not necessarily have to do everything in this list.

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Next, for two weeks use the following chart to record what you do to cope with negative thinking. Any time a negative thought enters your mind, note the date, the action you take, what happened, and how you felt afterwards. Write down if you were successful in reducing negative thinking.

<b>Date</b>	<b>Action or activity</b>	<b>What happened?</b>	<b>How did you feel after?</b>	<b>Were you successful? Y / N</b>





What was the biggest obstacle you encountered when completing this exercise? Describe.

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Were you successful at reducing negative thinking? \_\_\_\_\_

Why or why not? \_\_\_\_\_

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How helpful was this exercise? \_\_\_\_\_

(1 = not very helpful, 5 = moderately helpful, 10 = extremely helpful)

What did you learn from this exercise?

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# Silencing Your Inner Critic

## Objective

To reduce self-criticism and increase self-compassion following a breakup.

## What to Know

Rejection and feeling like you failed because your relationship ended can contribute to a downward spiral of negative self-talk. You might believe your inner voice because it offers you “evidence” that what you feel so intensely is true.

Relentless self-criticism prolongs and complicates the grieving process following a breakup. Perhaps you are hard on yourself about your personality, your appearance, your intelligence, or things you said (or failed to say). Rather than beating yourself up, questioning your choices, and agonizing over what could have been, use this challenging time for self-care and compassion. Here are some suggestions to silence your inner critic.

- 1. Appreciate who you are – apart from the relationship.** Who were you before your ex entered your life? Who do you *want* to be? Analyze your interests, hobbies, and friendships to begin the process of moving on. Make some short-term goals and use this time to grow into the person you wish to be.
- 2. Are your expectations unrealistic?** Perhaps you blame yourself for not meeting a cultural standard that seems easy to achieve for others. The expectation that you should know exactly what makes the perfect relationship is unrealistic and self-defeating. Whenever you criticize yourself for being single, remember you are not flawed if you do not currently have a partner.
- 3. Consider what you learned about yourself.** Each failed relationship is an opportunity to reflect on what you learned about yourself. When you notice you are in a self-critical spiral, take out a journal and write about what the relationship taught you. For example, “I know I could work on improving my communication skills,” or “I’d like to increase interests and hobbies of my own.”
- 4. Imagine how you will feel about the breakup in ten years.** There will come a day when this loss does not feel so painful.
- 5. Pay attention to your thoughts.** Be the observer the next time you criticize yourself. Notice how you feel, and if your thoughts make you feel awful, replace them with different, healthy thoughts. Create positive statements to replace the critical or negative ones.
- 6. Practice loving kindness.** Be gentle with yourself when you are overwhelmed with negative self-talk. Keep in mind that beating up on yourself creates trauma. Talk to yourself as if you are a child being criticized. Be loving and kind to this child.

**7. Avoid comparing yourself to others.** Comparing yourself to others can create fear that impacts decision-making. If you believe you never measure up, you might wonder what the point is in trying.

**8. Ask yourself, “Is this true?”** Whenever you criticize yourself, ask this question.

**9. Be your own biggest supporter.** Consider your past accomplishments, including the good things that happened during the relationship. Take time to acknowledge yourself.

**10. Keep a gratitude journal.** Reflect on what you are grateful for that happened in the past. Note all the good things currently in your life.

**11. You are not the “mistake” – and you are not a failure.** Everyone makes mistakes, and you are not a terrible person because of past relationship decisions.

**12. Ask for help.** Sometimes you might require outside help, and following a breakup is a great time to seek help so you can move forward with a clean slate.

**13. Immediately stop negative thoughts.** Create a positive statement to replace negative self-talk. The most powerful words are, “I am.” For example, you might say, “I am smart, funny, and a great cook.” Be mindful of the statements you say to yourself when you are upset, angry, and fearful. Turn those statements around as quickly as possible using positive “I am” statements.

## What to Do

First, answer the following questions.

Who were you before your ex entered your life?

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Who do you *want* to be?

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Write down some of the ways you criticize yourself.

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Who can support you during this difficult time? Write down the names and phone numbers of at least four people.

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Write down your interests, hobbies, and friendships and make some short-term goals.

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Write about what the relationship taught you. If you need additional space, use a journal or notebook.

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Imagine how you will feel about the breakup in ten years. Be as detailed as possible.

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What are some positive statements you can use to replace the critical or negative ones?

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Next, examine what you have written down and review the list of thirteen suggestions above. Write down all the actions you can take to silence your inner critic. Brainstorm ideas – you do not necessarily have to do everything in this list.

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Date	Action or activity	What happened?	How did you feel after?	Were you successful? Y / N

### Reflections on This Exercise

Did anything surprise you while completing this activity? Explain.

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What was the biggest obstacle you encountered when completing this exercise? Describe.

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Were you successful at silencing your inner critic? \_\_\_\_\_

Why or why not? \_\_\_\_\_

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How helpful was this exercise? \_\_\_\_\_

(1 = not very helpful, 5 = moderately helpful, 10 = extremely helpful)

What did you learn from this exercise?

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# Creating a Post-Breakup Self-Care Routine

## Objective

To develop a self-care plan by identifying what you value and require as part of your day-to-day life.

## What to Know

In the wake of emotional upheaval, creating a post-breakup self-care routine becomes an essential addition for healing, growth, and renewal. As you care for yourself you can rediscover your sense of self, rebuild your emotional well-being, and embrace a future full of promise. By channeling your energy into nurturing self-love, practicing resilience, and embracing positive change, you can emerge from the breakup stronger and more empowered than ever before.

Perhaps you forgot the importance of taking care of yourself. Self-care refers to the kinds of things you might do regularly to reduce stress and maintain and enhance your wellbeing – particularly important after a breakup.

Self-care is personal, and people will have different approaches to taking care of themselves. You might value some areas over others. Below are the different life areas where you might want to implement self-care activities:

- Workplace/Professional
- Physical
- Mental
- Emotional
- Spiritual
- Interpersonal/Relational

This worksheet will help you identify the areas of your life where you can implement self-care activities.

## What to Do

For each category above, select at least one strategy or activity that you can include in your self-care plan. There might be areas of overlap between these categories. List the activities that you have identified as important to your well-being and that you can engage in daily or weekly to take care of yourself.

Workplace/Professional: \_\_\_\_\_

Physical: \_\_\_\_\_

Mental: \_\_\_\_\_

Emotional: \_\_\_\_\_

Spiritual: \_\_\_\_\_



Interpersonal/Relational: \_\_\_\_\_

Identify people in your life that might be good resources for exchanging new self-care ideas and strategies, as well as provide you with support and encouragement.

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List other forms of support such as support groups, religious organizations, clubs, community groups, and so on.

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List people you can talk to on a regular basis about your concerns.

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List ways you can get regular exercise (at least 30 minutes each day).

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List hobbies or other activities you enjoy on a regular basis.

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Write down ways you can improve your sleep habits.

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List ways you can improve your diet.



least 3 or 4 obstacles or barriers and how you can address them.

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The final step is to implement your plan and keep track of how you are doing. Keeping track of your self-care activities for one week will help you recognize your successes and identify and address any difficulties you may not have anticipated. Remember to stick to your plan even if emotionally difficult circumstances arise.

Date	Self-Care Activity	Obstacles?	How Did It Go?

Date	Self-Care Activity	Obstacles?	How Did It Go?

**Reflections on This Exercise**

How helpful was this exercise? \_\_\_\_\_

(1 = not very helpful, 5 = moderately helpful, 10 = extremely helpful)

What could you do differently to make progress in this area?

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# Dealing with Excessive Thinking and Worrying with the TRAC Technique

## Objective

To identify healthy ways to cope following a breakup by using the TRAP/TRAC technique.

## What to Know

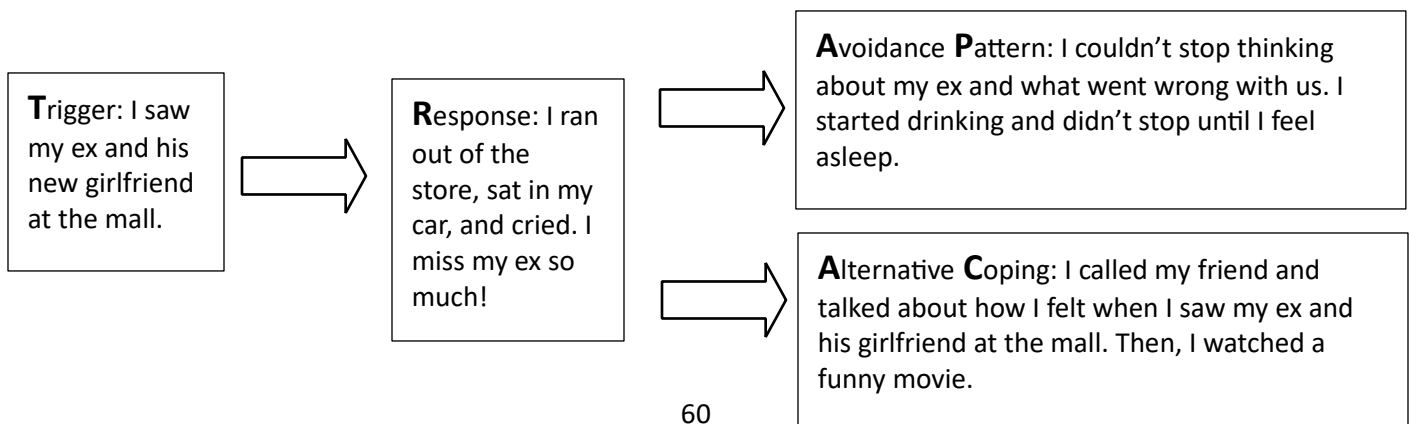
After a breakup, rumination and worry can trap you in an emotional loop. Perhaps you believe it will help with reducing upsetting feelings, understanding what happened and why the breakup occurred, and eventually moving on. Unfortunately, rumination and worry are usually unproductive – and can actually make your situation worse. To react with rumination (*excessively thinking the same negative thoughts about the past*) and worry (*thinking about the future in a way that makes you anxious*) is like grabbing a shovel when you are trapped in a deep hole. You might believe that digging hard and fast is productive, but in fact it just takes you deeper into distress. If you have gotten into a habit of ruminating, it can be harmful to your mental health, as it can:

- prolong or intensify depression.
- increase negative thinking.
- decrease effective problem-solving.
- increase uncertainty.
- impair your ability to think and process emotions.

If you find yourself frequently ruminating or worrying, it can be hard to stop. Ask yourself if there is something healthy you can do instead. If there is – do it. If you cannot think of anything – redirect your attention and energy to something more productive.

Active problem solving is different from rumination and worry, which happens solely in your head. Choosing an alternative way to cope is more helpful, and you are more likely to think clearly and come up with solutions. You might take a walk, spend time with loved ones, or engage in a hobby – all of which can help pull you out of the TRAP and get you back on TRAC.

If something triggers you into rumination or worry, acknowledge what is happening and pull yourself out of the TRAP. Get back on TRAC by choosing alternative ways to cope. Review the following example.



## What to Do

First, answer the following questions.

Describe triggers that cause you to ruminate or worry.

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How do you usually respond?

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Are there certain times of day you are more likely to ruminate? To worry? Explain.

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Have you noticed a pattern in the way you tend to get trapped in worry and rumination? Describe what happens.

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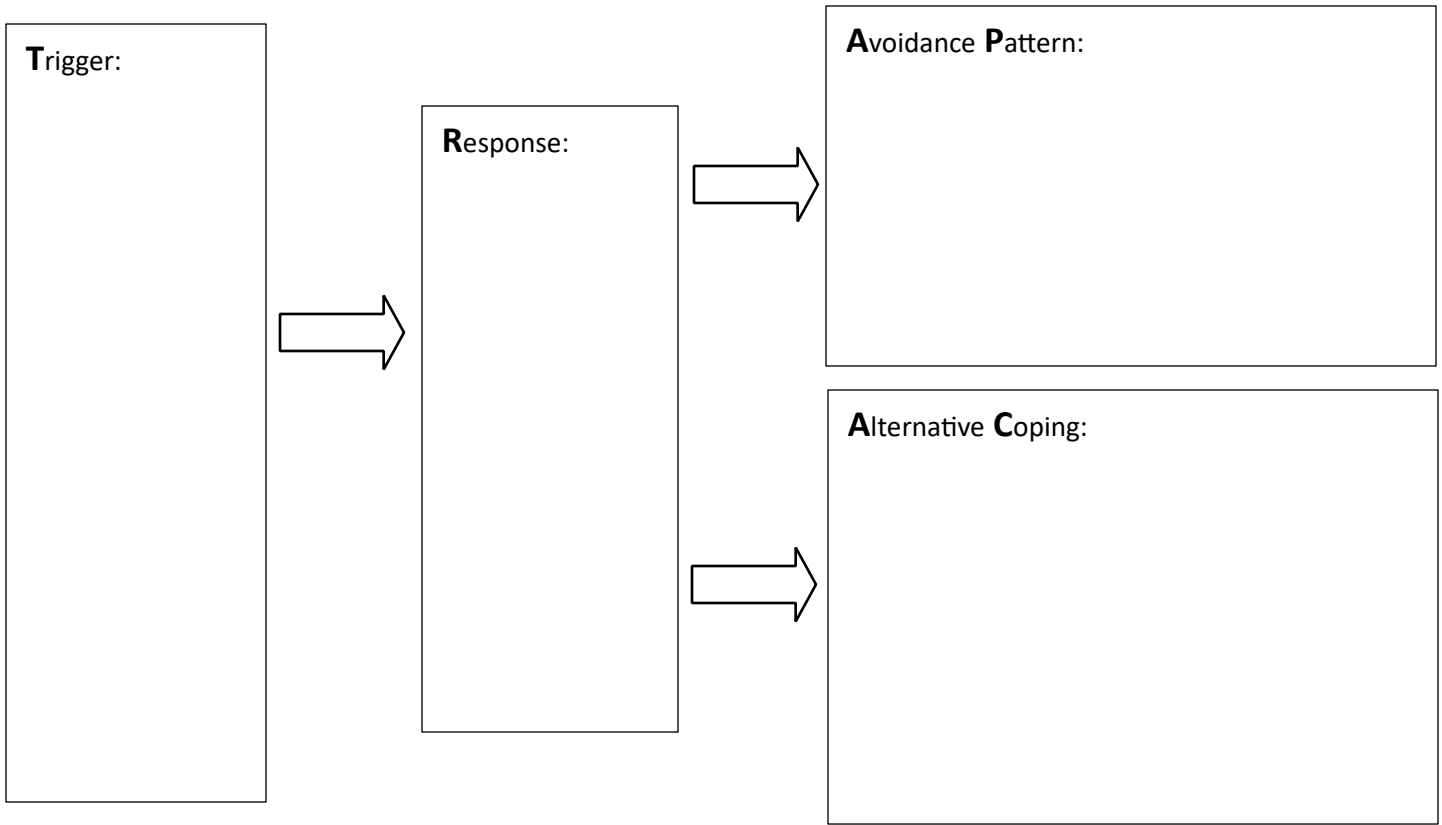
What are some alternative ways you can cope? In other words, instead of getting trapped in worry and rumination, what can you do instead?

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Fill in the following diagram when you are triggered. Describe the trigger and how you responded. In the "Avoidance Pattern" box, describe how you might normally react (when you are in the TRAP of rumination and worry). In the "Alternative Coping" box, write down some ways you can get back on TRAC and break the pattern of rumination and worry.



**Reflections on This Exercise**

Did anything surprise you while completing this activity? Explain.

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Were you successful at getting back on TRAC? \_\_\_\_\_

Why or why not? \_\_\_\_\_

How helpful was this exercise? \_\_\_\_\_

(1 = not very helpful, 5 = moderately helpful, 10 = extremely helpful)

What did you learn from this exercise?

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# Embracing Self-Compassion and Practicing Self-Forgiveness

## **Objective**

To cultivate self-compassion and practice self-forgiveness following a breakup.

## **What to Know**

Healing from a breakup can be challenging, but it also presents an opportunity for growth, self-discovery, and building a stronger relationship with yourself. Self-compassion and self-forgiveness are essential aspects of this process. Research suggests that these practices can significantly contribute to emotional recovery and overall well-being.

## **Understanding Self-Compassion**

Scientific studies conducted by Dr. Kristin Neff and her colleagues have shown that self-compassion involves treating oneself with the same kindness, care, and understanding one would offer to a close friend. Research indicates that individuals who practice self-compassion experience reduced negative emotions and increased emotional resilience.

In addition, Dr. Neff's research demonstrated that self-kindness is a key component of self-compassion. Treating yourself with warmth and understanding activates the brain's "self-soothing" systems, leading to decreased stress and increased feelings of safety.

Research indicates that recognizing shared human experiences can help reduce feelings of isolation and promote emotional healing. Dr. Neff's work suggests that acknowledging that suffering is a universal human experience fosters a sense of connection and reduces feelings of loneliness.

Mindfulness, another aspect of self-compassion, involves acknowledging and accepting your feelings without judgment. Research shows that mindfulness practices can lead to improved emotional regulation, greater self-awareness, and reduced reactivity to negative emotions.

Recent studies in positive psychology have highlighted the efficacy of self-compassionate affirmations. Repeating affirmations that encourage self-kindness and understanding can reshape self-perception and improve emotional well-being.

## **Practicing Self-Forgiveness**

Research conducted by Dr. Frederic Luskin suggests that self-forgiveness is a vital aspect of emotional healing. It involves letting go of self-blame and negative emotions associated with personal mistakes, which reduces psychological distress.

Dr. Luskin's research emphasizes the importance of recognizing self-judgment and its effects on mental health. Self-criticism has been linked to increased levels of anxiety, depression, and rumination, making self-forgiveness essential for breaking this cycle.



Numerous psychological studies support the idea that acknowledging your imperfections and mistakes promotes self-acceptance and self-growth. Embracing your humanity, flaws and all, contributes to healthier self-esteem and improved overall well-being.

Visualization techniques, like imagining negative emotions drifting away, can positively influence emotional processing and regulation. These techniques can help facilitate the process of releasing self-blame and guilt.

Dr. Luskin's work highlights that self-forgiveness affirmations can lead to reduced negative self-evaluation and increased feelings of self-worth. Positive affirmations about self-forgiveness can rewire ingrained negative thought patterns.

According to a recent study, consistent self-compassion and self-forgiveness practices lead to greater emotional resilience, increased self-esteem, and reduced symptoms of depression and anxiety over time. Research underscores the effectiveness of journaling for emotional processing and healing. Regular journaling can help you track progress and identify areas of growth. Regularly assessing and noting changes in self-compassion and self-forgiveness can encourage healing following a breakup.

This worksheet is designed to help you cultivate self-compassion and practice self-forgiveness as you recover from a breakup.

### **What to Do**

What does self-compassion mean to you? Write down your own definition and what it looks like in practice.

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Think about how you would comfort a friend who is going through a breakup. Write down a kind and compassionate message you might say in this situation.

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Heartbreak is a shared human experience. List some common feelings or struggles that people experience after a breakup. This can help you feel less isolated in your pain.

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Practice mindfulness by bringing your attention to your feelings without judgment. Write down some of the emotions you're experiencing post-breakup, acknowledging them without trying to change them.

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Create a list of affirmations that promote self-compassion. For example: "I deserve kindness and understanding during this difficult time," or "I am worthy of love and care, especially from myself."

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Reflect on what self-forgiveness means to you. Write down your own definition and why it is important for your healing.

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Next, choose a specific self-compassion and self-forgiveness practice from above that resonates with you. Commit to practicing it daily for the next week. Use the chart to track your progress. Write down the date and activity you did that day. Note any shifts in your self-perception and emotional well-being.

Date	Activity	Shifts in perception	How did you feel after?	Well-being

### Reflections on This Exercise

Did anything surprise you while completing this activity? Explain.

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How helpful was this exercise? \_\_\_\_\_

(1 = not very helpful, 5 = moderately helpful, 10 = extremely helpful)

What did you learn from this exercise?

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# Exploring Your Identity

## Objective

To identify interests and positive qualities as you create a new identity following a breakup.

## What to Know

Ending a romantic relationship is a major life transition, an event that shifts your role and your identity. Transitions mark the endings of old phases and the beginning of new ones, producing changes in your life trajectory. It might be time to rethink your identity.

Your identity answers the following questions: “Who are you?” and “What does it mean to be you?” Identity includes the basic values that shape the choices you make and what you value related to relationships, career, and more. You might hold many identities: parent, partner, teacher, or friend, for example.

After a breakup, you might experience an identity crisis. Not only do you lose your partner, but also your lifestyle and way of being in the world. Your identity is closely connected to your relationships. So, when relationships change, how is your identity affected? The key is to recognize your identity will change following a breakup and take proactive steps to create a new identity.

If you connected your identity to your ex, you might feel lost when the relationship ends. This worksheet will help you identify your interests and positive qualities to create a new identity.

## What to Do

First, examine the changes that have occurred since your breakup, some of the qualities you have discovered in yourself, and interests you might like to cultivate. Focus on your strengths and skills. In your post-breakup life, you will build on these capacities to create a new identity.

Describe five changes you have experienced since the breakup.

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_

Describe how you have adjusted to these changes. Are you having difficulties or challenges? What has this transition been like for you? Explain.

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Describe qualities, beliefs, personality traits, and anything else about you that has remained unchanged.

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Describe five positive qualities or traits you have discovered or developed since your breakup. For example, you might have discovered you are independent, financially savvy, or courageous.

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_

What are five interests or activities you would like to explore?

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_

Now, pretend you are going to “advertise” your new identity in the newspaper. The goal of your ad is to declare your new identity to the world. Based on your responses above, write your “identity ad” describing the new you.





Did anything surprise you as you completed this exercise? Explain.

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How helpful was this exercise? \_\_\_\_\_

(1 = not very helpful, 5 = moderately helpful, 10 = extremely helpful)

What did you learn from this activity?

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# Developing Healthy Communication Skills

## Objective

To enhance your communication skills following a breakup.

## What to Know

The process of healing after a breakup requires introspection and growth, and an important aspect of this growth is cultivating effective communication skills. By honing these skills, you can not only better understand your own feelings but also articulate them in ways that foster connection. Identifying communication problems you experienced in your last relationship – while developing constructive communication patterns post-breakup – can equip you with the necessary tools to establish and nurture healthy channels of expression in future relationships.

## What to Do

Reflect on your past communication patterns in romantic relationships. Consider the following questions.

How did you and your partner typically communicate with each other?

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Were there any recurring problems related to communication during the relationship?

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How did you express your feelings, concerns, and needs? Was this effective? Why or why not?

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Check off the challenges you faced in communication during the relationship.

- \_\_\_ Lack of active listening.
- \_\_\_ Difficulty expressing emotions openly.
- \_\_\_ Frequent misunderstandings.
- \_\_\_ Avoiding difficult conversations.
- \_\_\_ Interrupting each other during discussions.
- \_\_\_ Using harsh or hurtful language.
- \_\_\_ Inability to compromise or find middle ground.

Next, define your communication goals for future relationships. You may want to consider the following elements:

- **Active Listening:** Practice truly listening to what the other person is saying before responding.
- **Emotional Expression:** Learn to express your feelings and thoughts openly but respectfully.
- **Conflict Resolution:** Develop skills to manage disagreements in a constructive manner.
- **Empathy:** Work on understanding your partner's perspective and feelings.
- **Healthy Boundaries:** Establish and communicate your personal boundaries clearly.

What is important to you? Where are you lacking – what skills would you like to develop?

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Here are some strategies to enhance your communication skills.

- **Use "I" Statements:** Use statements like "I feel" or "I think" to express your emotions without blaming or accusing.
- **Engage in Reflective Listening:** Repeat what you hear your partner say to ensure you understand correctly.
- **Offer Empathetic Responses:** Practice acknowledging your partner's feelings, even if you do not agree.
- **Take Breaks:** If a conversation becomes intense, agree to take a break to cool down before continuing.

- **Choose the Right Time:** Find suitable moments to discuss important matters rather than during times of stress.
- **Avoid Criticism:** Focus on the behavior or issue at hand, rather than attacking the person.

What else can you do to enhance communication?

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Ask a loved one to engage in role-playing scenarios to practice your new communication skills. Who can help you? \_\_\_\_\_

Do each of the following while role playing.

**1. Expressing Feelings:** Role-play sharing your feelings about the breakup with a supportive friend.

**2. Listening Practice:** Pretend to listen empathetically while a partner talks about a concern.

Write about your experience. Did you experience any obstacles? What went well?

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Use the following chart to track your progress. For the next two weeks, write down instances where you successfully used improved communication techniques. The more you practice, the more likely you will be a better communicator in future relationships! Note the date, situation, who was involved, and what skills or techniques you used. Finally, describe the outcome.



communication is an ongoing process, and each effort you make contributes to your personal growth.

### **Reflections on This Exercise**

Did this exercise help you enhance your communication skills? Why or why not?

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Did anything surprise you as you completed this exercise? Explain.

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How helpful was this exercise? \_\_\_\_\_

(1 = not very helpful, 5 = moderately helpful, 10 = extremely helpful)

What did you learn from this activity?

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# Letting Go of Grudges

## Objective

To identify and let go of your grudges.

## What to Know

Do you hold grudges? Holding a grudge involves replaying a past injustice over and over in your head. If you are holding a grudge, you repeatedly get caught up in the emotions associated with the situation long after it has passed. Do you really want to stay “stuck” and keep rehashing painful situations? What will it take for you to move on and let go?

Holding grudges weighs you down. When you hold grudges, it is not possible to heal your emotional pain. And holding grudges may actually harm your health. In one study, adults who held grudges for more than a decade experienced greater cognitive decline than those who were more forgiving. Some studies even suggest that holding grudges may increase stress hormones such as cortisol, negatively impacting your immune system.

The longer you hold a grudge the more difficult it is to forgive and move on. To let go of a grudge, shift your focus off the person who “wronged” you and the story of your suffering. Here are steps you can take to let go of a grudge.

1. **Acknowledge the problem.** Identify the grudge and what is causing you to hold onto it.
2. **Identify your feelings.** A grudge can form when a problem is not fully confronted or solved. Clarify your feelings on the situation. Then, decide if this is something you will work on yourself, or if you need to contact the person involved.
3. **Gain understanding.** Sometimes it is helpful to put yourself in the other person’s shoes to understand their point of view and behavior. Understanding the other person does not justify their behavior, or that you were wronged, but it might make it easier to let go of the grudge.
4. **Acceptance.** Consciously choose to release the grudge – with or without an apology. The other person may never come around, and they might have forgotten about the issue or not even realize how you were affected. Even if you do not receive an apology, the other person might be remorseful. Some people are unable to apologize.
5. **Move on and avoid dwelling on it.** Once you decide to move on and release the grudge, keep moving forward. Do not spend time thinking about the situation, or repeatedly discuss it with others. If the issue is brought up in conversation, change the subject.

6. **Consider the positive.** You can view the situation that caused your grudge as a learning experience. Trying to understand the person you were angry at can help you let go of the grudge and release lingering resentment.
7. **Let go.** Making a determined and sincere effort to let go of a grudge can lead to feelings of calm and greater happiness.
8. **Forgive.** Forgiving the person does not mean forgetting about what happened; it is simply acknowledging differences and accepting that everyone makes mistakes. Forgiving is not always easy – especially if you have experienced hurt and pain – but it is an important way to have more peace in your life.

### What to Do

First, reflect on grudges you are holding against other people, including your ex, family members, friends, or co-workers. On the chart, write down the grudges you are holding, and next to each statement, rate the intensity of your anger on a scale from 1 to 10, where 1 = little to no anger, and 10 = extreme anger or fury.

Name of person	Grudge	How long have you held this grudge?	Intensity (1-10)



Which grudge is hardest to release?

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Which grudge might be easiest to release?

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Choose one grudge to work on releasing. Write it down.

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How does it benefit you to hold onto this grudge?

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Is this a grudge you can let go of yourself, or do you need help from a professional?

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What can you do to better understand the other person and their behavior?

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Are you able to accept the situation as it is, even without an apology? Why or why not?

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What can you learn from this situation? About yourself? About the other person?

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**Reflections on This Exercise**

What else can you do to let go of grudges?

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On a 1 to 10 scale, how successful were you at letting go of your grudges, where 1 = not at all successfully, and 10 = completely successful: \_\_\_\_\_

Are you ready to let go of additional grudges? Explain.

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How helpful was this exercise? \_\_\_\_\_  
(1 = not very helpful, 5 = moderately helpful, 10 = extremely helpful)

What did you learn from this exercise?

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# Managing Your Anger

## Objective

To manage your anger following the end of a romantic relationship.

## What to Know

Going through a breakup is never easy, and one of the emotions you might experience is anger. Anger is a normal emotion, but perhaps it is more intense for you, and it has started to impact your daily life. If you continue to feel intense anger, it might increase stress, leaving you drained and exhausted. What can you do?

Suppressing or denying your anger is not a good idea and exploring your feelings with a counselor or coach can be helpful. In addition to this type of support, you can also identify ways to minimize the anger you feel toward your ex. Here are eleven tips to manage your anger following a breakup.

- 1. Awareness.** Start by acknowledging how you feel. If you are denying how you feel, you cannot change it. It is important to be honest with yourself. Awareness helps you own your feelings and let them go. In addition, be honest with yourself if you are avoiding your anger. Are you turning to alcohol, overeating, or drugs? Are you overworking, shopping, or overexercising to avoid how you feel? Perhaps you are angry with yourself, or maybe you are judging how you feel. What might happen if you accept you are angry, and show yourself some compassion?
- 2. Acknowledge and accept your anger.** This can be as simple as stating out loud that you are angry and why, or you might write about your feelings in a journal. You can write a letter to your ex that you do not send.
- 3. Forgive your ex.** If you continue to dwell on your anger, it will be difficult for you to move forward. Instead, forgive your ex – for your own wellbeing.
- 4. Identify and avoid your triggers.** Make a list of everything that sets off your anger and identify ways you can avoid those triggers. For example, if you get angry when you see your ex's social media posts, unfollow, or block them.
- 5. Practice self-care.** This includes practicing good hygiene habits, getting enough rest, and eating nutritious food. Allow yourself time to rest, reflect, get angry, cry, and grieve the loss of the relationship.
- 6. Exercise for 30 minutes, 5 days per week.** Getting regular exercise can help you release anger and improve your mood. You might even try a form of exercise that helps you release aggression, like kickboxing, hitting baseballs, or learning karate. Conversely, you can walk in nature to calm down.
- 7. Use relaxation techniques.** Set aside at least 15 minutes every day to meditate, practice yoga, breathe deeply, take a bubble bath, listen to calming music, or engage in other relaxing

and soothing activities.

**8. Ask questions to stop cognitive distortions.** When you mindfully listen to your thoughts, you might be surprised to find that sometimes your own thoughts trigger your anger – rather than anything your ex did in the past. Sometimes your anger is an interpretation of what you *think* happened. If you get stuck in negative or unhelpful thought loops, ask yourself questions about the thoughts. Are they true? What evidence do you have to support or refute them? What are more realistic thoughts you can replace them with?

**9. Talk about your feelings.** Choose someone who you trust like a good friend, family member, relationship coach, or therapist. A supportive person will listen carefully to what you have to say, and will not share your comments with your ex.

**10. Use “I” statements if you talk to your ex.** If you must talk to your ex (such as if you have children together), practice using “I” statements, which place the focus on what you are feeling. “I” statements prevent you from making accusations and putting your ex on the defensive.

**11. Join a support group or online forum.** You can talk with others who have experienced a breakup and learn how they deal with anger.

This worksheet will help you identify ways to manage your anger following a breakup.

## What to Do

Answer the following questions.

How big is your anger? When did you last feel so angry?

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Is this anger triggering older upsets?

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What do you think is behind your anger (for example, fear, sadness, or despair)?

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Are you turning to unhealthy coping methods to deal with your anger? If so, describe.

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Are you angry with yourself? If so, why?

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What might happen if you accept you are angry, and show yourself some compassion?

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What can you do to acknowledge and accept your anger?

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Is it possible for you to forgive your ex? Why or why not?

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Make a list of everything that sets off your anger and identify ways you can avoid those triggers.

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Take stock of your self-care habits to determine if there is anything you can improve. Perhaps it is something small, like taking a walk out in nature after work each day.

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What are some ways you can move your body five days per week?

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What are some relaxation techniques you can use to soothe anger?

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Who can you talk to? List two or three people.

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Are there online resources or support groups you might be interested in to deal with your anger? Write down some ideas.

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Did this activity help you better manage your anger? Why or why not?

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**Reflections on This Exercise**

How helpful was this exercise? \_\_\_\_\_  
(1 = not very helpful, 5 = moderately helpful, 10 = extremely helpful)

What did you learn in this exercise that was helpful?

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# Healing Through Mindfulness

## Objective

To guide you through the process of emotional healing following the conclusion of a romantic relationship.

## What to Know

The end of a romantic relationship can be marked by many emotions and challenges. The waves of feelings, ranging from sadness and anger to confusion and even relief, can be overwhelming. During this transition, mindfulness techniques can support your healing post-breakup. Mindfulness is the practice of immersing yourself in the present moment with a non-judgmental awareness of your thoughts, body sensations, and emotions. Here are some activities you can do to practice mindfulness.

**1. Anchoring the Present.** Mindfulness takes root in the present moment, allowing you to ground yourself while experiencing difficult emotions. Pause and allow your eyes to close gently. Breathe deeply and purposefully, tuning in to the sensations that move through your body. Sense any tension or tenderness. As thoughts arise, let them drift, neither clinging nor pushing them away. Focus on three sounds you hear, visible objects you see, and three sensations surrounding you.

**2. Observing Thoughts and Feelings.** Mindfulness is about acknowledging and embracing your emotions. Set aside 5-10 minutes for this practice. Sit comfortably, relax, and take some deep breaths. As thoughts of the breakup or your ex-partner emerge, greet them without judgment. Draw your focus back to the steady rhythm of your breath. Afterward, reflect on patterns in the thoughts you had.

**3. Surrendering with the Breath.** Lie down or find a comfortable seated position. Close your eyes gently. Inhale, imagining healing and acceptance coursing through your body. Exhale pain and tension. Dedicate 5-10 minutes to this practice, allowing each breath to release your pain, sorrow, and tension.

**4. Embracing the Impermanent.** Reflect on the transitory nature of emotions and experiences. Just as emotions wane and wax, so do challenging circumstances. Write down instances from your past where change prevailed, and your resilience saw you through. Picture these instances as reassurance that your current phase of healing will also soon shift and change.

**5. Awakening the Senses.** Take a walk outdoors and engage with the world around you. Revel in the sights, sounds, scents, textures, and even flavors encircling you. This sensory immersion serves as a gentle reminder of your connection to the present moment.

**6. Journaling Gratitude.** Each day write down three things for which you are grateful. This may include small moments, close friends, or character traits. The cultivation of gratitude reframes your perspective, nurturing positivity during challenging times.



Did practicing mindfulness activities help you heal following your breakup? Why or why not?

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### **Reflections on This Exercise**

How helpful was this exercise? \_\_\_\_\_  
(1 = not very helpful, 5 = moderately helpful, 10 = extremely helpful)

What did you learn in this exercise that was helpful?

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# Navigating Social Media and Relationship Memories

## Objective

To empower you to reclaim your emotional well-being, foster personal growth, and constructively navigate digital spaces and relationship memories post-breakup.

## What to Know

Breakups are marked by a whirlwind of emotions, adjustments, and newfound uncertainties. Along with mixed emotions, you might be concerned about navigating social media and memories of the relationship.

Social media platforms, once shared spaces of connection and camaraderie, can suddenly morph into trigger-laden territories that evoke feelings ranging from nostalgia to sorrow. Photos, posts, and interactions that were once a source of happiness may now elicit feelings of longing or pain. Even viewing mutual connections can become emotionally charged as you wonder how to heal from the breakup while your digital lives remain intertwined.

Even though this might be challenging, there is an opportunity for growth and empowerment. By using the following suggestions to address social media concerns and the memories better times with your ex, you can begin the journey of self-discovery and healing while moving forward.

**1. Identify Your Triggers.** Begin by reflecting on the specific triggers that remind you of your past relationship. These could be certain photos, posts, or even mutual friends. Write down a list of these triggers.

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**2. Evaluate Social Media Interaction.** Analyze your current level of interaction with your ex-partner on social media platforms. Are you still connected? Are you constantly checking their profiles? Rate your interaction on a scale of 1 to 10, with 1 being minimal interaction and 10 being excessive interaction: \_\_\_\_\_

Is this something you want to change? Why or why not?

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**3. Set Boundaries.** Based on your evaluation, determine the level of interaction that is healthiest for you at this point. Consider unfollowing or muting your ex-partner's accounts to reduce exposure to triggers. Decide on a reasonable amount of time you will spend on social media each day.

What can you do to set appropriate and healthy boundaries?

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**4. Create a Supportive Environment.** Identify friends, family members, or support groups you can turn to when you are feeling overwhelmed by memories or emotions. These individuals can provide comfort and perspective during challenging times.

Who can support you?

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**5. Mindfulness Practice.** Engage in mindfulness exercises when you find yourself dwelling on relationship memories. Practice deep breathing, grounding techniques, or meditation to bring yourself back to the present moment.

What will you do?

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**6. Engage in Positive Activities.** Make a list of activities that bring you joy and a sense of accomplishment. Whenever you are tempted to scroll through your ex-partner's social media, choose an activity from the list and redirect your energy.

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**7. Journaling.** Keep a journal to document your thoughts and feelings. Write down your progress, challenges, and any insights you gain as you navigate this process. Journaling can help you process your emotions and track your growth.

**8. Creating New Memories.** Focus on creating new positive memories and experiences that are independent of your past relationship. Engage in hobbies, explore new places, and spend time with supportive friends to enrich your life.

What will you do?

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**9. Reflect and Reframe.** When you encounter relationship-related triggers, take a moment to reflect on the lessons you learned and the personal growth you experienced. Reframe these triggers as opportunities for growth and empowerment.

### What to Do

Over the next two weeks, do one or more of the above suggestions when you are overly focused on your ex’s social media or get caught up in memories. Use the following chart to track your progress. Note the date, what you did, how you felt before the exercise, and how you felt after.

Date	How did you feel before?	What did you do?	How did you feel after?

Date	How did you feel before?	What did you do?	How did you feel after?

**Reflections on This Exercise**

How helpful was this exercise? \_\_\_\_\_  
 (1 = not very helpful, 5 = moderately helpful, 10 = extremely helpful)

What did you learn in this exercise that was helpful?

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# Building Your Confidence

## What to Know

Do you believe in yourself and generally think you are skilled or talented? If you answer no, you might suffer from low self-confidence. If you are confident, you feel secure with your abilities, strengths, talents, or ideas. You are self-assured and actively overcome challenges. If your confidence is currently low, you will be happy to know that you can build it!

Building confidence takes practice. The exercises included in this worksheet are designed to be done regularly, so it is important you make time to practice every week.

## What to Do

Choose a journal or notebook and write the date at the top of a new page. Write down whichever tasks you are working on that day. Include your answers to the questions below, and your reflections on each task. Write by hand, because handwriting helps you remember and process information in a way that typing on a keyboard does not. It is okay if you do not fill each page every day.

Not only will these activities build your confidence, but they will also boost your happiness. Research indicates that accomplishing things like achieving goals, or stepping up to meet challenges, increases happiness.

The activities below are designed to help boost your confidence. You will start by getting better at something you are already good at. Then, you will challenge yourself to do something you have always wanted to do but might not feel confident enough to do it.

### **1. Write down three talents, skills, qualities, or abilities you do well and enjoy – and practice them as much as possible.**

Examples of talents, abilities, or skills include dancing, learning languages, drawing, writing, interior decorating, organizing, baking, and so forth. Examples of qualities include kindness, humor, creativity, etc. Some of these you can practice every day, while others might happen just once/week.

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

Pick one strength, talent, quality, or skill to focus on. In your journal, write it down and brainstorm ideas on how you can find time to practice and do it *at least* once a week. Be specific. For example, write down where you will take a lesson or class, what group or committee you will join, where and when you will participate, or any other information so you will make time in your schedule.



Here is an example: *I'm a great knitter, and I enjoy knitting while socializing with others. To make this talent part of my life, I will join a local knitting group that knits socks for the homeless. They meet once/week (Wednesdays at 6:00 pm) at the Community Center.*

Tip: If this is a recurring event or meeting, be sure to add it to your calendar or planner.

**2. Make a "Can-Do" list.** Are there things – even little things – that people don't know you can do? Perhaps you take the things you *can* do for granted! For example, maybe you can fix a flat tire, play guitar, draw cartoons, or drive a car. Write your list below or in your journal.

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**3. Take the Confidence Challenge.** It is time to step up and challenge yourself. In your journal, write down this sentence and finish it at least six ways: "If I had more confidence, I would..." For example: *If I had more confidence, I would do standup comedy, start a business, travel overseas, return to college, and obtain a degree...*

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_
6. \_\_\_\_\_

After you finish writing the sentences, reflect on what is stopping you from doing each thing. In your journal, choose the easiest or hardest one and write about how you can muster enough confidence to do it. What would you need to do? Whose support or encouragement might help you? Imagine you actually did the thing – with confidence.

Next, choose at least one action you can take to complete one thing from your list.

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When will you do it? \_\_\_\_\_ Who can help you? \_\_\_\_\_

Did you do it? Yes / No

**4. Write a Confidence Self-Talk Script.** In your journal, write down what you can say to yourself to reinforce that you have what it takes to do the six things you included in your list for Task 3. Try to re-read your script several times each week. Set a reminder on your smart phone or note it on your calendar so you don't forget.

**Reflections on This Exercise**

What was the most difficult part of this exercise?

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After practicing the activities for at least a month, are you more or less confident? Explain.

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How helpful was this exercise? \_\_\_\_\_  
(1 = not very helpful, 5 = moderately helpful, 10 = extremely helpful)

What did you learn from this activity?

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# Rediscovering Intimacy and Rebuilding Trust After Betrayal

## Objective

To identify ways to recover from betrayal, rebuild trust in relationships, and rediscover intimacy following a romantic betrayal.

## What to Know

Betrayal is a violation of trust or confidence involving one partner failing to commit to what they promised. Betrayal can fracture the foundation of trust and damage intimacy within romantic relationships.

If you were betrayed, you may suffer from reduced self-esteem, damaged self-worth, confusion, shock, disgust, rage, and distrust of others. You may doubt everything the betrayer says and does.

Betrayal often involves infidelity, but it can take other forms as well, such as neglecting the relationship, breaking promises, emotional distance, financial infidelity, lying or withholding information, or disclosing personal information. If your ex-partner betrayed you, you might be wondering how to recover. You may have difficulty trusting others, preventing you from forming meaningful, intimate romantic relationships.

You can recover from the pain of betrayal and learn to trust others again, and this worksheet outlines thirteen steps to do so.

## What to Do

First, answer the following questions as honestly as possible.

What does betrayal mean to you? How did it manifest in your relationship?

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How did the betrayal affect you emotionally, mentally, spiritually, or physically?

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Identify situations, words, or actions that trigger feelings related to the betrayal.

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List the various emotions you have experienced since the betrayal (e.g., anger, sadness, confusion).

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What are some healthy outlets for expressing your emotions (e.g., journaling, talking with a friend)?

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Do you have fears about becoming intimate and vulnerable with a new romantic partner? Why or why not?

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Next, read each step and answer the questions that follow.

**1. Acknowledge the betrayal.** No matter if your ex-partner intentionally hurt you or not, your trust has been violated. Acknowledging it is the first step to recovering from the betrayal trauma. Write down what happened, in as much detail as possible.

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**2. Name your emotions.** How do you feel about the betrayal currently? You may still experience many emotions. Instead of trying to deny or suppress them, name them.

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**3. Avoid blaming yourself.** Perhaps you are blaming yourself for your ex-partner's actions. Do you blame yourself? If so, describe your experience. Why do you blame yourself? Be specific.

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**4. Grieve the loss of trust.** Betrayal involves loss of trust, and it is normal to experience grief. You may actually experience the stages of grief while recovering from the betrayal. Allow yourself to grieve. Are you experiencing the stages of grief? What is this like for you?

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**5. Avoid the temptation to retaliate.** It is normal to feel the urge to seek revenge, and while there are healthy ways to recover from betrayal, retaliation is not one of them. Write down some of your thoughts about retaliation – and what you can do instead.

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**6. Talk to someone you trust.** Seeking emotional support from your loved ones or a mental health professional is an essential factor in the recovery process. Choose someone who can remain neutral and offer you support. Who can you talk to? What will you say to them?

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**7. Develop a plan.** After you have had time to process the incident, create a plan. You may still feel betrayed, shocked, or devastated, but you cannot heal if you focus on how you have been wronged or constantly relive painful memories. Decide how you want to move forward. Write down some ideas.

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**8. Take time to reflect.** Spend some time engaging in introspection. Write down your thoughts here.

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**9. Practice forgiveness.** Forgiving does not mean overlooking, accepting, or excusing betrayal. Forgive your ex-partner for your own sake. To heal from a betrayal, forgive and let go – even if they do not deserve your forgiveness. Are you willing to forgive? Why or why not?

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**10. Trust again.** You do not have to trust people blindly. What can you do to rebuild trust in others?

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**11. Learn to trust yourself again.** Trusting yourself is an essential step. To trust others, you must trust your ability to make sound judgments. Do you trust yourself? Why or why not? If not, what can you do to begin to trust yourself again?

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**12. Practice self-care.** Make yourself a priority and take small steps to practice self-care and regain your confidence. What self-care activities can you engage in daily or weekly? Schedule them!

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**13. Practice vulnerability and intimacy.** Practicing vulnerability becomes both a courageous step and a healing balm when you acknowledge your emotions and fears while allowing yourself to be open and authentic with others. Share your thoughts, concerns, and hopes, with an emphasis on using "I" statements to express your feelings. Raw honesty creates a space for empathic understanding, inviting others to respond with empathy and vulnerability. Renewed trust and shared emotional authenticity cultivate intimacy. Write down some ways you can practice being vulnerable.

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Even if you do not believe it now, the pain of betrayal will eventually fade. It is possible to rebuild trust in yourself and in others. Did this exercise help you recover from betrayal? Why or why not?

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## Reflections on This Exercise

How helpful was this exercise? \_\_\_\_\_

(1 = not very helpful, 5 = moderately helpful, 10 = extremely helpful)

What did you learn from this exercise?

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# Rebuilding Self-Esteem and Self-Worth

## Objective

To identify ways to rebuild self-esteem and self-worth following a breakup.

## What to Know

The end of a romantic relationship often brings about a period of emotional upheaval, which can influence how you perceive yourself. These are ways a breakup can affect self-esteem and self-worth:

**Rejection and Abandonment.** The end of a relationship may trigger feelings of rejection and abandonment. These emotions can lead to a sense of inadequacy and questions about your worthiness of love and affection.

**Negative Self-Perception.** You might start questioning your qualities and characteristics that contributed to the relationship's end. This self-doubt can lead to negative self-perceptions, such as feeling unattractive, unlovable, or not good enough.

**Comparisons and Idealization.** You may compare yourself to your ex-partner or idealize the qualities of the former relationship. This comparison can lead to feelings of inferiority, as you might perceive your ex as more desirable or successful.

**Isolation and Loneliness.** The absence of a partner's emotional support and companionship can lead to feelings of isolation and loneliness, further contributing to a decrease in self-esteem as you question your ability to maintain relationships.

**Cognitive Distortions.** Negative thoughts and cognitive distortions, such as blaming yourself for the breakup or catastrophizing the future, can worsen feelings of low self-esteem.

**Impact on Body Image.** The emotional stress of a breakup can affect self-care routines and lead to changes in eating habits and physical appearance, which can further impact self-esteem.

**Reduced Confidence.** Breakups can challenge your confidence in decision-making, future relationships, and your ability to navigate life changes.

**Insecurity about Future Relationships.** You may be wary of new relationships due to a fear of being hurt again. This fear can contribute to self-doubt and decreased self-esteem.

You may be experiencing some (or all) of the above, but you can take this opportunity to rediscover your value and rebuild your self-esteem.

## What to Do

List the emotions you have experienced since the breakup (e.g., sadness, anger, relief, confusion).

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Identify any negative thoughts or self-criticism that have emerged post-breakup. Write them down.

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Are these negative thoughts recurring? Explain.

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Write down any beliefs about yourself that were reinforced by the breakup (e.g., "I'm unlovable," "I'm not good enough").

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For each belief, provide evidence that contradicts it. Challenge these beliefs with objective observations.

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Create affirmations that counter the negative beliefs you identified (e.g., "I am deserving of love and respect," "I have qualities that make me unique").

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List your personal strengths, talents, and positive qualities (e.g., compassion, resilience, creativity).

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Write down accomplishments you are proud of in various areas of your life.

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Write a letter to yourself, acknowledging and appreciating your strengths and past successes.

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As you engage in these activities while committing to self-care, you will gradually rebuild your self-esteem and self-worth, emerging stronger and more resilient than before.

### **Reflections on This Exercise**

How helpful was this exercise? \_\_\_\_\_

(1 = not very helpful, 5 = moderately helpful, 10 = extremely helpful)

What did you learn from this exercise?

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# Reframing Your Relationship Narrative

## Objective

To guide you through the process of shifting your perspective on a past relationship and breakup.

## What to Know

Reframing your relationship narrative is a cognitive process that invites you to explore the memories, emotions, and beliefs surrounding a past relationship. Imagine holding up a multifaceted gem to the light, allowing each facet to reveal a new angle of understanding.

All relationships involve shared experiences, emotions, and communication. If you have experienced a particularly difficult breakup, your perspective on these elements might be distorted. In addition, the relationship might have been affected by limiting beliefs, self-doubt, trauma, negative perceptions, and more. This can impact any positive aspects of the relationship, overshadowing the growth and insight you may have experienced while in the relationship.

The goal of this worksheet is to help you reframe your relationship narrative in a way that illuminates the hidden gems of empowerment, growth, and valuable life lessons. By examining your relationship (and the breakup) from different vantage points, you will have the opportunity to view it through a new lens—one that allows you to identify the positive aspects that might have been overshadowed by negative experiences.

The “new” narrative may allow you to focus on your strengths, wisdom, and capacity for change moving forward. By creating a new story, you are not denying the challenges. Instead, the focus is on your ability to rise above them.

## What to Do

**Step 1: Identify the Current Narrative.** Reflect on how you currently view the relationship and breakup. Write down key beliefs, emotions, and thoughts that characterize your current narrative.

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How do you typically describe this relationship to others?

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What emotions are attached to your memories of this relationship?

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What story do you tell yourself about the breakup?

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**Step 2: Recognize Limiting Beliefs.** Identify any limiting beliefs or negative self-perceptions that are part of your current narrative. These beliefs might be holding you back from moving forward.

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What negative beliefs do you hold about yourself due to the relationship and/or breakup? Be specific.

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How have these beliefs influenced your emotions and choices? Be specific.

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**Step 3: Exploring Alternate Perspectives.** Consider alternative ways to view the relationship and breakup. Challenge the existing narrative by examining different angles and interpretations. Imagine you are an outsider reviewing the situation. How might someone else see your relationship and breakup?

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How might this situation be viewed as an opportunity for growth or change?

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**Step 4: Exploring Lessons and Growth.** Focus on the lessons and personal growth you can pull from this relationship and breakup. Look for ways in which the experience has contributed to your development. Be as honest as possible.

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What have you learned about yourself through this relationship and its ending?

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How has this experience provided an opportunity for personal growth and transformation?

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**Step 7: Reflecting on Progress.** Regularly revisit your new narrative and affirmations. Take note of any shifts in your thoughts, emotions, and actions.

How has reframing your relationship narrative affected your overall outlook? Be specific.

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Have you noticed any changes in the way you feel about yourself and the breakup? Explain.

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By shifting your perspective, you can transform a challenging experience into a source of strength and insight. Remember that changing your narrative is a process, and with time and effort, you can create a more positive and empowering story for yourself.

**Reflections on This Exercise**

Describe how this activity helped shift your perspective on a past relationship and breakup.

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What was challenging about this exercise? Be specific.

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Did anything surprise you about this activity? If so, describe.

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How helpful was this exercise? \_\_\_\_\_

(1 = not very helpful, 5 = moderately helpful, 10 = extremely helpful)

What did you learn from this exercise?

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# Reimagining Your Future

## Objective

To generate a sense of hope by creating a vision of what you would like your life to look like in six months, one year, and two years.

## What to Know

Whenever you experience a big change in your life, it is easy to feel overwhelmed. Following a breakup, you might experience a wide range of emotions. That is normal and understandable. With difficult feelings, it may be challenging to get in touch with a sense of hope—hope for the future, hope that you will be okay as you move forward following heartbreak.

A vision of your future can serve as a powerful guidepost along the road of healing.

## What to Do

Answer the following questions.

Do you know what you want in your life? Is there anything in the way of you working toward what you want? Describe briefly.

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Next, create a vision statement to help you “keep your eyes on the prize”— living a happier life. First, make a list of twelve things you want in life. There are no right or wrong answers, and you do not have to be realistic. Just go for it, whether it is meeting a new romantic partner, moving to a new place, buying a house, taking a vacation, having children, or simply having peace of mind—anything goes! Use extra paper if needed. You can also create a collage of images from magazines or download photos or images from the internet instead.

Things I Want in My Life:

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_



- 6. \_\_\_\_\_
- 7. \_\_\_\_\_
- 8. \_\_\_\_\_
- 9. \_\_\_\_\_
- 10. \_\_\_\_\_
- 11. \_\_\_\_\_
- 12. \_\_\_\_\_

How did that feel? Was it fun or stressful or a little bit of both? It is okay to dream and hope! You deserve it! Write your response here:

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Now you will create your vision statement. Focus on your vision for six months, one year, and two years from today. Refer to your list of wants to help you shape your statement. Some categories you might want to include are relationships, career, school, spirituality, physical fitness, and so on. Write in the present tense, pretending it is actually six months, one year, or two years from now.

**Six-Month Vision Statement**

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# Are you Ready to Date?

## Objective

To prepare yourself for dating following the end of a relationship.

## What to Know

Putting yourself out there after the end of a relationship can make you feel uncomfortable, awkward, or vulnerable. This might be especially true now that dating often begins online.

Following a break-up, everyone has their own timeline for when they might want to begin dating. After a relationship ends, you can begin to prepare yourself for dating through self-reflection – both processing your emotions and identifying what you can do better in future relationships. When you decide to begin dating depends on your resilience and ability to let go of the past. Of course, if you have children, dating will be further complicated.

Here are issues to consider when you re-enter the dating scene:

- **End one relationship before starting another.** No matter how your last relationship ended, pausing between relationships gives you time so you avoid dating out of desperation.
- **Identify what you have learned from the past.** You will probably repeat unhelpful patterns if you fail to identify what did not work well in previous relationships. Consider how you want to grow as a person and as a partner in your next relationship. The more you take responsibility for your part in previous relationships, the more likely you will have a successful relationship in the future.
- **Forgive, let go, and move forward.** If you find yourself angry, bitter, or resentful about previous relationships, you might have more work to do to prepare yourself for dating.
- **Admit if you need help.** Seek help from a therapist or support group to work through any lingering issues.
- **Get a life.** Build a strong network of nurturing friendships and enjoyable activities to sustain you through the ups and downs of dating.

This worksheet will help you prepare yourself for dating following the end of a relationship.

## What to Do

Below are a series of questions and checklists. Be as honest as you can as you answer these questions.

**Are you ready to date after ending your relationship?** If you are not emotionally stable and ready to connect with dating partners, you might feel confused and unhappy, or sabotage potentially positive connections. So, what are the signs you might not be ready? Check off the statements that apply to you:

\_\_\_\_ You consider contacting your ex whenever you have a problem.

- \_\_\_ Your ex still has some of your possessions.
- \_\_\_ You think about your ex daily.
- \_\_\_ You are not comfortable running into them in public.
- \_\_\_ You closely watch them on social media.
- \_\_\_ You are interested in who they are dating.
- \_\_\_ You want to date only to stop thinking about them.
- \_\_\_ You agonize over what went wrong in your last relationship.
- \_\_\_ You are resentful, bitter, or angry.
- \_\_\_ You have not examined how you contributed to the successes and failures of past relationships.

If you checked off five or more statements, you might not be ready to date. So, it might be wise to give yourself more time and identify what you need to move forward.

Describe whether you think you are ready to date.

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Why do you want to start dating?

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If your 'why' includes a desire to avoid painful feelings like hurt, anger, or loneliness, then it might be helpful to take some time to heal before dating.

Dating requires a certain amount of vulnerability, tolerance of uncertainty, and willingness to feel a range of emotions. If you have taken the time to heal and you *want* to date (more than you *need* to date) you are more likely to experience successful dating.

**Do you fear commitment?** Many people who experience a breakup develop certain fears, including the fear of betrayal or commitment. Mark off any of the following signs you are afraid of commitment:

- \_\_\_ You dislike becoming attached to people.

\_\_\_ You think a new relationship might hold you back.

\_\_\_ You dislike monogamy or want to date multiple people.

\_\_\_ You are not over your ex.

\_\_\_ When you start developing feelings, you flee.

\_\_\_ You want sex more than a relationship.

If you checked off three or more statements, you are probably afraid to commit. It is normal to fear commitment following the end of a relationship. If you are afraid to connect, avoid leading anyone to believe otherwise. Be clear about your intentions, and if they agree, go for a no strings-attached connection.

Discuss how you feel about commitment. Be specific.

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**What are your intentions?** Knowing and understanding your intentions means knowing yourself and getting a grasp on your dating goals. Answer the following questions.

Do you know what you want from a new partner? Have you figured out your relationship “must-haves” and “deal-breakers”? Describe below.

Must-Haves:

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Deal Breakers:

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What are the values you are most looking for? Write down what you are looking for in a partner.

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Are you self-confident? Why or why not?

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Are you independent? Why or why not?

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Are you looking for someone to take care of you? Explain.

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Do you easily express yourself and what you want? If not, what can you do to express yourself in a clear and direct way? Describe.

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**How do you define “dating”?** What are the first words you think of when you hear the word “dating?”

If you answered “awful” or “painful,” try reframing your definition of dating. Imagine dating as an *experience* or an *adventure* – something new and exciting. And remember, not every date should be about finding “the one.”

**Are you trying?** If you feel ready to date, it is time to put yourself out there to meet new people. Check off activities you are willing to do.

- Join your colleagues at after-work activities.
- Attend Facebook or Meet Up events.
- Say “yes” to invitations to unexpected social events.
- Use public transportation and chat with people you see regularly.
- Volunteer for an organization.
- Be open to conversations with strangers; for example, at the park or in the grocery store.
- Start a new activity like joining a hiking club or taking dance lessons.
- Try a dating app like Match.com, OKCupid, or eHarmony. *If you are considering online dating, do research into which ones offer the experience you are looking for: some are suited to people looking for long-term partners, others are for casual flings. Make sure you are aware of the scams that target online daters.*

Now, choose at least one of the activities you checked off to try it within the next week. What will you do? \_\_\_\_\_ After you have done the activity, describe what happened.

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Are you willing to do at least one activity each week to meet new people? Why or why not?

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**Do you have expectations?** Here are some signs you might have expectations:

- Have a rigid set of ideas about your “ideal partner,” from appearance to financial status.
- Expect your partner to spend all their free time with you.
- Have prejudices or beliefs you are unwilling to reconsider.
- Expect your partner to agree with everything you say.
- Compare your relationship with others people’s relationships.

Are you willing to release some of your expectations? Why or why not?

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It might take some time and multiple dates with several people before you meet someone suitable for a relationship. Are you willing to go on multiple dates? \_\_\_\_\_ Why or why not?

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Now that you have answered the questions and completed the checklists, you are now more aware of what you can do to prepare for dating! You are probably clear about what you want, and you have learned from past mistakes.

Now, consider what else you can do to make the transition into dating easier? Is there anything else you can do to prepare yourself? Be specific.

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What are obstacles to dating you have identified?

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**How (and when) will you tell your kids you are dating?** (*if applicable*) Therapists suggest spending at least six months getting to know someone before you introduce them to your children. Introducing someone too soon can be confusing for children, and it is a good idea to talk

with your kids about their feelings – letting them know it is okay to be angry, nervous, or sad. Encourage them to ask questions and express their concerns. You might tell your children you made a “new friend” that you would like to get to know. Describe below how/when/what you will tell your children you are dating:

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### **Reflections on This Exercise**

Now that you have completed this exercise, do you feel prepared to date? Why or why not?

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How helpful was this exercise? \_\_\_\_\_  
(1 = not very helpful, 5 = moderately helpful, 10 = extremely helpful)

What did you learn from this exercise?

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