

RELATIONSHIP STATUS: *friends*

Mel Myrdycz investigates the intricacies of transitioning from in-a-relationship to just-friends



Everyone's been there, and we've all wondered – is it possible to be friends ... honest, true, real friends – after a breakup? As a relationship coach, it's a scenario I've witnessed and discussed hundreds of times over the past 28 years. Did you know, in approximately 80 per cent of cases, one of the parties has an ulterior motive for staying friends, with an emotional attachment of some degree to the leaving person?

Are you in this situation right now?

Take a minute and be really honest with yourself. Think about each scenario below by placing yourself in the position of the person who is being left (referred to as YOU) and your partner leaving (referred to as LEAVING PERSON):

- YOU are unable to let go of the leaving person, you are in love; if they give you a chance it will get better. The LEAVING PERSON sprung on you that they no longer wish to be in this relationship. What do you do?
- YOU feel your insecurities and emotions arise. You did not see or want to see a breakup coming. This person is the love of your life. What do you do?
- YOU have children involved, this breakup is not just affecting you, it is affecting your whole family. Would YOU use your children as leverage to reinstate a friendship?
- YOU make promises that whatever happened will never happen again, but the LEAVING PERSON cannot forgive the event and needs to leave. What do you do?
- YOU are in an abusive relationship, YOU want to leave but the LEAVING PERSON who controls the relationship will not allow YOU to leave. Do you attempt a fake friendship to escape?

- The LEAVING PERSON had an affair, stepped outside your relationship, broke your heart and trust. YOU feel guilty and not good enough, do you try harder suggesting being friends and starting again?
- YOU cannot believe the internal emotional turmoil you are feeling right now, you never considered the relationship would ever end, you can't see yourself with anyone else, your friends and families all love each other and yet the LEAVING PERSON is no longer wanting to be in this relationship. What would you do?

If you are truly honest with yourself, in any of the scenarios above, whether you are male, female, same sex relationship, short or long relationships, YOU may want to hold

onto the LEAVING PERSON, for a number of different reasons – initially though, none to be their friend.

Who wants to be 'just friends' with someone you're in love with or still attached to? Initially, with emotions raw and new, are you thinking of the bigger picture? Could you really handle being in the same room with an ex and new partner, watching them enjoy life when it used to be you? Or, imagine you're at your ex's family's home in an attempt to be friends and they arrive with the new partner, or they arrive and ignore you because when they said 'end' they meant it?

Through both training and experience it's important to note that a couple needs to give each other space and time to grieve the death of the relationship. There is no rule on how long, this depends on the individual situation and the depth of the emotional

attachment. If space is given, then there is hope for friendship or at least amicable communication (especially important when children are involved).

The other 20 per cent of breakups find friendship easier, and it doesn't take a rocket scientist to work out this is because of the reduced emotional attachment or control of the other person. You'll realise lack of emotional attachment when you can truly look at someone and don't feel anything – you don't hate them or wish them ill; you don't love them and wish they would return – you just accept them for who they are.

Whatever stage you're in right now, you need to find a way to analyse the situation clearly and objectively, so the ultimate outcome is the right one for YOU.

About Mel

Mel Myrdycz of Relationship Resolutions (relationshipsolutions.com.au) is a relationships coach and Reiki Master. You'll find her commenting at [Facebook.com/relationshipsolutions](https://www.facebook.com/relationshipsolutions)

Readers confessions

Two *Get it* readers share their experiences

My husband and I were together for a good number of years and have two beautiful children together. After a while though, we realised our marriage wasn't working. We tried counselling but inevitably came to an amicable solution – we would remain under one roof to take care of our children, but would enjoy separate lives. I have a boyfriend now and everything is still working well. We realise this situation isn't for everyone, but we keep the lines of communication open, and make an effort to get through any issues as friends, not just for our kids sake, but because we were friends first, and we'd like to keep it that way. Like a marriage, it's not easy, but if you ask me, yes, you can be friends. But you do need to be in the same space, one can't be attached more than the other, definitely not.

–Fiona, Biggera Waters

My boyfriend and I were together for two years and I just wasn't feeling it anymore. I cheated on him – something I'm not proud of and wouldn't recommend, but this was the catalyst for breaking it off. He didn't see any of it coming and although I knew it should be a clean break, I pandered to his pleas to remain friends, mainly because I felt so guilty. I did love him but not in the way he needed me to. In the end it got messy and was evident we could not be friends – at least not for now. I want to move on and he needs to move on, and we simply can't do it in each other's space.

–Lucie, Surfers Paradise

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