

## Putting All Your Eggs in One Basket . . .

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The feelings we encounter in dealing with a relationship break-up can be painful and intense. It may feel like your heart is literally breaking in two, or you may feel disoriented, lost, or angry. When your whole circle of friends were *your X's first* (or took 'sides'), it can be an additional challenge to have to cope with the loss of other friendships. When your friends don't communicate - or they gossip, are non-supportive, or in some other way are hurtful - this can lead to self-doubt, and feelings of depression and anxiety as we may begin to withdraw and feel isolated. This pattern indicates the presence of toxic relationships that can extend beyond the romantic type.

If you inappropriately define yourself as a success because you are in relationship, a break-up can hit very hard. Despite all that, sometimes a relationship is time-limited, and just was not enough of a match to deserve a long-term commitment. Usually it has been leading up to a break-up over a long period of time, or never really 'clicked' - or was not healthy, from the start.

Sometimes two people may have genuine feelings, but have too many personal or professional issues (or differences) to have the skills or energy needed to allow a relationship to work! What brings two people together? When you are at a point on your life where you are discovering who you are at a very fundamental level, it can be difficult to determine if you're in a 'keeper', long-term relationship. Think about the qualities you loved about the person with whom you were (or are) in relationship. Was the initial attraction mostly physical, and never developed to a deeper level? Did you grow apart, developing different interests or values (or come together for the wrong reasons)? Did physical or emotional distance allow new feelings toward new people develop?

Ask yourself, "What was good, and what was not?" - and make lists to help you discover a more objective perspective! Talk to trusted friends or get some guidance from a professional. Sting had it right when he wrote, "If you love someone, set them free". In reality, to be healthy, we have to be free - and in a relationship because **both** parties feel a mutual commitment. Otherwise, what's the point? Don't you want people in your life who WANT to be there? Be patient with the process - it's healthy to allow yourself time to adjust to the transition of a break-up - to mourn the loss. However, it's also important to evaluate what you learn/ed from the experience. Remember, to quote another icon, "You can't always get what you want - you get what you need".

Do you deserve to be abused and used? NO (!) - so respect yourself enough to choose carefully. Learn from your past mistakes, remembering that all experiences are opportunities to grow. Give yourself permission to nurture yourself and heal. Remember, beyond the first feelings of physical attraction, a healthy relationship involves good communication, honesty, reciprocity, mutual love and respect, caring supportiveness, generosity, shared ethical, moral, and spiritual views, and an agreement on growing and learning together - which makes for a best friendship and spiritual bond. Don't put all your eggs in one basket until you know who you are, feelings are mutual, and you're both ready to grow together!

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