

THE BREAKUP PROCESS QUESTION-AND-ANSWER LIST

The following items are designed to help you to start seeing where your role begins and ends in an intimate relationship. This is a free-flowing discussion and inventory of the real issues behind your breakup. This isn't about saving your public reputation or blaming your partner, but learning the truth about you. Our primary goal here is to help you begin to develop some emotional clarity and insight into how your relationship ended. This list is very neutral because it is about your assuming responsibility and gaining understanding into your contribution to the end of your relationship. How you got to this point isn't a matter of right or wrong, good or bad, or any judgment about emotional weaknesses. Instead, this is an opportunity to fully understand your relationship in a more complete and nonreactive mode. Once you understand your role in the breakup of your relationship, you can redirect your future intimate relationships in a very powerful, courageous, and positive way. No behavioral change or emotional relief is possible until you are able to gain two things: a nonreactive emotional perspective and a clearer picture of your contribution to and participation in what your prior relationship was.

Consider the following questions.

- Did you ignore the obvious signs that your relationship was dying?
- Was communication very strained for months or years, or was it never good at all?
- Did the kids monopolize your life?
- Did you secretly resent your partner for not paying attention to you?
- Did you use the kids as an excuse to maintain emotional distance from your partner?

- Did you resent your partner for his or her unpredictable behavior?
- Did you feel that you couldn't be your "real" self with your partner?
- Do you feel that you emotionally and mentally outgrew your partner?
- Did you not want to remain in a loveless and/or sexless marriage?
- Did you not want a relationship like that of your parents?
- Did your husband leave you for a younger woman?
- Did your wife or husband leave you for someone completely different than you? For instance the contractor remodeling your house or the personal trainer at the gym?
- Was your partner emotionally abusive?
- Was your partner physically and mentally abusive?
- Did you find yourself romantically attracted to a coworker, the yoga instructor, or your child's elementary school teacher?
- Did you fantasize about being with other partners—romantically and physically?
- Did you stay at work late to avoid your partner?
- Can you remember the last time you had sex with your partner?
- Did you stay in the marriage for the kids?
- Did you stay in an abusive marriage because you never wanted to be divorced?
- Did you want to avoid feeling like a three-time loser with a third divorce?
- Did you marry your partner so you could have kids, rather than for love or for an emotional partnership?
- Did you and your partner take separate vacations rather than together?
- Did you resent your partner's ex for the emotional bond created by their kids?
- Have you never been really happy or excited about your partner?

- Did you feel comfortable in your relationship, but not in love with your partner?
- Did you believe your partner was never emotionally available for you?
- Have you secretly thought about ending the relationship for a long time?
- Did you never expect your partner would leave you?
- Do you hate not having control of the relationship anymore?
- Do you dislike your stepchildren?
- Do you want children while your partner wants a new house?
- Do you resent your partner's ex because of the alimony payments?
- Do you hate being single?
- Do you fear being alone?
- Do you not want to be like your mother: divorced with two young children?
- Did you think you could wait until the kids went to college before you got divorced?
- Did you never think your partner was as unhappy as you were?