

Rebuilding: When Your Relationship Ends, Bruce Fisher Ed. D.

This book is designed to help people rebuild their lives after a separation or divorce.

The process of rebuilding is compared to climbing a mountain by passing through specific stages beginning with denial.

Denial: Ending a love-relationship may be the greatest emotional pain a person will ever experience. The pain is so great, in fact, you may react with denial or disbelief. You feel as though you have failed, as though you have been hit in the stomach and experienced death even though you are still living.

Loneliness: It is natural to feel extreme loneliness when your love-relationship ends. But healing can come from the pain, if you listen to it. You can learn how to grow through loneliness to the stage of *aloneness* – where you are comfortable being by yourself. A period of time alone with oneself allows introspection, reflection, growth and development of the inner self.

Guilt vs Rejection: Dumpers end the love-relationship, while dumppees have it ended for them. The adjustment process differs while dumpers feel more guilt and dumppees feel more rejection. For the mutuals, people who jointly decide to end the relationship, the adjustment process is somewhat easier.

Grief: Whenever there is a loss of something important in our lives, we suffer grief. You need to work through grief's emotions in order to let go of the dead love-relationship. Though an intellectual understanding of the grief process is valuable, one must allow oneself to experience grief.

Anger: Divorce anger is the extreme rage, vindictiveness, and overpowering bitterness that we feel when our love-relationships are ending. Expressing anger constructively instead of aggressively can help one to let go and become emotionally distant from the former love-partner. 'I' messages promote the expression of feelings. (I feel...)

Letting Go: It is essential to invest in personal growth rather than the former love-relationship. Things that trigger memories of the former partner should be removed from sight. Some persons avoid feelings of rejection by not letting go. Thinking about unpleasant memories of the relationship can help control weeping.

Self-Concept: Self-concept may be devastated by ending love-relationships. Rebuilding self-concept requires certain types of effort such as deciding to change, changing one's view of oneself, positive affirmations and controlling negative thoughts.

Friendships: Support received from friends is very important and can shorten the time it takes to adjust to the crisis. Divorce is threatening to many married people so your married friends may slip away. It is better to work through your past love-relationship before committing to a new one.

Leftovers: Crises can cause unresolved issues from past relationships to resurface. A person may rebel as if he/she is a teenager resisting parental authority. This internal struggle may severely strain marital relationships.

Love: Your capacity to love others is closely related to your capacity to love yourself. There are various types of love including romantic, friendship, game-playing and needy.

Trust: People who have a painful *love-wound* will emotionally distance others until the love-wound is healed. Divorce adjustment requires one to learn to be a single person followed by learning to love again. The focus should be on developing friendships rather than love-relationships.

Sexuality: Interest in sex may vary greatly and be out of character. Fear is a common emotion during this stage of adjustment. Strive to view your sexuality as a special way of sharing and communicating with another person.

Responsibility: Most marriages that end in divorce were out-of-balance in terms of responsibility. Relationships where responsibility is not equal lack the flexibility necessary to respond to stress and change. Over-responsible (controlling) persons may collapse when their relationships end.

Singleness: During this stage there is an emphasis on personal growth rather than in other relationships. Fear of intimacy, avoidance of feelings, and opposition to marriage all indicate that the person is stuck.

Freedom: By working through the rebuilding blocks (stages) you can build more meaningful relationships in the future. You will have the freedom to choose to be free and happy either as a single person or in a love-relationship.