# When Someone You Love Walks Away

## 5 Things You Can Do to Begin Finding Peace

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Your relationship may not be resolved. But your life doesn’t have to remain on hold.



## Before We Begin

If someone you love has walked out of your life, you know how painful that can be. Maybe it happened after an argument. Maybe the relationship had been difficult for years. Or perhaps you still don't understand exactly what happened.

You've probably replayed conversations in your mind more times than you can count. You've wondered what you could have said differently, whether you should reach out again, or if you'll ever have the relationship you once had.

And then there are the ordinary moments when the hurt catches you off guard. A birthday. A holiday. A family photograph. Seeing other families enjoying the relationships you wish you had.

I want you to know something: **You can love someone, miss them terribly, and still have a good life.**

That doesn't mean you stop caring, close the door on reconciliation, or pretend what happened wasn't important. It means your life matters, too.

I work with women trying to find their footing after a family relationship has broken down. Their stories differ, but many have become so consumed by the relationship that they've lost sight of themselves.

I can't give you a formula that will bring someone back into your life. Nobody can honestly promise that. But I can share five practical things you can begin doing to find some peace, gain perspective, and start enjoying your life again. You don't have to do everything today. Just begin.

## 1. Stop Trying to Solve the Entire Relationship Today

When someone you love pulls away, it's natural to want answers. Why did this happen? What did I do wrong? How can I fix it?

But not every question has an answer right now. And not every problem is yours to solve. Relationships involve two people, each with their own experiences, feelings, and choices. You can take responsibility for your part, but you can't make someone else want the same relationship you want.

### Something to try

Draw a line down a piece of paper. Label one side **What I Can Control** and the other **What I Cannot Control**.

On the first side, write things like how you respond, whether you respect boundaries, how you spend your day, and whether you seek support. On the second, write whether they call, forgive, or decide to reconcile.

Look at your two columns. How much of your energy has been going toward things in the second one? Today, choose one action from the first column. It may be taking a walk, calling a friend, or deciding not to send another message.

**That isn't giving up. It's recognizing where your responsibility ends and someone else's begins.**

## 2. Look at Your Part Without Taking All the Blame

One of the hardest things about estrangement is the guilt. Maybe there are things you genuinely regret. Or maybe you've spent years trying to understand what you did wrong.

It matters to look honestly at our relationships. None of us gets everything right. But there's a difference between taking responsibility and carrying all the blame. **You can acknowledge your mistakes without deciding that everything is your fault.**

### Something to try

Write your answers to these three questions:

**What do I genuinely regret?** Name a specific action or conversation, rather than labeling yourself a bad mother, daughter, or sister.

**What have I been blaming myself for that may not be entirely mine to carry?** Consider the other person's choices and the history of the relationship.

**If I had another opportunity, what would I do differently?** Maybe listen more, defend yourself less, or set a healthier boundary.

Use what you discover to learn rather than punish yourself. You can't rewrite the past, but you can decide how you want to live from here.

## 3. Give Yourself a Break From Thinking About It All Day

Have you ever been enjoying yourself when a thought about the estrangement suddenly appears? Before you know it, you're replaying an old conversation or imagining a future one. Just like that, the moment is gone.

You can't always stop a painful thought from showing up. But you can practice not spending the rest of the day following it.

### Something to try

For the next week, set aside 15 minutes a day to write about the relationship. Write what hurts, what you miss, what makes you angry, and what you wish were different.

When the time is up, close the notebook and return to something you planned. If the thoughts return later, remind yourself: *I've given this some attention today. I don't have to work through it again right now.*

Then do something specific: call a friend, work in the garden, cook dinner, or finish a small task. Be flexible if you need more time to process difficult feelings.

**The goal isn't to stop thinking about someone you love. It's to keep those thoughts from taking over every part of your day.**

## 4. Leave the Door Open Without Standing in the Doorway

You can remain open to reconciliation without spending every day waiting for it. There's a difference.

Leaving the door open means you're willing to consider rebuilding the relationship if that becomes possible in a healthy way. Standing in the doorway means putting your life on hold until someone else changes their mind.

Maybe you avoid making plans because you're hoping for a call. Maybe holidays have become something you dread. Maybe enjoying yourself makes you feel guilty.

### Something to try

Ask yourself: **If nothing changes in this relationship over the next year, how do I want to have spent that year?**

Write down three things you've stopped doing, postponed, or lost interest in because of the estrangement. Choose one to bring back into your life.

Make a specific plan to do it within the next two weeks. Put it on your calendar. When the day comes, allow yourself to enjoy it. You might still feel sad and wish your loved one were there. Both feelings can exist together.

**Moving forward isn't giving up on the relationship. It's not giving up on you.**

## 5. Decide What You Want Your Life to Look Like Now

Estrangement can slowly become the center of your life. You may stop noticing the relationships, interests, and opportunities that are still here.

I'm not suggesting you simply get busy and forget what happened. I'm asking you to remember that you are more than this one relationship. You still have something to offer, people to love, and a life worth living.

### Something to try

Finish these three sentences on paper:

**Before this relationship became so painful, I enjoyed…**

**One relationship I want to give more attention to is…**

**Something I would like to look forward to again is…**

Now choose one small action for this week. Invite a friend for lunch. Sign up for a class. Plan a visit. Return to a hobby. Keep the promise you make to yourself, even if you don't feel completely ready.

Peace rarely arrives all at once. Sometimes it begins when you decide to participate in your own life again.

## A Final Word From Me

I know a short guide can't answer every question you have. Your relationship has a history, and your hurt is real. There may be things to grieve, boundaries to consider, or difficult choices ahead.

But I hope you'll remember this: you do not have to wait for someone else to make a decision before you begin caring for yourself.

You can keep the door open without standing in the doorway. You can care deeply without losing yourself. And you can become whole even when the relationship isn't.

If you've tried to work through this on your own and still feel stuck, I'd welcome the opportunity to talk with you. In a free 30-minute conversation, we can discuss what you're experiencing, what you would like to change, and whether coaching together would be helpful. There's no pressure to make a decision.

**Schedule your free conversation:** beckykolb.com/consultation

Warmly,
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