Coping with a breakup

What to expect after a relationship ends, and how to look after yourself.

Whether you chose it or not, a breakup means losing a person, a routine, a shared future and part of your sense of who you are. It is normal to feel a great deal, and for the feelings to change by the hour.

What you might feel

Grief and longing
Waves of sadness. Missing them, even if things were bad.

Anger and blame
At them, at yourself, at the unfairness.

Anxiety
About being alone, money, the children, the future.

Relief and guilt
Sometimes at once.

In the first weeks

- **Look after the basics.** Eat, sleep, move, wash. They slip quickly.
- **Lean on people.** Tell a few friends what you need: company, distraction, a listener.
- **Go easy on alcohol.** It deepens low mood and loosens the urge to text.
- **Limit contact, where you can.** Constant checking of their social media keeps the hurt fresh.
- **Put off big decisions.**
- **Let yourself be sad.** Grieving is part of getting over it.

Over the months

- Rebuild a routine that is yours.
- Pick up things you let go during the relationship.
- Notice what you are telling yourself. "I am unlovable" and "I always get it wrong" come from grief. They are not facts.
- When you are ready, look honestly at what you would do differently. Without attacking yourself.
- There is no timetable. Good days and bad days will alternate for a while.

Get more help if
you cannot function after several weeks, you are drinking heavily, or you are having thoughts of harming yourself. Talk to your GP or therapist. In an emergency call 112 or 999. Samaritans: freephone 116 123.

What I need most right now, and who I could ask

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