

# WHOLE AGAIN

EXPERTS OFFER INVALUABLE INSIGHT ON THE ART OF MOVING ON AFTER A PAINFUL BREAKUP

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**G**oing through a divorce, separation, or breakup of any kind can be one of the most difficult emotional roller coasters in life. As time passes, this area can begin to feel like all too familiar turf. As we experience the full scope of gut-wrenching, heartbreaking, tumultuous emotions that this wild but wonderful right-of-passage has to offer, it can be tough to listen to advice a la, "It'll all be OK; just focus on yourself and eventually you'll meet someone new." Let's take a look at whether the experts agree, and where to direct your focus while you heal your heart.

## Stay busy with mindful goals.

Psychologist and author Chloe Carmichael, Ph.D., said filling the voids in time spent with your ex is one of the most important steps in healing after a breakup. Establishing a new schedule, filled with activities that you enjoy and are important to you, can help make your life feel normal again. If you're a social person, plan nights

with friends, long chats on the phone with loved ones, and join new group activities. Your support system is one of the most valuable assets you can lean on, and lean hard if you need to! If you prefer to stay home more, find new hobbies you can experiment with: redecorating (ditch that tacky chair your ex picked out), cooking new recipes (bonus if it's a food your ex didn't like), or even adopting a new furry friend to assuage any loneliness.

## Focus on the new and exciting future.

Another great tip Carmichael offers is to continually remind yourself that dwelling on the past won't do the heart any favors; rather, direct your thoughts towards the future. Think about your goals and aspirations, and start actively working towards them. This will help you feel more positive and optimistic about the road ahead. Because long-term relationships are filled with sacrifices, think about things you gave up for the good of the relationship, and how you can incorporate those

back into your life.

## Don't rush yourself.

Healing takes time, so be patient with yourself. Don't beat yourself up if you're not feeling better right away. Remember that it's okay to feel sad, angry, or confused after a breakup. The experience can be mentally taxing and severely emotionally draining, and it's important to give yourself time to process your feelings. In today's digital age, it can prove even more difficult to sit in your grief while your ex posts on social media, thus most experts suggest keeping a healthy amount of digital distance from your former partner as well. It's okay to take a break from your work, your social calendar, and your responsibilities to give yourself time to focus on your healing and self-care. Everyone heals at their own pace; there is no normal recovery time. Your role, noted Carmichael, is to let yourself feel what you need to feel, let it out in a healthy way, and allow time to build yourself back stronger than ever. **1**