

I'm Alvean Lyons, and I'm Doug Weiss and welcome to Love Life.

We have a juicy one today, ready? Here we go. So, the question from our audience today is, Is there ever a good way to break up? Everybody knows relationships fail, and one partner or the other, occasionally both, recognize that things aren't working out. The conditions are no longer right for happiness and wholeness. But is there a way, an emotionally healthy, socially healthy way to be able to leave a relationship that doesn't cause anger and recrimination and lasting hurt? Can you do it? Well, is there an ideal way to break up? Doug, what do you think you've dumped a lot of women? What do you think?

Thanks for that. I'm tempted to say, you know, in the interest of humor, no. There is no good way to break up and I am only being slightly facetious in saying, look, let's face it breaking up unless both of you recognize that it's not working--and that's not common, someone's gonna get hurt. Even when both of you recognize that it's not working, it is still hurtful. It's hurtful to form a bond with another human being and then to sunder that bond. Not to play with semantics, but in my opinion there's no good way. There are ways that I think are less hurtful

Better ways.

Yeah, maybe we can put that connotation on a bad thing. You know, I've been on both sides of this. I have broken up and I have been broken up with, and I can say whether this its a dating situation, or sadly, a divorce, the longer you've been together, the more you are invested in each other, the harder it is going to be. I think there are common sense things that our listeners will relate to. My experience has been that there has to be respect for each other. You can't allow the pain or the hurt or anger to come into the situation. If it does then abandon hope all. You have to eliminate fault finding. You didn't come together on the basis of fault and you can't sunder on the basis of fault. What brought you together was undoubtedly a whole series of feelings for one another, a mutuality. And when you part the question is how do I allow myself to disengage from this relationship respecting the individual that I have come to know and care about for whatever period of time. I think it requires us to be very big.

So, let me ask you in a much less eloquent way, do you have a preferred way that you would like to get dumped? If it has to happen? Is there a particular way you prefer it to happen? Yeah, I think on balance there is a preferred way, what would that look like? Or sound like?

Well, I'd like to learn something from the experience. So, I'd like to have the benefit of knowing why it didn't work.

So, you want an explanation?

Yes, I do. I want to be able to understand what transpired and why it transpired because there's something for me to learn that I'm going to take with me the rest of my life, and I don't want to be wondering the rest of my life What if I had done this? What if I had done that? What if we hadn't done this? What if we had done that?

Would you say you care enough to know that? So if it was just casual dating? And then she decides she doesn't want to date any more? Do you need closure in a situation like that? Or are there some relationships that you would be looking for that in and others that might not rise to the level that dare I say you really don't care what she thought when she decided it was over?

I think it is in relationship to how long you've been together. Okay, so let me give you the extreme example. And this comes actually out of my book on life, love and internet dating. It's very common in the internet dating world to have an exchange of emails, and often no one responds, or they respond a couple of times, and then stop. And one of the lessons I had to learn when I was a newbie on the internet, in my very short career of being on dating sites was silence, which seems like a terrible thing to do to somebody is sometimes the only way to signal Hey, I'm not interested. So, in that kind of relationship, where you've exchanged a couple of emails with each other, I don't think anybody owes anybody an explanation. It's just, hey, there's no chemistry here. It's not working. If you've gone out on two or three dates, and you choose not to date. Again, I think that's evidence in and of itself, that there just was some fundamental incompatibility. If you've been dating for six months, on the other hand, and I don't know that six months is the magical amount, but if you if you've grown emotionally invested, or the other person has grown, emotionally invested, whether or not you've used The L Word, I think you have a responsibility to have that conversation.

Does it have to happen in person? Because we're in a generation that, you know, people break up by text they propose by text, they do all kinds of things in this generation. So for you, would it need to be something that has to happen face to face? Can it happen over the phone? Is it more or less respectful to you in a situation where you guys have dated for we'll use the arbitrary six months, there's some mutual investment, and it's coming to an end and she's the person deciding that is going to end. Would you want that to be a face to face conversation? Or is it okay, if it was done over the phone?

I would accept it in writing, over the phone. But my preferred approach, if it were me who was initiating that breakup, I would want to do it in person. To me, there's a question of courage involved in this. If I've exchanged intimate feelings with someone, much less been physically intimate, to end that relationship without facing them, without talking to them, without allowing them to understand that you respect them and that fundamentally what's happened is not something that in any way alters who they are, or their self-worth, I think is an obligation that you have, at the very least. Personally, I think to avoid that is self-serving. But that's me. I understand that doesn't necessarily mean that everyone will feel the same way or have the same, view and frankly, you know, circumstances matter a lot if you're breaking up. If one of the partners cheated, did something that was reprehensible that changes the landscape a lot

Significantly Yeah,

How about you, you put this all on me? Is there a good way to break up?

Well you know, I probably stink at it a little bit in the sense that.....

I doubt you stink at anything

I appreciate it but I actually am friends with most of my exes. It is different when you are married and I have been happily for almost 25 years at this point. You know, we were babies when we got married so we've been together forever 22 to be exact but together for 25 years I'm 43 years old and I still talk to my exes and when they come into town for homecoming, or whatever, they'll reach out and we welcome them to the house and they can bring their significant others and their wives if they're married. I will say that the nature of the relationship has a lot to do with how it ends. Most of my exes and I were truly friends inside of our dating relationship. So when it ended, quote unquote, romantically, so to speak, not necessarily that we were sleeping together. But there was romance involved in it, when the romance component of the relationship ended, it didn't necessarily mean that the friendship component did. And there was a lot of understanding that had to be had, depending upon who was responsible for ending it being sensitive to the other person's feelings. So, we were very mindful of someone was still in love, for instance, and gave room for that to be able to fade, so to speak, or, or evolve from being in love to being able to just love each other. I love you as a person. But I don't necessarily need us to be together to be together in that kind of romantic way anymore. If I were to say that I had a preferred way of ending a relationship or being on the receiving end of a relationship ending, I actually prefer the fade out, quite honestly, where it's kind of dial down, if it's somebody that you talk to every day, you know, and you recognize that the relationship needs to go separate ways that you every day might go to every other day. And then every other day might go to once a week we talk, it kind of gives me room to start to develop my independence, or it gives the other person room to start to develop their independence. It often will trigger a conversation to say, Hey, we don't talk as much as we used to and you can then be a little bit honest about the fact that I think that we're hitting a place in our lives that both of us may need something a little bit different. It stimulates a different kind of conversation, but it's a little less abrasive than ripping the band aid off and I have to change all of my social media profiles, and I have to pretend that you never existed before. I just don't see the nuclear end; I don't see the need for that if you were good to each other. I think that there are ways in which we can let go of someone gently and still honor what it is that we once had. And hopefully if you had friendship you may be able to find a gentle place in which you guys can think amicably about one another.

You know, one of the things that you really have to avoid is the temptation to leave your options open.

I would agree with that.

I think that happens sometimes and I think it happens-- I may be wrong and you may yell at me about this-- but I think it happens more with women than it does with men.

I would not yell at you because I think that is 100% true, because women are always prepared with a parachute plan.

Interesting, we just jump out of the plane and then wonder if there's a parachute you guys have something in your backpack.

And we know how to pull the parachute in our friend's backpacks

Well we hope you're not going through this experience and if you are keep the parachute close. That's another episode of love life and we've had some fun We hope you have as well. In the meantime if you have some thoughts about this episode write to us at doug@lovelife.digital or alvean@lovelife.digital

We want to thank Kamaria Mason, our producer, Todd Washburn, our Recording Engineer and the entire Love Life family, including you, our listeners. We'll be back next week with another episode. Until then, have a wonderful week. Bye folks.