

I Still Love My Ex. What Should I Do? (60+ Expert Tips)

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By [The Editors](#)

It's no secret that breakups can be tough. But what happens when you still have lingering feelings for your ex?

What should you do? Should you reach out and try to rebuild things? Or is it time to cut all ties and move on?

If you're looking for advice, you've come to the right place. According to relationship experts, here are things you should do if you still love your ex:

[Christy Piper](#)



Coach and Speaker | Author, "[Girl, You Deserve More](#)"

Don't waste your time reviving something that likely won't work

If you still love your ex, it's normal. Just because you broke up *doesn't* mean a flip is switched, and you magically don't love them anymore. This *isn't* how emotions work.

But loving them still is *annoying* because you think about them all the time *against* your will. But you're not with them anymore. So you feel sadness and regret.

You wonder if you did something wrong and probably blame yourself. You're sad because [you miss your ex](#).

Maybe you replay the break-up scenario in your head a thousand times. You wonder if you could've done or said something different. And if you would still be together if you hadn't said that one wrong thing.

There are a few important questions to ask yourself:

- **Do you want to be with this person?**

Do you simply miss the person? Or do you actually want to be with them again?

The more time that goes by, the good memories become *stronger*. And the bad ones *fade*. If you're unsure, **write down the good and bad memories now**. This will help you remember more *accurately*.

- **Do you simply miss having a partner (any partner)?**

It could just be that you like having a partner. Not that you miss this ex specifically. If this is true, start dating new people. Don't waste your time reviving something that likely *won't* work.

Related: [When Should You Date Again After a Breakup](#)

There's no shame in wanting a partner to do couples activities with. It's essential to be very *honest* with yourself here.

- **Is this person actually good for you?**

It's normal to miss someone after a break-up, even if they were very bad for you. Missing someone *isn't* a good gauge of whether you should get back together.

If you're not sure, ask your trusted friends and family. **Truly**

listen to what they say—not just what you want to hear.

Related: [50+ Reasons Why Listening Is Important](#)

- **Can you solve your differences?**

How did your ex respond when you brought up issues or things that bothered you?

- *Will neither of you change or compromise?*
- *Is it always one of you changing for the other?*
- *Do you both apologize to each other?*
- *Can you both meet each other halfway?*
- *Did they listen and work with you?*
- *Did they try to integrate your feedback and try make you happy?*
- *Or did they get defensive and keep doing the same things that bothered you?*

Does your ex have fundamental differences in:

- beliefs
- interests
- habits
- the way they see the world

Are any of these *dealbreakers* for you?

If your ex did *not* work with you before, why do you think

anything will change now? Over time, it usually becomes *harder* for couples to get along, not easier.

Apologize for your part in the break-up if you did something wrong

Only do this if you *genuinely* think you did something wrong. Most break-ups take two. But not always. Sometimes they just wanted to break up due to *incompatibility*. Or any other slew of personal reasons that have little to do with you.

See if they apologize for their part in the break-up. If you think they should apologize for something, but they don't, this is a *red flag*.

It means they likely *won't* take responsibility for their part. And they don't see fault in their actions. This is a *terrible* trait in a partner.

Imagine if something big happens, and they put all the blame on you instead of trying to compromise or solve the problem.

Try talking to your ex if you want to get back together

If you want to get back together, see *where* your ex stands. Do this on the phone or face to face after the apology.

Related: [Should You Get Back Together with Your Ex?](#)

It's essential to **keep your dignity**:

- **Do not beg or plead with them.** Keep it simple, asking if they'd be willing to try again.
- **Listen carefully to their response.** Pay attention to any excitement or hesitation in their voice.

When seeing them again for the first time, it's good to meet in a *peaceful* place. A park, garden, or cafe is ideal.

Is the effort truly worth it?

Just remember: If there were problems before, they often *repeat* themselves until fully resolved. A quick apology *won't* resolve deeper issues and recurring disagreements.

Make sure it's worth it to restart something that has already ended. Getting back together now will only *temporarily* stop the pain from the break-up. If you break up again, it'll hurt all over again.

If you need additional help deciding what to do in your specific situation, you can always talk it over with someone.

Confide in a *trusted* friend who is good with their own relationship or hire a relationship coach. This way, you'll take the *right* course of action, rather than just acting on a feeling.

Kendra Allen



Founder, [Break Up Bestie](#) | Host, Heal Your Heartbreak Podcast | Author, "[The Breakup Workbook](#)"

Be compassionate for where you are right now

Going through a break-up and getting over heartbreak is difficult for anyone, and if you're in a position where you still love your ex, it can be even more challenging.

Below are five tips to keep in mind when you are getting over a break-up where you still love your ex.

Don't judge yourself

Going through heartbreak is hard enough. The last thing you need is shame and judgment over the fact that you're struggling.

It's completely *normal* to still love your ex; it's a human

experience. So instead of fighting with your feelings, be compassionate for where you are right now.

Related: [What to Do After a Breakup](#)

Make sure your ex isn't up on a pedestal

If you think of your ex as the perfect person with *no* flaws and constantly think you could never find someone as good as them, you likely have your ex up on a pedestal.

No one is perfect, and it's crucial to see your ex *objectively*. If you have them up on a pedestal, take a piece of paper and write down any faults or pet peeves you can think about.

Remember that just because it was good doesn't mean it was meant to be

It can be *hard* to wrap your head around the fact that good relationships can come to an end. It can even be scary to think about, but it's the *truth*.

Sometimes two people love each other, but the relationship *isn't* meant to work out for various reasons.

The relationship ending doesn't take away from how beautiful or meaningful your relationship was, and it doesn't mean that you won't find a relationship as good (and most likely better).

Focus your energy on yourself, not your ex

Many people make a *mistake* in the healing process: **they focus all of their energy on their ex.**

- Why their ex ended the relationship
- How their ex is doing now
- What their ex is up to

And they completely *neglect* the person who needs the most energy and attention—*themselves*.

If you catch yourself wondering what your ex is up to, turn your attention towards yourself and ask, "*how am I doing?*" You won't get over a break-up using your ex; you get over a break-up by focusing on yourself.

Related: [How to Get Over an Ex You Still Love](#)

Do not investigate

Along the same lines as the tip above, the *worst* thing you can do if you're stuck on your ex is play investigator.

It *won't* do you any good to keep tabs on your ex's social media, no matter how *tempting* it is.

You also don't want to ask friends how your ex is doing or any other forms of gathering intel on them. **Any news you find out will not be good news for you**, and it's better to

just stay in your own lane.

[Laura Doyle](#)



Relationship Coach | Author, “[The Empowered Wife](#)”

Do you want your partner back, or do you hate being alone?

Most relationships fail because one or both of you *don't* really know what you want, and instead of expressing your desires, you start complaining.

The fastest way to *kill* a connection or intimacy is through *criticism*. The truth is that there is *no* respectful way to complain—either to your loved one or about him.

When you focus on *negativity*, you make it expand, and eventually, you *don't* see the positives anymore.

Figure out your true desires

So, what do you want? Get clear about your *true* desires by focusing on the outcome you want.

For example, *"I want him back"* isn't really an outcome. What happens if you get him back? Would that make you happy?

The relationship ended, which means there was something that broke your connection. Dig *deeper* for the underlying desire:

- *Do you want the peaceful and loving relationship you had at the beginning?*
- *Is that what you miss?*

Once you know your true desires, you will be better able to see and take responsibility for your behavior that may have helped in your romance falling apart.

Related: [How to Figure out What You Want in a Relationship](#)

Be "pleaseable"

Yeah, I know. *"Pleaseable"* isn't technically a real word, but it definitely is important to mention.

Let's say you get your partner back, or in the worst-case scenario, you both have moved on, and you have a new romance. Do you show *gratitude* when your loved one does something nice for you?

How about when he does something around the house, such as make the bed? Or do you correct the way he does it or

feel like saying thank you is unnecessary because he should be doing it anyway?

The truth is that it *doesn't* matter! Your partner is doing something nice, which means you don't have to do it yourself. This makes your life *easier*, and rather than focusing on him not doing it the way you would have, be appreciative that it got done.

Gratitude is the grease that makes a relationship work. No one wants to be around other individuals or in a relationship with someone that makes them feel *underappreciated* or *not valued*.

The most straightforward way to avoid this is by saying thank you, even for the simplest things. Having an appreciation for someone else doesn't negate your contributions, but it does inspire the other person to keep doing what he has been doing.

On the other hand, people stop trying when they feel like they can't do anything "*right*." Which camp do you want to be in?

Treat yourself three times daily

Start prioritizing your own happiness by doing things you *enjoy* three times every day. It only counts if it

is *fun, frivolous* things you do for the joy of it and not things you should do.

For example, doing laundry is *not* self-care, even if it helps to declutter your space and lowers your anxiety. What do you like to do just for the fun of it? For no other reason than it puts a smile on your face.

You are probably wondering what this has to do with the matter at hand? *How exactly is this related to you being in love with your ex?*

Well, **happy people attract happy people**. Work on yourself and become the *best* version of yourself, which will attract him like a bug to a light.

You are the only person that can [make yourself happy](#). Not your ex. Not a new romance. *You*!

This also puts your focus on what you *can* control and gives you power over creating a life you dreamed of.

[Renée Suzanne](#)



Choose yourself and your happiness over the memory of your ex

You wake up in the morning thinking about your ex. Your heart aches, and your thoughts return to them constantly.

You stalk them on social media and maybe even try to run into them as you go about your day. And you can't stop wondering:

- *"What are they doing?"*
- *"Are they seeing someone new?"*
- *"What if it could be different?"*
- *"Do they think about me?"*
- *"Will they ever realize what we had together and come to their senses?"*

The memories *haunt* you:

- the sound of their voice,
- the places you went together,
- the feel of having someone next to you in bed at night.

You *can't* seem to get them out of your mind, and when you're honest with yourself, you realize that you *don't* want to. You just want them back. And that's the problem.

They're *not* coming back. And even if they did, **it wouldn't work out for the same reasons it didn't work out this time.** Because no matter what amazing qualities this person possesses, the single most important one is that they *don't* want to be with you.

That's the only thing that matters. *Nothing* else counts.

The best thing to do for yourself right now is to [love yourself](#) more than you love them. Choose *yourself* and your *happiness* over the memory of someone who *doesn't* even want to be with you.

Treat the thoughts you have about them like a bad habit and teach your brain to *stop* thinking about them. Here's how:

Brainstorm ways to interrupt yourself when your mind turns to thoughts of your ex

Try thinking:

- *"We're not doing that today."*
- *"They've moved on, and so will I."*
- *"I'm choosing to love myself."*

You can also list all the things you *disliked* about them and read them when these moments arise.

Think about what you really want out of life

Finally, you can have a little intervention with yourself. Think about what you really want out of life, the kind of relationship you want.

Is the life you dream of spent with someone who *doesn't* want to be with you? Because that's the way it is with your ex. They *don't* want to be with you because they aren't with you right now.

Don't let your brain lie to you and make excuses for them. They aren't with you because they don't want to be.

That's the truth of who your ex is, not the person you wish they were. You don't get to be with the person you wish your ex were. That person only exists in your imagination.

And the faster you realize that, the *quicker* you'll be able to move on to someone who can really love you back. You deserve that.

John F. Tholen, PhD



Retired Psychologist | Author, "[*Focused Positivity: The*](#)

The best answer is to do nothing

"I've decided I'm still in love with my ex; what should I do?" The best answer to this question is usually *"do nothing."*

The relationship ended for a reason, and the pain caused by its ending is likely to sabotage a repeat attempt even further.

Because our relationships are so important to us, however, we sometimes develop an *obsession* with a former partner who at one time seemed perfect for us. This illusion can be the source of *irrational* actions and considerable misery.

Related: [How To Stop Obsessing Over a Guy](#)

Once a relationship has ended, the best course is to *learn* as much as we can from what went wrong and attempt to *apply* that knowledge as we either pursue another or build an independent life.

Recognize that your obsessive thoughts about your ex are dysfunctional

"What can I do about my obsessive thoughts?" The key to managing obsessive thoughts about an ex is to recognize

that they are *dysfunctional*—likely to cause *distress* without inspiring constructive action.

Then shift our attention to more *balanced* and *reasonable* (functional) alternative thoughts likely to:

- reassure,
- inspire hope,
- or motivate self-assertion.

Although it seems that our feelings and motivations result *directly* from the events and circumstances we encounter, they are instead a reaction to our *self-talk*—the *internal* monologue that endlessly streams through our mind, interpreting our every experience.

Our automatic thoughts—those that spontaneously “*pop*” into our self-talk—are determined by a *complex* interaction between our biology and early experience.

We become obsessed with someone when that interplay results in dysfunctional automatic thoughts that we allow to occupy the focus of our attention, ideas such as:

- “*No one else but [the person] could ever be my soulmate.*”
- “*I could never be happy apart from [the person].*”
- “*Dedicating myself to showing [the person] how much I*

adore them will eventually “win” them over.”

Dysfunctional thoughts such as these can:

- Invade our “self-talk”
- Disrupt our mood
- Create counterproductive motivations—even though they are almost always unreasonable, *incomplete*, or *totally wrong*.

Shift your attention to more balanced and reasonable alternative ideas

The best method for “*defusing*” an obsession is to collect—and shift our attention to—more balanced and reasonable (*functional*) alternative ideas such as:

- “[Successful relationships](#) are more the result of hard work, willingness to compromise, and personal dedication than finding any one person who might complete us.”
- “No matter how perfect [the person] might seem, like everyone, they have their share of flaws and problems.”
- “I am better off looking elsewhere—or even remaining single and independent—than pursuing someone who doesn’t appreciate me.”
- “As wonderful as my fantasy life with [the person] might seem, my chances of developing a rewarding life are

just as good or better with someone else—especially since my feelings seem not to be reciprocal."

- *"Idealizing and pursuing [the person] when they have different wishes will make me appear immature and desperate."*

[Noelia Leite, PhD, LMFT](#)



Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist | Doctor in Integrative Mental Health

Work on yourself first

You need to ask yourself, *"do I love myself more than him?"*

Many women suffer for their ex so much because they *forget* about themselves or put their ex *first*. If this is the case for you, you should work on yourself first. You might experience very positive outcomes, including *forgetting* about your ex.

Improving wellbeing will make you feel more:

- empowered,
- self-confident,
- and whole again.

Making yourself *positively* busy and doing things that *feed* your body, mind, and spirit is the key to nurturing yourself. Wellness is the way to keep *healthy* and entails several interconnected practices.

A healthy and structured routine will help you foster balance, wellbeing, and quality of life. Ultimately, it will help you focus on what is essential: *you!*

Here you can find several tips that may help you move forward:

Physical wellness

- **Appearance.** Many people find that changing hair cut or color, renewing or modifying the way of dressing makes them feel like a *new* beginning.
- **Exercise.** Besides releasing *endorphins* for overall wellbeing, I often tell my clients that exercising is one of the best ways to *avoid* physiotherapy. There are numerous ways to exercise, such as:
 - playing tennis
 - lifting weights
 - cardio

- yoga
- pilates
- **Proper nutrition**. We are what we eat, period!
Adequate nutrition helps us *harmonize* with ourselves and avoid chronic diseases.

Emotional wellness

- **Journaling**. It helps one understand emotions and think clearer, being an observer rather than being entangled. When journaling, it is essential to reflect if you are following any negative relationship pattern or if there is any negative interaction pattern in the family's lineage. Identifying and healing this is vital so you can *stop* perpetuating the unhealthy cycle.
- **Mindfulness**. Mindfulness is the state of being present using our senses. It is the *conscious* act of paying attention to our thoughts, feelings, and senses. Examples of mindfulness practices are:
 - attentive walking,
 - breathing,
 - or eating.
- **Pets**. If you have one, you know what I am talking about. Suppose you have not, and you have ways to have one. In that case, it can be a *great* companionship besides helping you decrease negative emotions.
- **Hobbies**. Every activity that pleases us can be

considered a hobby. There are hobbies for every taste and personality type—gardening, photography, wild bird feeding, and instrument playing are just a few. If you do not have any hobby, it may be the time to dedicate to one.

- **Therapy.** It is an investment that might help you *better* understand yourself and make sense of your experiences to move on with your life. Some in-depth short-term therapeutic modalities bring *healing* in a short time and help to *break* unhealthy patterns.

Spiritual wellness

- **Nature.** Being in contact with nature, plants, and animals enhances our sense of connection with a Higher Power, God, Universe, Nature, or any other name you would like to name.
- **Rituals.** Rituals help individuals make sense of experiences and move on with their lives. Alchemic rituals utilizing the elements of nature may bring more closure and intensify the experience.
- **Religion.** Many people feel connected with a Higher Power when immersed in religious practices.
- **Meditation.** It is also an excellent way to connect to ourselves and elevate our connection with something bigger than us.

Intellectual wellness

Besides being a good workout for the brain, it is essential to keep it functioning healthily.

Good reading, TV programs and films, cultural activities, and games are great ways to keep our brains healthy.

Occupational wellness

It is essential to do something, and it does not mind if it is a remunerated or non-remunerated activity. It occupies our minds and makes us feel busy.

Financial wellness

Financial stability is pivotal to keeping ourselves *well* and providing for the future. Making a financial plan might *avoid* several problems in the future.

Social wellness

We are social beings, and it is essential to feel *connected* to others.

- Making good friends and keeping them
- Fostering healthy contact with family members
- Joining group activities

are good ways to stay well socially and healthily.

[Shira Miller, CPCC](#)



Certified Professional Co-Active Coach and Chief Communications Officer | Author, "[Free and Clear](#)"

Self-reflect to decide if you want to reach out and seek a second chance

The first step is to do some homework which involves self-reflection to determine if you are still in love with that person or the "*idea*" of the person.

Do you actually miss being with that individual or being part of a couple? Make a list of what you love about your ex to *decide* if you still have deep feelings for them and it's *not* a reaction prompted by loneliness or loss.

Related: [What to Do When You Miss Your Ex](#)

If you still love your ex, ask yourself if you want to reconcile with them:

- *Why did you break up, and could those issues be resolved?*
- *How did you feel about yourself when you two were together?*
- *Did they bring you happiness and support or drain your energy as a source of drama?*

If this was a [healthy relationship](#), decide if you want to reach out and seek a second chance.

Talking face-to-face lets you *calibrate* how you feel in your ex's presence and determine if they are open to reconciliation.

If you give it another go, talk *upfront* about how things will be different this time to give your relationship a fighting chance. How will you communicate better with each other and deliver mutual respect and support?

Focus on letting go and healing

Your self-reflection may reveal that getting back together with your ex is *not* in your best interest. That's when it is time to focus on letting go and healing.

Related: [How to Let Go of Someone You Love and Move on](#)

The first step in this scenario is to [practice forgiveness](#). Forgiving your ex for any transgressions and, most

importantly, forgiving yourself for a relationship that was ultimately disappointing.

When you hang onto a relationship that *didn't* work and realize being with that individual is bad for you even when you are still in love with them, it's a *one-way ticket* to getting stuck—in your love life, with your self-esteem, and other areas.

Practicing forgiveness will help *free* you from moving on.

Then I recommend taking an *inventory* of what you learned from the relationship, how you grew, and focusing on loving yourself.

- Do things that make you happy.
- Plan an adventure that excites you.
- Spend time with trusted friends who build you up.
- Make self-care a priority, whether that means:
 - engaging in more wellness
 - or simply binging streaming shows that make you laugh out loud for hours.

When you feel great about yourself and loving yourself first becomes a natural instinct, maybe it is time to start dating again.

Consider what kind of partner would make your already good life even better and get *clear* about their essential qualities

without getting hung up on specific details. Then open the door for a *new, more sustaining* love to come in.

[Emily Lovz](#)



Dating Coach and Matchmaker

Go on "MegaDate"

Are you really in love with your ex, or are you just fearful you won't find another partner? **Scarcity bias** drums up emotional feelings even when they're not warranted.

It's totally possible you and your ex *aren't* soulmates. It just feels that way because you *don't* have any romantic prospects.

So what's the remedy for this? *MegaDating*.

MegaDating is a dating philosophy urging singles to date *multiple* people simultaneously to find a compatible partner quickly. Dating around:

- builds confidence,
- helps you meet various suitors,
- prevents you from settling with the wrong person,
- and enables you to get over exes.

Get your emotional fix elsewhere

Right now, there's an emotional *void* in your life. A gaping emotional hole that your ex ripped out of your heart when they left. These holes *aren't* easy to fill, but you *must*.

They can be filled with romance, but this *isn't* always easy. The *healthier* way to heal and ensure your emotional and social needs are addressed is by:

- **Spending quality time with friends and family**
- **Repairing relationships** you let fall by the wayside while you were with your ex
- **Surrounding yourself with loving, supportive people,** and watch as you slowly start to heal from the pain left by your ex

Cut off communication

It's impossible to get over your ex if you still think there's a chance of getting back together. Texting them, seeing them on SM, and other forms of communication are attempts to keep them in your life, albeit at a distance.

Cut them off cold turkey by realizing you're *not* going to get back together. **Take a few months to detox and get them 100% out of your system.**

Related: [Why Is the No Contact Rule so Effective?](#)

Verbally express what you're going through to someone

We've all been through breakups. Your loved ones and friends know exactly how you feel and can *empathize* with you.

Use the *cathartic* pastime of talking it out with a loved one or professional. Let out your emotions, talk through your feelings, and heal by *verbally* expressing what you're going through.

Find new habits and hobbies that are gratifying and build confidence

Your routines have been *ripped apart*. You were used to seeing your ex every week, if not every day. You two lived interconnected lives. Now that they're gone, you have an opportunity to start over again.

You can either binge-series and feel bad for yourself (something you're entitled to for a little while) or build *new* habits and take up new hobbies that are gratifying

and build confidence.

When a relationship ends, it *frees* up time and the possibility to love again. What you choose to fill that time with is up to you.

Lauren Cook-McKay



Director of Marketing & Content, [Divorce Answers](#)

Consider whether what you feel is still love or attachment

Feelings do *not* simply end just because you and your partner broke up, even for the person who initiated the break-up.

Being attached happens when you love another person, so even if the labels are gone, the genuine *connection* is still there and is actually quite *difficult* to break.

It's natural that you would find yourself having a hard time letting go. After all, your ex was someone who you loved

unconditionally and selflessly.

There are ways to grieve the attachment you had with your ex. It can be through:

- getting closure
- or creating healthy boundaries with yourself about when to contact your ex and not.

Find a channel to release or express your emotions

Accept that you are still in love with your ex, **but carve out a direction for moving on, not for staying stuck.**

This means being *proactive* in seeking new hobbies and interests or spending quality time with yourself or your loved ones. You can try out a new hobby such as:

- painting,
- writing,
- or learning a new instrument.

You can also start immersing yourself in sporty activities or watching new TV series or movies.

This helps you step out of the typical routine that you had with your ex before and forge a *new* routine of your own while also trying to get the hang of being by yourself.

Put it in words

Writing a letter can be your first step to getting closure and actually dealing with your emotions.

Most therapists recommend their patients to write after a break-up or divorce with a set of guide questions to help them navigate through their emotions.

Some prompt questions would be asking:

- What they cherish from their past relationship
- What they wish for each other moving on
- What they will miss about the person

Feelings left *unsaid* often reveal themselves in letters and can be a release for most people who are still stuck.

Lindsey Mannon, LCSW



Therapist, [Malaty Therapy Services](#)

Give yourself time to mourn and heal

Take time to mourn fully. Perhaps this means finding a therapist to assist you through the process. **Not accepting our pain leads to long-term suffering.**

Remember that it is okay to *miss* the positives within your previous relationship—give yourself time to mourn and heal from these.

There was something *good* about the relationship; that's why you got into it. And it *doesn't* mean you are "*not over*" your ex if you miss the good times.

Once you've taken this time, get *curious* about [why you are still hurting and missing your ex.](#)

Acknowledge the "red flags" or not-so-good times of your relationship

It's essential to look back and acknowledge the "*red flags*" or *not-so-good* times. Identify these moments:

- Where your boundaries may have been broken,
- When you did not feel heard
- When you put more into the relationship
- There was a lack of reciprocity

Would you want to return to a relationship where the "*red flags*" were still present? *I hope not.*

Think about what you want or want *differently* in a future relationship. What kind of values and beliefs do you hope a future partner has?

Check your inner self-talk

Perhaps most importantly, check your inner self-talk. Are you still in love because you're holding onto the ***“what could have been,”*** and the love story you dreamed of is no longer an option?

If so, it's time to mourn the *loss* of this expectation and consider being more present in a future relationship.

It's good to know you see a future but not entirely plan out the details of it. When we do this, we often *struggle* with regaining emotional *control* after the break-up.

It's also important to notice if your self-talk has turned to *self-blame* (i.e., it's all my fault, I should/should not have done this, or we'd still be together).

Our brain *hates* missing pieces to the puzzle, so when we are faced with something like a break-up, we often do not know *why* this happened.

Because our brain simply wants an *answer* to fill in the one missing puzzle piece, we come up with a solution solely based on the only information source we have—*ourselves*.

Therefore, we self-blame.

The brain is content because we completed the puzzle, but we are left with *false* answers because we are unable to consider all the information. As difficult as it is, try to allow yourself to move forward *without* an answer to why things didn't work out.

There is great joy in having a *healthy* romantic relationship, but singleness is a *gift*. We have much more time for ourselves than we would in a relationship.

Related: [What Are the Benefits of Being Single?](#)

Focus on filling this time with activities you may have lost track of during the relationship:

- creating art,
- spending time with friends,
- exercising,
- the list goes on and on.

Ken Fierheller



Prioritize self-care over your feelings for your ex

Love and relationships are *complicated* and cause us whirlwinds of emotion throughout our lives.

Between the stresses of finding a partner and the heartbreak of ending relationships, the realization that you may still love your ex can be among the *most painful* of them all.

Loving an ex can feel hopeless, but it's important to **remember that it's normal to still have feelings for someone gone from your life** and that you're *not* alone in feeling this way.

When dealing with residual feelings for an ex-partner, it's helpful to consider first whether or not the complex emotions you're struggling with really are love.

Having lingering feelings for an ex may *not* always be about love. For many, the loss of a partner can lead to *grief* over what could have been in their future.

But these feelings of loss may *not* be specifically connected to their partner. Instead, the loss is associated with their idea of *how* their partner could have affected their life.

In a similar direction, it can be difficult to distinguish between feelings of love for an ex and feelings of love for the person the ex could have *become* or the person you *thought* they were.

How to move on? If, after truly *confronting* your feelings of love for your ex and realizing they are genuine, you still find yourself suffering with no way to start feeling better, there are a few things you can try to lessen the impact of this loss on your life.

Get closure by cutting off all communication

First of all, a clear and direct way to try and get some closure is to cut off all communication, plain and simple.

Cutting off contact does *not* have to be reserved for cases where there is bad blood—sometimes, choosing to go your separate ways is simply a matter of *preserving* your own mental health.

Find ways to keep busy and distract yourself

If, however, you've decided that keeping in contact with your ex is the *best* way for both of you to move on, then it might be helpful after such a loss to find ways to keep *busy* and *distract* yourself from your feelings of pain and grief while they are at their strongest.

While it's vital to deal with your feelings of loss eventually to heal fully, it does *not* have to happen while your pain is at its *worst*.

Distance yourself from your ex

Giving yourself time to distance yourself from your ex can prove quite helpful in the long run.

Lastly, remember that no matter what happened between you and your partner, **your feelings matter, and you deserve love too.**

Remember to prioritize *self-care* over your feelings for your ex and to take care of your mental health and well-being first.

[Briana MacWilliam](#)



**Licensed and Board Certified Creative Arts
Psychotherapist**

If you are still in love with your ex, you *don't* necessarily need

to "*move on*." Instead, **increase your definition and understanding of love in a broader context.**

Love *can't* be given or taken away because it's the natural state of being, so there is no "*getting over*" your partners.

Recognize that you have an *infinite* amount of love to give and that the *uniqueness* of the love you shared with that person will always be a precious moment in time.

Decondition your system so it doesn't constantly pull you in their direction

That said, an effective way to overcome your belief that you can only love this specific person is to *decondition* your nervous system (in other words, change your thought and behavioral patterns).

So that it *doesn't* believe it needs to be close to a specific person to survive or avoid anxiety.

Because of the chemicals of attachment and bonding, there need to be *body-based* interventions when you break up with someone so that your *instinctual* system isn't constantly pulling you in their direction.

Body-based interventions mean *bodywork* or *therapies* that work directly on your body (such as *arts-*

based interventions), and they're essential for *shifting* the way you're conditioned to think and feel.

Steps to reconnect with yourself:

There are also other steps you can take to reconnect with yourself instead of focusing on your ex.

Strengthen your relationships

Strengthen your relationships with platonic friends and larger communities that you enjoy participating in.

You can use these opportunities for co-regulation, which will feed a need for connection and expand the narrow focus on love as only a romantic gift.

Reframe negative limiting beliefs

Pay attention to and become aware of the negative stories going on in your head about what is possible for you and your love.

These stories come from *old* wounds and conditioning that *filter* your perceptions, which will *restrict* what you allow into your experience.

The more you can reframe negative limiting beliefs, the *better* you will be able to identify when the universe

delivers to you a more *compatible* partner in the future.

Pursue passion projects and do things that you love

This will *raise* your mood and, therefore, your energetic vibration.

When you are glowing with emotional satisfaction, other people will be attracted to that, and there will be people who are equally enthused.

Amy Andersen



Dating and Relationship Expert | Founder, [Linx Dating](#)

Becoming friends with your ex is not the solution

After sharing love and a life together, severing all contact with an ex sounds like a *harsh* outcome, to say the least, but is maintaining ties with an ex worthwhile?

Traditional advice seems to support "*clean breaks*" and

"*moving on*," but is there something to be said for pursuing friendship in lieu of separation?

Getting over an ex takes time, and becoming friends as a quick transition directly from a *romantic* to a *platonic* relationship is *not* the solution. Well, definitely not a solution that takes minimal effort or would be described as a walk in the park.

You need to ask yourself why you want to stay friends, and are you even ready to have a friendship?

Before you can be [friends with an ex](#), you have to consider **four different relationship domains** that can *prevent* a successful friendship:

Continued romantic attraction

You're still hoping the relationship could return to a romantic nature and have a romantic attraction.

This is a direct indicator you are likely *not* ready for a friendship and reserving your romantic attraction is not possible to foster a friendship at this time.

Reliability/sentimentality

You think your ex "*gets you*" more than anyone else, and you believe you could count on them to have your back and

understand your perspective.

With the changing nature from romantic to platonic, you have to *assess* if reaching out to an ex-romantic partner is a result of *dependability*—not their specific advice or expertise.

If you favor reaching out to your ex before any other friends for advice or comfort, you might *not* be ready for a friendship at this time.

Pragmatism

You perceive your life as *easier* or *necessary* with your ex as a part of it. Maybe your ex has the resources you want:

- connections to business prospects,
- money,
- or skills you need.

Sexual access

Maintaining enough *connectivity* exclusively to ensure sexual opportunities or, simply, a friends with benefits situation. **Sexual-based relationships** often *struggle* to alter a relationship beyond physical and romantic feelings (i.e., a friendship).

Although *reliability* is the prevailing reason for friendship

among both women and men, men were more likely to rate pragmatism and sexual access higher than women.

Regardless of what you decide, **give yourself—and your ex—an opportunity to adjust to being single.**

If you do decide to pursue friendship, realize that the strong emotional connection you continue to share could *complicate*—at best—or *preclude*—at worst—your chances of establishing a new, totally fulfilling relationship.

[Sam Nabil](#)



CEO and Lead Therapist, Naya Clinics

Relive the relationship to help you remember that it is already in the past

One way of actually progressing from a difficult stage of your life and getting to *accept* things is to relive them.

Getting a hold of yourself starts with dealing with your emotions *head-on*. Reliving the past will highlight

the *good* and the *bad* in that experience.

Those must be maximized as *reminders* of why the relationship ended and the fact that it *did* already end. Until it's *reinforced* in your mind, relive the relationship to help you remember that it is already in the past, and you must now take *action* for the future.

Communicate your thoughts and feelings in a journal as the sensory input of writing can help you focus *better* on your emotions.

Make new memories

To get your ex *out* of your system, make new memories, and do things you didn't have the chance to do when you were still together.

- You need to visit *new* spots you have no memory of with them.
- Eat food you have never tasted before.

While you *won't* be able to instantly get your ex out of your mind, stimulating your brain with *new* challenges and experiences will *strengthen* your emotional and psychological being, ultimately helping you move on *faster*.

Take action and find the answers by conversing with your ex

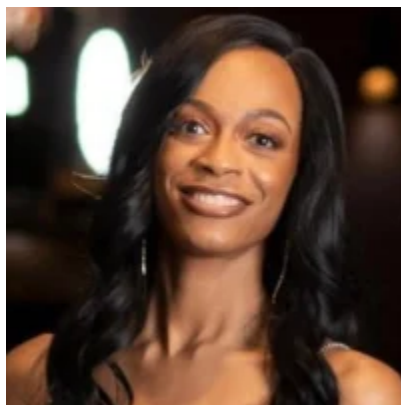
Being unable to get your ex out of your mind sometimes requires a simple solution—see them.

Seeing your ex in person and conversing with them is an opportunity to lay any *unresolved* issues you have with each other and fleeting ideas you have about your past relationship to rest.

Instead of overthinking and drowning yourself with unanswerable questions, take action and do your best to find the answers to those questions by having a conversation with the person in question.

By doing this, you no longer need to wonder, and you'll be armed with the information to decide whether you'll move on or get back together with them.

Mel Williams



Relationship Expert | Lifestyle Coach, [Healing Is Sexy](#)

Re-evaluate the source of your feelings

If you're still in love with an old flame, the first thing to do is examine why. **Where is the source of this feeling coming from?**

- *Is it purely nostalgia that focuses on only highlighting only good memories without accounting for the issues that still haven't been addressed?*
- *Is it loneliness?*
- *Is it the result of your insecurities causing you to believe that what you had with your ex is better than this new, unfamiliar reality of being alone?*

It's important to examine why you believe you still feel so strongly for your ex, especially if the relationship *wasn't* healthy, where you felt your needs were being unmet, and you had more bad days than good days.

The last thing you need in your love life is to pine away entertaining the idea of loving someone who wasn't a good fit for you when you were just in love with the idea of being in a relationship.

Getting to the root and understanding the why behind your feelings will help you decide if you should seriously *entertain* the emotions you feel or *move on*.

It will also help you decide if it's *worth* reaching out to see if you can *rekindle* the relationship or seek *closure*.

Be *mindful* that the reasons you may still be in love with your ex may be more about you than it is about them.

They may not be your person, and now is a good time to re-evaluate your why and better understand your feelings so you make the *best* decisions for yourself.

Niloofar Tavakoli



Licensed Professional Counselor, [Malaty Therapy Services](#)

Focus on yourself and work on sitting with the difficult emotions

As humans, we have an innate desire to *connect* with others, and often the loss of a connection is difficult for us to navigate.

A helpful approach to moving on from an ex-lover is to focus on yourself and work on sitting with the difficult emotions, sensations, memories, etc., that come up.

In this way, we can practice *noticing* what we experience as we are experiencing it and move towards a *compassionate* framework rather than a judgmental one.

Start with self-compassion

Self-compassion during this process can be so helpful in allowing us to notice what it is that has us hooked on the break-up.

Maybe it's our perception of the relationship or what it could have been. Whatever it may be, **starting with compassion can go a long way in helping us heal.**

One way to practice self-compassion in the pursuit of moving forward from an ex-partner is to engage in *kind statements* towards ourselves, such as:

- *"I am noticing I showed up for myself today."*
- *"I am proud of making it to work today."*

It can be anything as long as we are *actively* engaging with ourselves.

Identify your values

Another helpful way to move forward from a break-up is to identify one's own values. Values are our hearts' *deepest* desires. They are what give our life

meaning and speak about who we are and who we want to be.

Related: [What Are Core Values and How Do They Control My Life?](#)

When we can identify who and what matters, we can notice what sort of activities allow us to feel closer to our values and, in turn, ourselves.

For example, if someone's value is to be a caring dog mom, then they can better know if they are moving towards their value by creating behaviors that signal that. So a goal towards the value of being a caring dog mom can be to walk the dog 2x per day.

By engaging in these activities, we can:

- feel *closer* to ourselves,
- release dopamine,
- and move towards recreating the life we want.

Overall, one can move forward from a relationship by:

- identifying ways to pour that love *inward*
- and creating a path that can provide a sense of *connection* and *joy*.

[Nancy Landrum, MA](#)



Relationship Coach | Creator, The Millionaire Marriage Club

Dispose of every reminder of your time of active loving with your ex

With every loss, there is the need to *grieve* before you can leave it in your past. You may still love a person and yet know it's necessary to leave them.

What is missing in the "*I still love my ex*" scenario is the *acceptance* that love can live forever, but being in an intimate relationship with the loved one needs to be grieved and left in the past.

To complete the grieving process, dispose of every reminder of your time of active loving with this person. That includes:

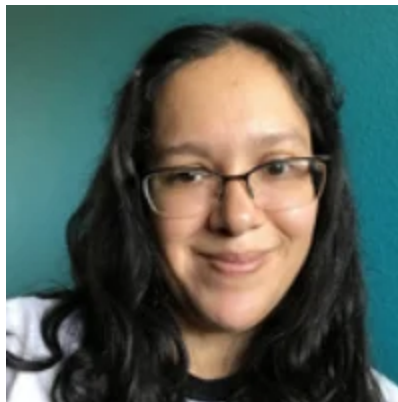
1. Returning any of their items to her or sending them to goodwill.
2. Wiping all text or email messages off of your phone and computer

3. Gathering up all mementos such as photos, show programs, etc. Put it in a shoebox and plan a ceremony of completion such as burning or burying them.
4. Cry all you need to. Even include a letter of completion written to your ex in this box. In the letter, remember all the good times, but also recount all the reasons for leaving this relationship. Note the date in your calendar.

In the future, whenever feelings of longing for the days of loving them come up, energetically/spiritually send your love and best wishes to that person and reassert that the relationship is *over* for you, as evidenced by the ceremony and date in your calendar.

Although painful, this grieving process will leave you open to a more *appropriate, healthier* relationship that will not need to be left. Your heart will be *prepared* to love again.

[Alison Gomez, LMFT](#)



Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist

Acknowledge your feelings for what they are

When you are finding yourself in love with your ex, the first thing you want to do is make sure to honor those feelings.

A lot of times, it can feel that the feeling itself is a *justification* for being in a relationship; however, that is not necessarily the case.

The feeling indicates that you still have *affection* for them or *miss* them. That does *not* mean that missing them is evidence for getting back to them.

Allow yourself to feel the grief of not being in the relationship. This might mean letting yourself feel *sadness* around the activities you will not get to do or the dreams you had for your relationship, regardless of how big or small. The grief will continue to decrease over time.

Look at all the information before deciding to get back together

If you are still in love with your ex and want to get back together, it is essential to look at all the information.

Here are some questions to ask:

- *What led to breaking up?*

- *What would be different this time should you pursue a relationship with them?*
- *What will you do to make a change?*
- *Will they be open to taking accountability for their parts of the issue?*
- *Will they be willing to make changes?*

If the answer is "*no*," or there would be no difference from before, then it might *not* be the healthiest to go back into that relationship.

If there is a possibility for *change* and *accountability* so the relationship can be healthier, then it may be a better outcome.

Stefanie Juliano, MS, LPCC



Licensed Professional Clinical Counselor, [NM Wellness Center, LLC](#)

Don't romanticize the person or relationship

What is the reason that they are an ex? Is it "*a break*," or will you be back together? If there's an abuse of any time, cheating, etc., it may be time to realize that it's time to move on.

Sometimes we *romanticize* a person or relationship when it's over. *Don't*. Remember why they are an ex.

It can be helpful to remember (but not obsess):

- over what didn't work,
- what the relationship lacked,
- why you were not happy, etc.

Don't feel guilt or shame

Many people *struggle* with the good parts outweighing the bad. Feelings *don't* typically fade overnight or in a week or month so give yourself time to heal.

To do:

- **Stay off social media if needed.** Stay busy or rest (what's needed—*don't overdo it*). Either ask your mutual friends not to bring them up or take a break from the friendships if needed and communicate why.
- **Self-care.** Talk it out with friends and a therapist.
- **Maintain good boundaries or start learning how to have them.**

- **Write them a letter** (not one that you have to send-it's for you).
- **Focus on other areas of your life.**
- **Delete the ex or block** from all social media, phones, emails, etc.
- **Commit to time to heal**, and time helps to normalize the new normal.
- **Find closure.** Sometimes it is not the person you loved; it was an aspect, or what they could be, etc.

Joan Collins Harwood, PhD, LMFT, LPC



Marriage and Family Therapist | Owner, [River Oaks Family Therapy](#)

Give yourself a grief period, then reevaluate what went wrong

Feeling hung up on an ex is a *common* phenomenon, especially when someone is considering a new relationship. My clients often say, *"It just doesn't feel right to be with someone else when my heart is not in it."*

While I have tremendous compassion for people who think they are still not over an ex, often there were excellent reasons that the previous relationship ended.

Sometimes people romanticize their ex by remembering only the *best* parts of the prior relationship. They *forget* about the:

- neglect
- immature behavior
- fights
- at worst, the abuse of the partner they left behind

Harder still is when the ex-lover was the one who left. A person may have experienced such a *blow* to their self-esteem that "*putting themselves out there*" seems a *daunting* task. Just the idea of online dating and meeting several people create anxiety.

When a relationship ends, it first helps to give it a grief period that allows you to feel all of your emotions, but then a courageous reevaluation of what went wrong is in order.

- *Were you giving your power away to this person?*
- *Were you giving them all the credit while short-changing yourself?*

I think it is human nature for our brain to wrap around what is *familiar* so much that we *can't* conceive of opening our

minds and heart to someone else.

But sometimes, working with a good therapist to prepare for a new relationship helps us to *fully* let go and stay open to a better love than we could imagine.

Katina Tarver, MA



Life and Relationship Coach, [The Pleasant Relationship](#)

Start working on yourself to be emotionally independent

Were you dependent on your partner's approval and validation? Your happiness depended on them? Being emotionally dependent is good once in a while but *not* always, as it may create chaos.

Whenever you start missing your ex, remind yourself that your happiness should come from *within* and not because of your ex's behavior towards you.

Try and enjoy pleasure from your actions instead of

depending on your ex.

Try and analyze what went wrong in this relationship

The break-up phase may remind you of all the *great* moments you and your ex shared.

With this, you tend to think about “***what it could have been***” instead of emphasizing “***what the relationship was***.” Due to this, you may start having the *urge* to return to your ex.

Instead of thinking and missing your ex, try and analyze what went wrong in this relationship. Was it:

- [cheating](#)
- disrespect
- possessiveness
- feeling of being unloved

Once you list down these factors, **try considering if these factors fade away once you go back to them.** No, right? Then it's best to move on and not think about the relationship.

Try and be the best version of yourself

There are instances people self-harm themselves when they

are unable to deal with trauma.

So instead of falling into this valley of sadness, **it is best to be better than you were yesterday.** It will help you immensely to move on and shape your personality.

Try and list down your:

- qualities,
- strengths,
- or hidden talents.

Working on them will give you a sense of *relief* and make you a happy person. Besides, it will also make your ex super jealous.

Jonathan Rea



**LPC-Associate | Licensed Chemical Dependency
Counselor, [Malaty Therapy Services](#)**

Write break-up letters to obtain closure

Rituals are a big part of our human experience. Rituals help mark relationship milestones, such as engagement parties and anniversaries. Hence, we should also place importance on rituals around break-ups.

Rituals not only bring us *closure* but also prepare our psyche to know that there will be other forms of human connection after the break-up and that there will be meaning to life even after the end of a relationship.

A helpful ritual is writing break-up letters to obtain closure. You can either send the letter or have a way with it (such as burning it in a space that is sacred to you).

The best practices to do after a break-up are those that help you:

- distract,
- connect,
- and work on a passionate project—whether it is:
 - work
 - consuming hobby
 - engaging fellowship

All of these help to [bring meaning and purpose back into your life](#), outside of your ex-partner.

[Courtney Burns, LCSW](#)



Clinical Therapist

Acknowledge what you love and were attracted to your partner

Persistent feelings of love and affection about your partner despite the break-up or other unsavory experiences with this person can be welcomed and explored.

You spent time and intimate moments with this person. The end of the relationship is a loss, and acknowledging what you love and were attracted to from the start is an essential *honest* response.

Explore the origins

Continued feelings of love or care for a person despite the end of the relationship or their poor treatment of you may be something *beyond* just the relationship between the two of you.

Take a look at this feeling of *longing*. Ask if this is something

that has occurred before in your life. Or if the *patterns* of this relationship that just ended *mirror* other relationships can be a helpful step in exploring what the continued feelings of love or care may mean.

These feelings of love and attachment to someone no longer in your life may *not* actually be about that person at all.

Sameera Sullivan



Relationship Expert, Sameera Sullivan Matchmakers

It's not a crime to want your ex back because you are in love with them. *Not* all breakups end on unfavorable terms. But sometimes, even when they do, you can still have *strong* feelings.

The love you once shared for your ex *doesn't* fade away overnight, and that's something you have to be patient with yourself about.

Even though this might sound easier said than done, the best thing you can do for yourself is to take the first step

toward moving on.

Remove all their traces

What to do? Start by removing all their traces:

- their phone number,
- pictures,
- or anything that reminds you of them.

Hanging on will only *stifle* your growth.

Do something that helps you take your mind off of them

That in *no* way means you ignore your emotional process. Do something like a trip with your friends or even on your own, try something new you have always wanted to, or take a self-care day.

In addition, straying away from social media makes things worse; not that you'd be stalking your ex, but any small reminder can lead you into a *self-destructing* spiral.

Seek clarity on your feelings to progress moving on

Never be afraid to talk to someone about it, and always seek out therapy in such cases.

It's better you seek *clarity* and understand why you're feeling such emotions; in most cases, sometimes, what you're feeling is something entirely else. So seek clarity on your feelings to progress moving on.