

# DEFINING THE RELATIONSHIP

## Lesson 11

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### Workbook Assignment

*When It's Over*

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### Overview

Ending a relationship can be a relief or a painful experience, depending on the amount of emotional investment of the partners. Following specific guidelines for ending a dating relationship may make the break up easier.

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### Objectives

- ◆ Participants will analyze three components of breaking up.
  - ◆ Participants will apply relationship principles to their own experiences.
  - ◆ Participants will discuss positive and negative aspects of ending a relationship.
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### Vocabulary

adaptations

intentions

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### Key Concepts

- Breaking up with someone may be the best choice.
  - Take the time to make the right decision regarding the relationship.
  - Once the decision is made, it should be carried out.
  - Feelings will be intense after the break up.
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### Preparation for Lesson

Instructor will need:

- Worksheet *When It's Over*
  - Situations for Lesson 11 (Instructor Manual page 46)
  - Overhead transparency **Breaking Up**
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### Teaching the Lesson

Introduce the lesson by asking the class members if any of them have experienced the break up of a good friendship or dating relationship. Ask them to identify feelings they had at the time the relationship ended. Responses will vary but will usually include

relief, anger, sadness, confusion, etc. Tell them that breaking up with someone is not easy but there are things you can do to make it less painful.

- Using the overhead transparency **Breaking Up**, discuss the reasons why relationships end and information provided regarding steps to ease the difficulty of the situation.
- Using the situation descriptions for Lesson 11 provided in the instructors manual, read each of the situations to the class members and discuss how the situations could be handled in a way that would cause the least amount of distress for the couple. Allow 15-20 minutes for discussion.
- Assign worksheet *When It's Over* for individual student completion.

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## LECTURE NOTES:

There is no point in prolonging a dating relationship that has effectively stopped growing. When the decision is made mutually to end a relationship it is easier for the individuals to step away. A break up is more difficult when the relationship has been ongoing for some time, or when one of the partners wants to end the relationship and the other one does not.

The decision to break up with someone must be made carefully. Factors to consider before making a final break are: is this really what is desired and how should it be carried out? If an individual believes that breaking up is the best choice, he/she should decide on a plan of action that shows respect and caring for both partners.

### Take Control of the Situation:

It is always a good idea to plan a time and place for the discussion to occur regarding a break. Avoidance of the subject, walking away, hoping the partner will "figure it out", or breaking up in the heat of an emotional reaction, are generally not the best methods to use when ending a relationship. If the decision to break up has been made by one of the partners, it is helpful for the other partner to be told the reasons why. They may not agree with the reasons, but at least they have had an opportunity to hear and address them. Feelings surrounding the break up of a dating relationship may be intense. There is added stress on the person who wants to end the relationship. He/she may feel guilty about hurting the other person and back down from the decision.

### **Make the Break Final:**

Once the decision has been made to end the relationship, it should be carried out soon. It is usually best when the break up is truly final. Telling a partner that the relationship can continue but on a different basis, does not accomplish the intended goal. The partner may harbor hopes that the relationship will revive and then be disappointed later on when it does not. Staying tied to a relationship that has ended does not allow either of the partners the space or freedom to start over. It is easy to fall back into the old relationship and never move forward.

### **Handle Your Emotions:**

There is always a period of adjustment for both partners after a relationship has ended. This is especially true when one of the partners did not support the decision. Typical feelings associated with a break up are: emptiness, guilt, disappointment, and sadness. Over time, the feelings become less intense. Both partners will have to establish new patterns of interaction with others and get used to being unattached again. It is best to be sure that one has successfully worked through the feelings from a previous relationship before entering into another one.

### SITUATION 3

Michael and Jennifer began dating three weeks ago. Michael's parents just found out that he is seeing Jennifer, and do not approve. They are demanding that he end the relationship because they feel that Jennifer is keeping him from doing his best in school.

How should Michael resolve this conflict?

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# WHEN IT'S OVER



The purpose of dating is to gain relationship experience. Throughout life we will meet people with whom we get along well and others whose personalities, habits, or interests don't blend with ours. A relationship that is not fulfilling or demonstrates significant problems should probably be ended. This is not so easy, however, since time and emotional energies have been put into the relationship. However, if it is evident that the relationship needs to end, there will be a number of feelings associated with the decision to move on.

## **❖ Take Control of the Situation**

1. *Be certain in your own mind that breaking up is what you really want to do.*

Why is this important?

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2. *Be sure that you can clearly explain your feelings and reasons for breaking up. Tell the other person how you feel.*

Why is this a better approach than just ignoring the other person or hoping that he/she will figure it out eventually?

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3. *Don't allow yourself to be talked out of your decision because of guilty feelings.*

What would you say if your partner blamed you for his/her unhappiness?

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