



REPAIR

After

SEPARATION

How To Maximize Your Chances of Reconciliation
by Rachel Rider



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Introduction

"MARRIED 18 YRS. SEPARATED 8 MONTHS. VERY LITTLE CONTACT. OUR FINAL COURT DATE IS IN TWO WEEKS. DON'T KNOW WHAT TO DO ANYMORE..."

If you've picked up this book, you know you are at a point in your relationship quite similar to our letter writer above.

Even if you and your partner have been together a long time, crisis can hit you and before you know it, someone wants out.

Whether it was you who moved out for one reason or the other, or whether it was your partner, these days you find yourself alone, angry, confused and possibly even depressed.

Getting your partner back has been weighing heavily on your mind. But there may be some things that you feel are stopping you.

You don't know what to do.

So much has been said.

You feel that you've hurt your partner too much.

Your partner has hurt you too much.

You have given up hope.

If this is your situation, I want to tell you that it's not too late. There are still things you can do – to evaluate whether reconciliation is still a viable option and to take control of yourself and your situation, as well as to create an environment where your partner will WANT to come back.

If you are separated or about to separate from your partner after a volatile situation, if you are even at the point of divorce or legal separation, Repair After Separation is specifically written for you.

You have to be realistic, however. This book is not about guaranteeing reconciliation with your partner. That part depends greatly on you and your partner. What this book can do is to share with you a step-by-step guide that will help you **MAXIMIZE YOUR CHANCES** for getting your partner back.

There's one question that I want to ask you before we begin this journey.

What do you want? Deep inside you, minus all the yelling, arguing, the hurt and the guilt – do you still want your partner enough to go through this process?

There must be a seed, a willingness inside of you to at least want to find out. If you are, then turn the page.



Prequel: After the Separation

I am a Marine that is about to deploy to Iraq in about a week. My wife left me about 2 weeks ago. She has been having an affair for the past couple of months. She recently moved in with her "boyfriend" this past week. She blames me for pushing her away because of our fighting. Before the affair, we had fights a few times a month or every couple of months. But since then it has gotten worse. I believe the fights lately have been more frequent because of all the added pressure due to the affair, the upcoming deployment, being without my kids or family and the added work hours due to the deployment. My wife rarely takes responsibility or blame for any of the fights that do happen between us. I am usually the one to say I'm sorry and try to make up.

We have been married for 5 and 1/2 years but have been together for over 7. She has already moved out and told me that she isn't "in love" with me. I'm deploying for the next 7 months and she told me that she is done. Is there any real hope for me to win back my wife?

I have forgiven her for the affair. We all make mistakes. I truly love my wife and I am willing to do anything to keep her as my beautiful bride. Please, I am in desperate need of advice. I have faced the fact that it is over, just to try and expect the worse. But, I don't want to give up on our marriage. Do I have options to save my marriage or just try to move on facing the fact that divorce is in our future?

*Jack
Seattle, USA*

Getting Real With Reality

When I received this letter from Jack, I could not help but be heartbroken for him. Certainly, his story is like many others but if there's one thing that really creates an even more sensitive situation for Jack, it's not that his wife has another man but it's the idea that Jack's time is limited, even more so than many of you who have picked up this book.

If there's anyone who's tempted, even entitled, to beg or plead with his wife to come back, it's Jack. No one will blame him for rushing. No one will think twice if he starts making all

the promises he needs – just so that he can have some form of certainty before he leaves.

Just because it seems logical for Jack to do these things, it doesn't mean that he should – even if he is on a very real deadline.

Then again, if you want any chance of reconciliation with your partner, thinking you are on a deadline is one of the worst mistakes you can make. So is crying, begging, threatening and promising change.

In fact, you may have tried everything already – rushed, nagged, pleaded, argued, rationalized – and since you are reading this book, I am assuming that nothing has worked.

There is a way to repair your relationship, even if your partner has left home.

I'm Rachel Rider. And I want to give you good news. There is a way to get your partner back.

Yes, it's possible. And you're going to do it with courage and presence of mind and without manipulating or coercing your partner.

The first thing you have to do? Get real.

Do you think that you can win back your partner by making them jealous or by hurting him or her the way they hurt you?

Do you think confronting your partner's lover will accomplish getting them back? What about the silent treatment or even having another screaming match over at their apartment?

The reality is your partner left for a reason and no amount of making them jealous or hurting them, shouting at them or confronting them will make that reason go away. In fact, your hasty reaction could do even further damage to your future chances of getting back together.

Before you think about your future, you need to understand what factors and reasons contributed to the breakup. Are you clear about the reasons for your breakup?



Even if by some chance you get back together now, without following the proper process you'll find the same reasons, the same problems haunting you both at a time in your future and have nothing resolved. You may separate again and this time, there may be no more hope of getting back together.

So where to from here?

Start with getting real about the relationship, about the problems you and your partner were having even before the separation. It's not about apportioning blame. It's about acknowledging the processes taking place in your relationship.

Take stock of your break up and admit to yourself that you are where you are because of patterns of behavior, and perceptions and expectations that were not being met in the relationship. It's not all about you or your partner. It's about your actions, reactions, behaviors and responses.

Getting real also means accepting that the problems happened, and you and your partner separating happened. While this may seem obvious, I get a lot of separated couples come to me denying that they really have problems, and that their separation is a temporary thing. Refusal to acknowledge the seriousness of your situation is going to compound your issues, so it's vital that every stakeholder in this process is fully aware of the gravity of your situation.

I receive a lot of emails that make me shake my head in disbelief. Often, I read about how the letter writer believes that leaving is just a phase their partner is going through, or that their partner today is not the one they fell in love with in the first place. Honestly, while this may be true, more often than not a lot of these thoughts are you trying to cope with the baffling circumstances you find yourself in.

If you think this way, I have to tell you - STOP. This is poisonous thinking. So is blaming your partner for everything that has happened. So is shaming them. Or thinking that you need to make them jealous, hurt them or get back at them.

Having your idea of who your partner is in your head is also poisonous thinking.

If there's one thing you have to get real about is that the partner you have now is the person he or she has become because of his or her experiences. They are reacting in the only way they know how and, sadly, you have to accept that. Wishing for the person you once fell in

love with will just cause you a lot of heartache.

You have no control over what happened yesterday, but you have complete control over what happens today and what can influence tomorrow.

This means that one of the first things you really have to do is, rather than focus on what your partner felt or did not feel, do or did not do, you turn your attention to yourself and get in touch with your own perceptions, expectations, feelings and attitudes that have led to this situation.

Ask yourself, what do I know about the reasons that led my partner to leave? Do I believe those reasons?

Why do I believe these reasons? Why don't I? How does my interpretation of the issues differ from my partner?

What really happened?

Some Truths About Separation

Accepting reality does not mean that you are giving up and losing hope. In fact, it means that you are finally grabbing hold of the real situation. It means that at a certain point, you are fully aware of the mistakes you both have made and are willing to take the correct steps to work things out.

One of the first steps you have to take is to replace your poisonous thinking with reality. You will need to imbibe some truths that shape reality in a more positive and accurate way.

Truth 1: You are not bad, a failure or a victim.

It's so tempting to wallow in self-pity during a crisis. It's also tempting to beat yourself up for failing, maybe even telling yourself, "There I go again..."

You and your partner may have made mistakes along the way, but that doesn't mean you are a bad person or that there's something wrong with you. Your imperfections make you human. Accept your imperfections and your humanity.

Moreover, you are not a victim. When you encourage people to feel sorry for you, they may feel pity but they don't feel respect. You want support to help you through this crisis, not sympathy.

If you want your partner back, you need to ensure that they come back because they love you, which means you need to be the best and strongest person you can be.

You are capable of asserting yourself, winning back your personal power and taking the initiative to do something about your situation.

Start accepting yourself and the decisions you made – flaws and all.

Truth 2: There is not just one option.

We think that there is only one way to love our partner, one way to fix a relationship in crisis, and one way to be loved back.

On the contrary, reality points out that there are so many options in life. There are also many forms that relationships take. In a room with 10 people are 10 different approaches, experiences, perspectives and capacities to decide.

If you feel trapped in your idea that there is only one way to go, you are limiting your options. Start rethinking.

Truth 3: Your relationship is in crisis for a reason, it did not come out of nowhere.

Like I previously mentioned, this crisis happened for a reason. It was built by negative experiences, unmet needs and even false expectations.

Your relationship did not get to this point overnight. There was already something there.

It's time to identify and acknowledge what has been growing in your relationship. Can you pinpoint when it first started and what this crisis has been feeding on?

Truth 4: It's not a matter of fault-finding but of being accountable.

While it is tempting to blame your partner, instead of finding fault, accept that both of you are accountable for the state your relationship is in.

You may not have control over what others do to you, but you have complete control over how you react to others.

You have more control over your life than you think... how have your actions and reactions contributed to the standoff you face now?

Truth 5: Ask not how you have failed but what you are being invited to learn from this experience.

Our experiences teach us something about ourselves and about life. This crisis is no different. Instead of focusing on feelings of failure, ask yourself what this experience is trying to teach you.

I like to think of crisis the way the Japanese do. Crisis in Japanese uses the same word as "opportunity".

Think of this crisis as an opportunity to improve your life, to undergo self-transformation. What you have to look forward to, in spite of difficulty is a brighter outlook and better life.

As adults, and as a couple, every day affords us the opportunity to learn something more about ourselves, about each other, our humanity, and what it takes to show and receive love and support. No matter how old you may be, or how long you have been together as a couple, you will always be able to find something new to learn.

The life lesson you are being called to learn in this instance may be a difficult one, but equally, the lesson is a powerful one. Will you take the opportunity to learn and grow... or not?

Step 1: Dealing With the Aftermath

It's been me and my lover, partner, sweetheart – whatever you may call him – for 15 years. We're married in every sense of the word except on paper.

That's why when he said he's done, I couldn't believe it. We're now in our late forties, after all.

I'm slowly going crazy missing him. I know that I just let him walk out the door but what could I have done? Fighting, arguing, begging, I know these don't work with him. What now?

Anneliese

Wellington, New Zealand

What to (not) Do First

Okay, it's done. They've walked out the door. Now what?

Well, I assume that somewhere from your bedroom to the front door, you've tried to do what you can, as you know how.

Did you beg? Cry? Plead? Promise to do better?

Or

Did you rant, rave, accuse, scream and blame?

Whatever you did, it didn't deliver the result you wanted – but while there was something lacking in the execution, I can't tell you that your partner left because of those actions.

Like we mentioned in the previous section, your partner left because of a much deeper reason or reasons. This has been building up for a while. However, the question now is not what happened previously, at least not yet (we will get to that later). The question is, what will you do now?

I need to give you some immediate ground rules on what to do and what not to do:

1. Don't call, beg, contact, run after your partner.

I can't repeat this enough. Now's not the time to fight fire with fire, so to speak – because you'll just get caught in the backdraft.

Separations are painful and emotive situations, and emotions may be running so high right now that more emotion will not help. If your partner has walked out the door, STOP, take a step back and BREATHE.

Don't call. Don't plan on secretly walking by their place or office just because "you were in the neighborhood."

That also goes for secret gifts and emails. Simply PAUSE.

One thing you can do, though, is to understand that you're not the only one going through a tough time. Unless they are the really callous type with no emotions and no conscience that you have no business running after, all things being equal, I'm sure they're also going through their own emotional crisis.

There is plenty to be said and done in the coming weeks and months, but it's important to know that both of you must be in a place where the messages and discussion can both be given and received in a calm and clear manner.

2. Don't do anything drastic.

Don't drown your sorrows in drink, drugs or sex. While any of these may provide a welcome distraction or escape from your life, the consequences may make your relationship recovery even more difficult. Consider carefully how each of your actions is bringing you closer to your goal of saving your relationship. Is today a step forward or a step back?

Immersing yourself in a victim mentality can have dramatic consequences, especially in what some people will resort to in order to get the attention of the one they love. Self harm is one of these, which ranges from binge eating, to hunger strikes, to drug overdosing, cutting or scarring, or letting depression take over.

Suicide, threatening suicide, or threatening to harm yourself is NOT AN OPTION.

Contrary to belief, it won't bring your partner back. More than anything, it will push them further away.

The consequence of doing any of the above is simply this: losing your self respect in more ways than one. And, frankly, losing your self respect is not the best way to get your partner back.

On the contrary, it is the worst way to get your partner back since what you are getting is someone who has been guilted, forced or manipulated into coming back.

They may be back, but it's not real. It's not love. It's guilt. And as soon as they stop feeling guilt, there's a good chance it will be replaced with anger or resentment.

In spite of how it may feel right now, it's not the end of the world.

The song from Les Miserables, "On My Own" says *"...Without me his world will go on turning."* It captures the essence of the reality of a breakup. Without them, your world will go on turning as will theirs. It may be difficult but it's not the end.

If you want them back, encourage them to come back because they want to, and because they love you. If they come back for the right reasons, your relationship rescue will succeed.

Grieving

One thing you do have to work on is the initial grief.

Grief is good for us in many ways. While the initial shock of grief is traumatic, it helps us understand what someone means to us. It shows us that we love and that we are acutely human. It's also part and parcel of loss and, if handled well, allows us to make it to the other side – Acceptance.

On the other hand, wallowing in grief and letting it consume you is definitely not the way to go. How do you manage the initial grief then?

Here are some tips:

Tip 1: Yes, you are in pain.

In any situation of loss – whether real death or the "death" of a relationship, in this case, separation, we go through grief. What you are feeling in this moment is both normal and human. But what we need to appreciate is that grief comes in stages. While they may happen in part, as a whole or not necessarily in order, these stages are part and parcel of the human experience of loss. Experts talk about Five Stages of Grief:

- a) Denial
At first, we deny that this is happening to us. Some usual internal scripts: Why me?
This can't be happening to me!
- b) Anger
You find yourself angry at your partner for hurting you, or at the world/God/the Universe, for letting it happen. You may also be feeling angry with yourself – asking how you could have let this happen!
- c) Bargaining
Do you find yourself bargaining with God, yourself, even your partner (even if they're not around)? If my partner comes back I will..... be better, nicer, sweeter, more understanding, and more loving.
- d) Depression.
A sense of hopelessness or despair follows, especially when after all the anger, pain and bargaining, things are still not going your way.
- e) Acceptance.
The final stage. Acceptance that the loss happened. Yes, you are separated from your partner. You may still be sad about it but generally, you've come to acknowledge that it is really happening. Now it's time to look forward, not back.

Yes, you are in pain. And yes, you will go through these stages. But if there's one thing that the experts are telling you it's that:

1. You are not alone.
2. There is information out there to assist you in these stages.
3. Acknowledging that you are in pain and that you will go through these stages (whether in part or as a whole) is the first step to healing.

I would suspect that you are in one of the first four stages of grief right now. Look to the 5th stage. Accept that this is happening to you. And that rather than depressing you even further, your acceptance signifies an opportunity to move forward.

Tip 2: This too shall pass.

In the movie "My Best Friend's Wedding", Julia Roberts' character was in so much pain after finding out that her best friend, whom she had come to love romantically, was in love with someone else. Crushed by the pain, she breaks down in a hotel hallway. An astute bellhop who happened to pass by says to her "This too shall pass."

Whatever it is you are feeling now, know that it is temporary. It will pass and some day, you will be able to look back on this moment as a turning point in your life. It may not seem like it right now, but in time love will light your life again – whether it is with your partner or not.

Tell yourself that feelings are temporary. And they don't have to consume you. What's more important is what you do with those feelings after.

Tip 3: You're the most important person in your life right now.

You really are. Your partner leaving does not change the fact that you are your own person. If you have not felt that for a while, now's the time to put things in perspective.

Your healing, your wisdom, your personal growth and your sense of empowerment are what's important now.

You may want to set aside some of this time to focus on activities that give you joy and feed your soul. Even in times of difficulty, there are so many things going on around you that can enrich your life and remind you of the gift of your humanity. Spend some time considering what you need to do to make you smile again. You may want to start painting, crafts, a hobby, or simply spend time relaxing with a book, a favorite album, or a movie. Nurture yourself by doing things that help you relax, rest, and refocus.

Tell yourself this: you cannot give what you don't have. If you don't have real happiness, real healing, wisdom that breeds self-love and real love, you can't expect to give it to your partner. Now is your chance to recharge your batteries and replenish what the separation has taken from you: your sense of self.

This is why, if there's anyone to focus on right now, it's YOU.

On the other hand, there is no one responsible for your own happiness and growth except you. You may think that the relationship defined you and made you happy. Or that your partner was your source of happiness. True growth as a person happens when you realize that the only person who has the power to make you happy is YOU.

But even if you have invested so much dependence on your partner and your relationship, where did that leave you?

You cannot control your partner but you can still control yourself. And from now on, there is no one who will master your own future but you. Your partner may add to your feelings of happiness and fulfillment, but they are by no means the sole source of your happiness.

Tip 4: You have other things in your life that need your attention.

When was the last time you were a good friend, sibling, parent, or colleague? When was the last time you took care of your health, your home, your kids, and your connections with other people?

One of the first things to take a backseat in a relationship crisis is your connections to friends and family. This may be partly due to stress and tiredness that the separation is having on you, but it also may be influenced by embarrassment at what people will think of you when they know your relationship is in trouble. Others will tell you it doesn't matter what other people think, but in reality we place great weight on the judgments and acceptance of our peers, especially those close to us. It becomes a matter of pride that you avoid people and the conversations about your failing relationship.

I won't tell you it's easy, and I won't tell you not to be embarrassed. Your feelings are valid and will happen regardless of what you read in this book. But what I will tell you is that this journey is easier when you have the support of those who love you.

The one thing we overlook when we withdraw socially is that our friends and family are our lifeline to reality. They may be the one good thing in your life right now, and you may need their love and support to recharge your spirit.

Think about them. They not only make your life whole, they make you who you are – all of you. And they make you realize that you are not just defined by your relationship. They won't condemn you. They are the ones who will love you and support you, and offer you encouragement in your lowest and darkest moments. You need your friends.

One thing they also give is a welcome DISTRACTION from the pain. Spending time with friends, outside of the frustration, pain, and trivialities of your relationship, is what you need right now. It's okay to distract yourself from the grief. That's part of the healing.

Dealing with the aftermath of your separation is immediate and necessary. And you may have discovered what we suggest here is contrary to what every instinct is telling you.

Remember, the most important thing right now is dealing with and processing the feelings of pain and stages of grief and focusing on yourself.

Dealing with your partner will come in its own due time. However, how can you even begin the process of getting your partner back if you are defeated, depressed and panicking?

Take a deep breath. Get in control of your emotions. Think happy. Think about something that makes you smile. Think about something that makes you laugh. Think about all the good things in your life that you are thankful for.

If only for a moment, allow yourself to be immersed in something that makes you smile or laugh.

It's the only way to gain a clear enough head for what you have to do next.

Here's an exercise to help you get things into perspective.

My Personal Gifts

Directions: On a sheet of paper, make two columns, A & B. Leave a blank space above both columns, like space for a title.

In column A, write down people, places, things that you are thankful for, that make you happy.

In column B, write down your personal qualities, achievements and plans that make you feel good about yourself. Write down the nice things you recall friends and family saying about you. If you have any friends who would like to take part in this exercise, invite them to share their acclamations about you.

Now, after doing both lists, write this in big, bold letters on top of your paper.

"These are my PERSONAL GIFTS. I thank MY LIFE that I have them.."

Ask yourself, how do you feel after doing this exercise?

Step 2: Getting It Together

I was with my ex boyfriend for ten years, ever since I was 15 (and he was 20). He is my first boyfriend and we broke up in February of this year. Before we broke up we had some issues that I thought were minor and would never break our relationship. I was applying to dental school and was only accepted at an out of state school, so he told me that I could go if I wanted to but that he would not go with me and that our relationship would not survive being away from each other for 4 years. So i decided to reject the school offer and got a master degree to help get into the dental school that I wanted to go to which happened to be 30 minutes away from my house. It was a perfect plan. But now my parents hated him because they thought that my future would be compromised and that he was always going to be an obstacle in my way.

When he broke up with me he told me that it was because of my parents and because of my school, that I was going to end up going to another state because I would never get into the one that was 30 minutes away from my house. At this time in my life, everything just crashed, my world, my illusions, my dreams of my prince charming were all broken into pieces. I felt like if i was drowning in the middle of the ocean and I didn't even have the strength to swim up for air. This was the darkest times of my life. A couple of months later I was accepted in the school that I wanted, 30 minutes away from my house, but my problem is that even to this day, 8 months after that, he continues to call me, to tell me that he loves me but that he just can't be with me right now. He doesn't want to tell me the truth because he doesn't want to hurt me, but he tells me that he will never forget me, that he dreams with me a lot, that he "adores" me, that I am special. I don't understand him, I really love him, I am absolutely in love with him even after everything that has happened. When I think about my future, it is him who I see as my husband and the father of my children. I want him. But sometimes I think I should hate him but it just doesn't come out of my heart to hate him. Can you tell me if I am doing things wrong, if there's something I could do to make him come back to me sooner. This is my first breakup, I don't want to do something wrong.

Ayesha
Malaysia

My answer:

“Having a 20 year old boyfriend when you were 15 is a serious matter. You were quite young and, honestly, you were still growing into your own sense of self, your boundaries and sense of self-direction. A 20 year old will have more of an advantage over you in terms of self-direction, status in life and options for the future.

In such a relationship, the power dynamic shifts heavily toward the older person while you, as the younger one, will come to depend heavily on him.

Ayesha, I know it's hard but you have to start thinking clearly and you have to start thinking about what is healthy for you. This man never asked you what you wanted - for yourself and for your relationship. Do you think this is fair to you?

I know you feel so strongly for him, Ayesha, and you cannot be faulted for that. What I would like to suggest is to take things one day at a time and not be so focused on him. Instead, focus on yourself and your future. Live your own life, achieve your own dreams and set your own boundaries. Be a woman on your own terms and not because of someone else's expectations of you - especially not of your ex.

You do not have to place all your hopes on this one person. He is a part of your life, but it's wise not to build your life around any man. Place your hope in yourself and your future. If he truly loves you, he will love you as an equal, not as someone he can control or who gives up their dreams for him.

Consider the fact that you have both grown. You have your own life and dreams to achieve now, and he has the choice to join you on the journey or not. He may come back to you when you are both ready to have a mature relationship, but that must be his choice as well as yours.

Ayesha, go study. Live life. Meet new friends. Become the woman who you are supposed to be - someone who is strong enough on her own. You cannot control how he loves you, but you can control how you react to him. If he is unable to offer you the love and commitment you want from a man, your reactions can help determine if this relationship is going to go forwards or come to its natural end.

But if there is one thing you take from this all it's that love is possible, either in rebuilding a relationship with this man or with a man you have yet to meet. Be the best person you can be. It is this woman who will attract life and love to her - in the best way possible.

Rediscovering your personal power

Ayesha's story may be different from what you are going through but it does show us one glaring reality. Sometimes, in a relationship, we tend to lose ourselves. We come to depend so much on our partner for happiness and love that we forget there is another person in the equation: ME.

On the other hand, Ayesha's story tells us that she still has so much to offer life and the only way she can begin taking control of her situation is to find her own personal power.

In your own crisis, ask yourself, have you lost yourself in the relationship? Have you set aside your plans, hopes, and dreams just to make your partner happy?

Or, has crisis sapped your strength to go on?

Rediscovering your personal power entails two things:

- 1.) Pointing the switch in your head to one that says "I MATTER" rather than "My partner matters.
- 2.) Living what you have acknowledged for yourself. Concept and execution. Core principle and behavior. Cause and effect.

In gaining personal empowerment, you are taking responsibility for your own happiness and well-being. You make the day to day choices that are good for you and each day you discover that you are that beautiful and strong person you have always wanted to be. The one who, in the long run, will build relationships that are healthy and mutually fulfilling.

What If I've Made the Mistakes?

It can happen that, in this crisis, you have had a big role to play. Perhaps you were the one who cheated on your partner. Perhaps you were the one who screamed, railed, blamed and shouted. Perhaps you've withheld intimacy or vulnerability from your partner, driving them away.

In your case, rediscovering your personal power means accepting that you don't have to behave this way anymore. You can take control of your emotions and behaviors, making healthy decisions rather than bad ones.

Success starts with a powerful positive mindset. You are more than your poor decisions.

You are a person with the intelligence, will, and positive qualities that can see this through.

Tell yourself you are a good person and your poor decisions are not an indication contrary to that fact.

Tapping into your personal power

When was the last time you have appreciated yourself for who you are and not for who you wish you were in light of your relationship crisis?

Meaning, I know the temptation is great to beat yourself up for the things you thought were not able to give your partner. Moreover, I realize that the pull to dwell on your mistakes does get you down.

But, like we always say in this book, now you've got to pull yourself together and get past that. Unfortunately, sometimes, you really don't know how.

What are the things you can do to recover your personal power? There are two main things you can do.

A.) Make PHYSICAL CHANGES.

Maybe your outside is a reflection of your insides – your down, depressed and hysterical so you don't find time to groom, you allow dark bags under your eyes and you have not bothered to wash and iron your clothes. Making physical changes is the first step you can take to grab hold of yourself. Even if you feel that your outside won't match the inside, it's all right. Just make the effort. Here are some simple ways to start.

1. Update your appearance.

Have you been stuck in a style rut? Take the time to go to the salon and get a new haircut, a facial, a massage, or if you are a girl, have your makeup and nails done. Do some shopping to update your wardrobe.

Don't underestimate the effect that making yourself look good on the outside has on your self-esteem. And it's also a chance for someone to take care of you and pamper you for a change.

2. Get exercise.

People who exercise feel better most of the time because of two things: their sense of well-being and the endorphins flooding their system. Exercise – running, martial arts, swimming, etc, - these are great to take up right now. They will help you focus on other things and are also good for your body too!

3. Do something you've always wanted to do.

Ever wanted to bungee jump? Dance? Take a night class? Travel? Now's the time.

Have you put aside these things because life took over? Or have you been afraid?

Doing something you've always wanted to do but never got around to breaks the monotony of grief and pain. Learning something new teaches you valuable lessons about your personal competence, self-discipline and even knowing that you are good at something.

They also help you realize that, hey, yes you CAN do this – you have the strength, power and courage to just go ahead and face your fears. This teaches you that no matter what, you are brave enough to pick yourself up again. And courage is something you will need in the days ahead, especially when you begin the process of getting your partner to come back.

B.) Making EMOTIONAL changes.

Physical changes are a good start and can even feed your emotional health. But, if there's anything you discovered in this crisis it's that you have believed certain things and behaved in certain ways that you and your partner really did not like.

Rediscovering your personal power also involves delving into your personal issues – why you believe and behave the way you do – and finally getting the healing you need, if necessary.

Dealing with Anger

Of course you're angry. So is your partner. And you can see why it's not a good thing to confront your partner now – when you may still do or say things you can regret.

Nonetheless, dealing with anger won't be easy. You have a lot of things to contend with: your anger towards your partner, your anger towards your self, and your anger at life in general for allowing this to happen to you.

One of the things that can help diffuse the anger is TIME APART. Since your partner are spending time apart, that's something you have a lot of right now. See this time as an opportunity for both of you to cool down.

You can also RELAX – in various ways. Go for long walks, listen to music, take a short break away on your own, go to the spa, take up yoga, enjoy the physical activities you have been doing. As you go about these activities, pay attention to how each one helps relieve your pain and anger.

Moreover, STOP STRUGGLING. The image of fighting against the current comes to mind. Struggling against the current of anger and pain might just make you drown in them. Take from the example of the Zen masters: accept and let your anger flow through you. Channel it into useful things.

Soulfulness

Soulfulness is your capacity to be self-aware, humble, open, wise, learned and capable of taking the initiative. It is part and parcel of personal empowerment because it IS in being soulful that you learn to connect with yourself and the source of your power.

Soulfulness means that in the very core of you, you are the most human, most self-aware and most compassionate you can be. Only it's been buried under pain, false beliefs, painful family experiences and poor personal values.

The goal then is to work on being soulful.

How can you go about this?

1. Inform yourself. There are numerous books, materials, seminars and classes that deal with healing your personal issues. Some examples are "Healing the Inner Child" seminars or materials that cover "Repairing the Family Dynamic." If you are looking for books to help you out, authors to look out for include M. Scott Peck, Dr. Wayne Dyer, Elisabeth Kubler-Ross, David Kessler, Ariel and Shya Kane, and many others.
2. Get help. If you feel that your personal issues are too heavy for you to work out on your own, Get HELP. See a counselor, attend a support group, talk to your friends, or consult a spiritual elder. Do this consistently and with special attention to learning more about yourself and taking charge of your emotional health.

Step 3: Evaluation

Only after you've stepped back, taken hold of the pain and begun to make physical and emotional changes can you actually say that you have enough strength and insight to now evaluate the relationship.

Like we always say, your separation happened for a reason and that reason is the first thing you have to work out.

To achieve this, you first have to do some thinking and soul-searching.

Evaluating What Happened

Crisis Evaluation Questionnaire

Directions: Answer the following as truthfully as you can.

1. I noticed things begin to change when
_____.
2. Our relationship prior to this was
_____.
3. In the _____ years we've been together, my partner and I repetitively argued because of
_____.
4. I think that the main issue why we separated is
_____.
5. Knowing what I know now about myself, I contributed to this crisis by
_____.

6. My partner needed me to be _____.

7. I needed my partner to be _____.

Now take a look at your answers and dig deeper by asking yourself these questions:

What were the main issues or behaviors that me and my partner kept bringing up in our arguments? How have they affected our relationship?

What is your relationship crisis telling you about yourself? Your partner?

What is your relationship crisis saying about the quality of your relationship before this?

In general, what are the things you are learning about relationships and how to love?

Is Reconciliation an Option

At this point, you really have to ask yourself whether reconciliation is still an option for you.

What is it that you want? What does your partner want? What negotiating needs to take place in order to facilitate a reconciliation?

Start thinking clearly.

One of the initial realities you will encounter is feelings of DOUBT. Ask yourself why you doubt whether you and your partner will get back together. Are your fears valid?

On the other hand, another feeling you may encounter is over confidence, especially if there are children involved or when authority figures outside your relationship are putting pressure on you to stay together.

If you're realistic about it, working things out is a great option. Couples are more efficient than singles, both in terms of use of resources and finances. It's cheaper to keep a couple than two singles. But for some couples, even with hard work and counseling, they find they end up back in the same situation time after time.

Imagine that you and your partner do reconcile. Do you think that things will succeed if

your attitudes and behavior go on as they are? If not, what needs to change?

How about imagining that you and your partner are able to reach a compromise? Would you really be willing to forgive and forget the issues that caused you to separate in the first place?

This next exercise will help you put your thinking process in writing.

Relationship Mind Map

Directions: You need two sheets of paper.

On the first sheet, put down in the center of the page “Good Things About Our Relationship”. Using your train of thought, write down keywords that describe the positive things about your relationship as they come to you.

Here’s a sample:



Fill up the page as much as you can. Some keywords to help you: “Our weekly dates”, “favorite candy”, “the way they smile”, “the hugs they give”, etc. Don’t censor yourself or think about your grammar, just keep writing.

Now on the second sheet, write down “Needs Improvement”. Do call outs of the keywords that come to you for this quality of your relationship.

Some keywords: “they leave laundry on the floor”, “blaming our parents”, “no time for each other”, “no time for dates”, “works too hard”, “always comes home grumpy”.

When you’re done, compare. What are the good points in your relationship? How do they outweigh the bad and vice versa?

Evaluating the relationship is not about finding out who's to blame. It's about seeing the relationship for what it is and determining how much your relationship is worth to you.

It also gives you an idea on the main issues that broke you up in the first place, mainly so that you can tackle them step by step when you do get back together.

You need to be objective and weigh the good with the bad to determine if reconciliation is in fact a good option for you.



Step 4: Setting Your Sights on Reconciliation

My husband told me about 5 weeks ago that he couldn't remain married anymore. Last week he moved out and we are now separated. The major issue is that he has felt rejected and unloved for years and has been suffering through this and suppressing it from me.

I have made several discoveries these last few weeks and see so much room for my own personal behaviors to improve to show more love and appreciation. I have been naive and ignorant to the true depth of it and had a bad attitude feeling like he was being needy when I have had all my personal issues to deal with. I recognize my mistakes and now I am searching for advice on how to repair this damage.

*Mary Ann
London, England*

Since you have done Steps 1 to 3, I am assuming that you are well on your way towards understanding your part in your relationship and how to begin to negotiate a reconciliation. Now, it will do you no good to be whimsical about wanting reconciliation, as if it's right there for you to grab just because you are ready. It's not. It's still going to take work – and even the possibility that it won't happen.

You have to be realistic and understand that a successful relationship is about two people.

At the same time, this is the moment to begin **TAKING ACTION**.

You have done the inner work. Now you will be asked to take certain specific steps to maximize your chances of reconciling with your partner.

Taking Responsibility

It's very easy for human beings to point the finger at others when things go wrong. Even as far back as the fabled Garden of Eden, you will read that the first thing Adam and Eve did was to blame each other when things went bad.

What we fail to realize is that our decisions are our own. The fate of our futures is our own. Same goes for our relationships.

If you've read the book "Relationship Recovery" that comes with this ebook, you have

discovered that it is vital to TAKE RESPONSIBILITY for what has happened and what will happen in your relationship. By acknowledging your part in what has taken place, you are at the same time investing in what will take place in the future recovery of your relationship.

In many cases, nothing changes in our lives or relationships because we resign ourselves to failure. We tell ourselves that he or she has always been that way and that they won't change. We tell ourselves that the obstacles are just too much to overcome. We tell ourselves that we aren't strong enough to save our marriages.

The truth is, by telling ourselves that and absolving ourselves of responsibility for the outcome, we are robbing ourselves of our personal power. You have much more influence over the outcome than you think.

Do you want to stand glibly by and watch your marriage disintegrate before your very eyes? Or do you want to empower yourself by taking responsibility for your reactions and your control over creating a positive outcome?

Owning your marriage outcome is the first step forward.

Forgiveness

We are always asked to forgive those who have done us wrong. What we fail to realize is that forgiveness is both a process and an attitude.

An attitude of forgiveness means that you are willing to release your partner from blame and instead, look towards how you can reconnect again.

It also means releasing yourself from the feelings of failure from your mistakes and unhealthy decisions. To forgive others means you also have to forgive yourself.

Forgiveness as a process means that a total feeling of forgiveness does not happen overnight. You will still feel the pain and it's unrealistic to expect otherwise.

Some people say that when you forgive, you forget. For me, I try not to use the term "forgive and forget". On the contrary, the process of forgiveness does NOT ask you to FORGET what happened – after all, how will you learn if you don't remember your experience? The forgetting part is more tied in with how you will no longer allow what happened to affect you negatively.

Attitude Adjustment

Accepting your mistakes is the first step. The second is to stop struggling to FIX the relationship but to TRANSFORM the relationship into something new. This requires being determined to adjust your attitude.

You have to commit to try to be soulful, always; to allow compassion to be tempered by self-respect; to allow giving to be borne of your empowerment; and to learn to be vulnerable, without asking for anything in return.



Step 5: Reconnecting with your Partner

My wife left me today after 15 years. I got your book and was amazed at what it did for me. We have never had any communication. We argue over everything and there has been a lot of hurt over the years. We finally talked last night and figured out our problems and know how to start fixing them, but something still was missing. It is love. She says she wants to be happy and she is ready to leave. It's not in her heart anymore. I admit I have fallen out of love as well, but something in me says don't give up. So I said that we don't know what feelings are going to come up once we are actually apart and that we need to be open to what lies ahead. I said we could possibly fall in love all over again and she agreed. We voiced our fears of leaving each other and know that we will both miss each other. We are for the first time in our lives talking!! We have been so miserable for so long the only thing we know to do is separate. I am the one who never gives up on anything, she is quite different though.

But, we have 3 kids between the ages of 14 and 3 and I don't really know how I will manage taking care of them without their mother.

How do you see this turning out? She is very adamant about leaving and I do not want to beg her to stay. I told her I support her decision. Can you offer some advice on this situation? I am completely clueless at this point.

*Brian
Toronto, Canada*

When you're separated, you discover that much of what the experts recommend – communication, spending time together, intimacy – may not be physically possible.

How then can you reconnect with your partner and pave the way to reconciliation?

The Immediate: Kids, Separation, and Obligations

If you're like millions of separated couples, you realize that there are some discussions that cannot be put off – your kids if you have them, your other obligations, and the implications of your separation or possible divorce.

Talking about these things cannot be helped. The key is HOW you talk about them. Consider topics such as access or custody of children, household finances, mortgage or rental payments, and the cost of having separate accommodation. The decision to separate can have a huge financial impact on a relationship, to the point that many can't afford to live apart even if they wanted to.

What obligations do you have to family commitments, friends, and social groups? Enabling yourself to discuss the most immediate commitments in an open and accommodating manner is the first step towards respecting each other and developing dialogue.

Any time you see your spouse and try to talk to them it's likely to be an emotionally loaded situation. The important thing is that you are able to interact calmly and rationally. Here's a few tips to help you achieve that:

Action 1: Take a deep breath and hold yourself in.

A physical expression of your self-control may be valuable right now. Take a deep breath and focus on the control you have over that breath. Imagine it as symbolizing how you want to reign yourself in.

Action 2: Focus on the issue at hand.

If you need to talk about kids, your obligations and implications of separation, then TALK ABOUT THEM. Avoid being sidetracked by emotional issues. Don't allow the conversation to drift between issues. It's imperative that you stick to the specific issues that need discussing in order to keep the conversation relevant.

Your children need both of you to be focused on their welfare. Your financial obligations need you to take charge so that there is no reason for your life to unravel just because your relationship is.

Action 3: Set goals, expectations and deadlines.

Talking about your kids and obligations means that you will have to talk about the details of your separation and how it's going to be managed. What are your day to day schedules? How do you manage visiting the children? What about your expenses, pets, the living arrangements, house payments, and contact times? These things really have to be ironed out so you both know what to expect, which then contributes to at least relieving some of the stress of uncertainty and the additional burden of the other obligations from your relationship. At the very least, you know that these things are clear and you have something to go back on when they are not followed.

Action 4: Do unto others what you would have them do unto you.

It's a golden rule and one that we are all reminded of from time to time. It is never more appropriate than now, in your crisis situation. If you want your partner to be pleasant and respectful to you, then you have to start through your actions toward them. Even if your partner may be really angry right now and that anger spills over during your discussions, go back to Action 1 and remember the Golden Rule.

Better to end the discussion than let it degenerate into a slanging match. Besides, a calm, pleasant person is infinitely easier to talk to and easier to love. Even if you have no control over your partner, you can set the standard for communication between you.

Contact with Your Partner: In More Ways Than One

Separating from someone you have had a long term commitment with is quite different from simply breaking up with a boyfriend or girlfriend.

You and your partner have invested time, effort, love, family, friends, finances, and commitment in this relationship. It gets doubly complicated if you are married with children.

In a way, you are in some sort of limbo. You are tied to this person but they are not home with you. Your life is still intertwined and yet on the verge of unraveling.

The situation does not get any better with the presence of a third party.

What if communication is difficult?

Keeping communication lines open can be quite difficult in cases of anger or infidelity. The physical separation doesn't make it any easier either. How then can you initiate contact and keep communication lines open?

Formal and Casual Situations

If you have formal legal discussions pending, these can be opportunities for you to show that you are approachable and easy to talk to. Just because there are legal proceedings taking place doesn't mean the standard of communication has to degenerate. In fact, it's easier and cheaper for both of you to keep arrangements as amicable as possible and cut down on legal bills. These discussions then become natural take off points to invite your partner to another talk, maybe a coffee or a shared meal together to discuss additional items.

If you have children or pets, it may be likely that you have regular contact with one another through visitation rights. Even in a tense situation, it's important to make each interaction

as positive as possible, even if only for a few minutes at a time. If you have children, it's important that you can set an example to them and show them that you are capable of communicating as parents in a calm and conciliatory manner. Times like these may be valuable opportunities to have very informal discussions about any other issues that come up. Ultimately you are going to be in contact with one another through your children or pets anyway, so you have a choice: you can either make the interaction an amicable or a negative experience. Trust me, it's easier for all parties if you can keep it civil.

There are also times where you bump into your partner outside – whether alone or with someone else.

In these situations your emotional response may be a little challenging, but it's important to keep your wits about you. Think of them less as the lover you lost, and more as the friend you still have. Even if your relationship feels vastly different to what it used to be, you still know the most intimate details about each other, their hopes, dreams and aspirations. When you think of your partner in that way, it's no longer scary. Acknowledge him or her like you might do a friend and don't reflect on it too much. It's a few moments of your life, no big deal. The important thing to always remember is that your aim is to come away from every interaction having conducted yourself in a manner you hopefully will not later regret.

In these casual situations, your objective is to show that YOU ARE NOT A THREAT.

The inner work and empowerment you have done for yourself should also pay off. Allow what positive things you are going through to show on the outside and downplay the negative.

Scheduling Dialogue

When the emotions have been given a chance to cool, you are both going to have questions you would both like answered. Where you feel it's possible, you can also try scheduling a dialogue with your partner for the purposes of really discussing your relationship. If things have cooled down sufficiently, you can try to invite your partner out. Be clear in your purpose. Maybe your invitation should go something like:

"Hi. I would be interested in meeting up with you to have a talk about us. I know that we still have a lot of things to talk about regarding our relationship and a lot of questions that I imagine each of us have for each other. I was hoping we can meet so we can get some form of closure on some of our issues or at least to talk ways to gain meaning or move forward from what each of us have experienced. You are not obligated in any way to meet with me but I was hoping you would be open to it."

Make it clear that this talk is not to consider getting back together, just to clear the air and let go of some of the emotion and fear you have of one another.

If you are given the opportunity to have more talks with your partner, our book "Relationship Recovery" outlines a step-by-step method on how and what to talk about.



Step 6: The Long Term: The Future of Your Relationship

Now that you and your partner are talking, you must be feeling some relief. Appreciate every opportunity that comes your way in terms of being with your partner.

From here on, tread lightly and work on providing an environment that maximizes trust and mutual respect. Anything you can do to make each interaction as positive as possible really increases your chances of reconciliation.

What are some positive attitudes you can take on for the long term?

Focus on The Friendship

Often, we think that marriage or commitment is the only relationship we can have with our partner. What we forget is that we are friends first and foremost.

A solid friendship is the foundation in any relationship. If you want your partner back, you have to be their friend first.

And by friend, there are certain expectations:

- Acceptance
- Honesty
- Openness
- Forgiveness
- Unconditional Respectful
- Trust
- Lack of Pressure

All these qualities make a great friendship. And, they make a good start for your process of reconciling with your partner.

As in any friendship, unconditional acceptance is key – even if you don't understand or agree with their feelings or opinions on your marital issues, it's vital to be able to respect their right to an opinion. In time, as you develop greater ways to communicate and understand one another, you may understand the meaning behind your partner's actions. Just because you may not be able to see the way right now does not mean that you will never understand them.

The challenge for you is to always keep your mind and your heart open to learning something new about each other. As you learn to relax and trust each other again, the path forward will become clearer. Central to this is the ability to show your partner that what's past is past and that every day is a new start.

Be Realistic.

I have to give you this pointer right here, after the one above. The reason is that sometimes, friendship with a former partner is all we'll end up with.

Now, that doesn't have to be met with despair or frustration. In fact, if you shift your perspective, ultimately being friends with your partner may be the best relationship that you will have.

Whether that friendship could one day turn back into love, that's another story. The important thing is at a certain point, you were both in the same place – and happy.

Value that. Learn to shift your expectation. Do you just have one option in your relationship with your partner? Or do you have a multitude?

Moreover, being realistic also demands that you always take things with a grain of salt. Hope for the best but be prepared for the worst. In many ways, facing the fear of the one thing you are most scared of is the first step to freeing yourself of the pain and negativity around your situation.

Consider the thing you fear most. Spend some time thinking about it, and make a mental list of the positive aspects of it. If it's a fear of being alone, remind yourself that you always have your friends and family. If it's the fear of losing your home, realize that you will always be able to buy or rent another. No matter what your greatest fear is, remind yourself that many people in life will face worse. And they will survive. Even if the worst happens, you will survive it, and you will be able to make something good out of it.

If you face your fear of losing this relationship, you have nothing to lose. Any positive step you take from that moment is taking you closer to achieving your goal of rescuing your relationship. By letting your fear go, you can focus on doing what you need to do most of all: love your partner.

What's vital is that you can see reality quite clearly and are always prepared to act accordingly and appropriately.

One Day at a Time

Your idea of reconciling with your partner may not be what they have in mind right now. If such is the case, then don't push it. There is often the greatest temptation to rush through the recovery process and make all the problems go away, But in your haste to fix what's wrong in the relationship, you don't give enough time to duly consider everything that needs to be learnt. It may take time, but the best lessons in life are the ones you take the time to learn. Give each other space and always try to build a healthy foundation of friendship, trust, and respect, rather than pressuring your partner to love you again.

Take it one step at a time, one day at a time. Pick up on your partner's cues rather than controlling circumstances to go your way.

The maxim "Time heals all wounds" is something you should take to heart.

Soup Up Your Skills

Just because you think that there's hope now doesn't mean you are able to relax and rest easy on your achievements. Continue to learn, study, and be self-aware. In fact, in good times or bad, there is always scope to learn something new about love, relationships, and how to make yours better than ever. The most successful relationships are those that never stop looking for ways to learn. Pick up healthy life skills along the way – like effective communication, learning and understanding love languages, keys to developing and fostering self confidence, short-term and long-term life planning, date nights and regular vacations or weekends away to spice up your routine, or better parenting.

There are a number of different facets of your life and relationship that would benefit from extra focus and attention. Call it your commitment to continual self-improvement! Challenge yourself to learn something new each week or month and put it into practice.

Be Content.

Be the kind of person that your partner would quite obviously be better off with. It has nothing to do with your partner's guilt but with your own capacity for happiness that draws them back to you.

This also means that you behave the way you feel. You are happy and full of life. You are grateful for the gifts your life has offered you, instead of always looking over your shoulder wanting more. You are respectful of others' happiness. You infect those around you with trust and happiness. And you don't let your insecurities get the better of you and pester your partner on the phone or through email. You just let them be and allow them the space they need.

You accept your partner for who they are and not who you want them to be.

It's less about convincing your partner that you have changed and more about showing them by example. The calm and happiness you radiate towards others is central to your ability to bring your partner back to you.

You are a fun, happy person who has a lot of things going for themselves, one who shows that they are self-reliant and empowered, who has friends, a social life and a bright outlook – these are attractive to others, including your partner.

Not to mention that it will help your partner realize that the burden to make you happy is not on them.

Be Proactive.

Being a person who is self-aware and self-reliant also means that you have the capacity to take the initiative. If you want a loving and fulfilling relationship, you understand that you are the person that can make that happen.

You lead by example rather than waiting for your partner to make the first move.

Be Loving.

Withholding your love is a sure way NOT to get your love back. Usually though, what we are most afraid of is falling flat on our face when we show our partner that we are vulnerable to him or her.

An empowered person realizes that to love is a decision – and appreciates that the capacity to MAKE that decision is part and parcel of this newfound power. Even if in the end, there are no guarantees. Real love is realizing that the benefit of loving your partner is greater than the risk of being hurt. That's what makes your connection so powerful.

What you don't want is a life full of regrets. Stopping yourself from simply loving someone, even if it doesn't work out, may be one of your greatest regrets.

Be Consistent.

Finally, just because you started on transforming yourself and your relationship, it doesn't mean that that's all there is to it.

Consistency is key. Every day your mission is clear: to love your partner. Not only are your priorities and goals clear in your own mind, they are clear to your partner.

No more guesswork. No more misunderstandings. You are clear about what you feel and you communicate this to the one you love. And in doing so you create an environment of trust and reciprocity, where your loved one can love you in return.

A Final Word

Just because you've read this book doesn't mean that your crisis will go away tomorrow. On the contrary, it could very well still be there – giving you pain and grief.

Don't allow yourself to lose the opportunity to learn from this book, and all the other books we offer at www.meetyoursweet.com and www.savemymarriagetoday.com.

The books there work cohesively with this one to give you the tools necessary to build your relationship, gain self-reliance and pull your relationship from the brink of crisis.

We hope that our materials always give you the quality insights and information you need to learn and grow in love, whatever your relationship situation is right now.

Best of luck,

Rachel Rider

Author of Relationship Recovery

Meet Your Sweet.com

