

Ending Things



Ending a relationship well may seem impossible, but it can be done if both people stay true to the principles of respect, consideration, and honesty. When one person ends the relationship, he or she is responsible for giving the news in a manner that shows genuine concern for the other person. No matter how uncomfortable the situation, there are certain decencies that must be observed.

- **Meet personally.** Someone you've been close to is owed a face-to-face meeting. Don't use anyone else as an intermediary. Phoning may be necessary when time and distance are a problem, but don't leave a brush-off message or voice mail. If ending the relationship is your choice, face up to it.
- **Meet privately.** To deliberately stage a breakup in a place where other people are close by--hoping that the presence of others will keep things calm--is cowardly.
- **Get to the point.** Don't try to ease the blow by taking the person out for a nice time, then dropping the bomb at the last minute. The person will probably feel that he or she has been made a fool of if you do.
- **Avoid blaming.** Neither party will benefit from a rehash of their faults and failings. Blaming or hurling insults is childish and cruel, as are phony and superficial excuses. A person may say hurtful things, but you don't have to respond in kind.
- **See to the other person's well-being.** Be sure that he or she is reasonably in control before leaving. A person who is extremely upset or angry isn't in the best shape to drive or go off on her own. The details of a breakup should be kept private. What's past is over, and talking disrespectfully about a former partner only reflects poorly on the one who does the talking.