

## CLOSE RELATIONSHIPS

### TERMINATION OF A RELATIONSHIP - SEPARATION

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- Relationship loss is often a very difficult problem for many people.
- Loss can come in different forms.
- The end of a non-marital relationship (dating, engagement, cohabitation) can cause great emotional pain.
- Separation from a partner due to death can happen at any age.
- For many people, the loss of a relationship causes great emotional pain, whether it is the end of a legal union or the end of a romantic relationship (dating, engagement, cohabitation).

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#### *Causes of Relationship Breakdown*

##### *- Jealousy*

Jealousy is a largely negative emotion that is multidimensional in terms of complexity (Pfeiffer & Wong, 1989).

It is triggered by the fear of losing a loved and valued person in a romantic relationship.

Jealousy is different from envy.

Envy is about wanting something that someone else has.

Although many theorists believe that jealousy and envy are two subtypes of the same set of emotions, in reality they are different in their composition and intensity (Erber & Erber, 2001).

Jealousy is more profound and is related to the fear of an uninvited third person who disrupts one's relationship with another person.

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- **Types of Jealousy** (Buunk and Dijkstra, 2000)

1) **Reactive/emotional jealousy** is defined as a negative emotional state towards a partner who is or is thought to be with someone else.

2) **Anxious/cognitive jealousy** is characterized by obsessive worry and thinking that the partner is with someone else.

3) **Preventive/suspicious jealousy** is defined as an unprovoked reaction to a partner's mild interest in another person.

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People can be open to jealousy to **different degrees**.

Personality traits are related to openness to jealousy. Another related factor is relationship status.

For example, low self-esteem (especially in women) and emotional dependency (Buunk, 1995; Buunk) are closely related to jealousy.

Attachment styles are also frequently studied with jealousy.

In one study, it was observed that securely attached participants were more prone to reveal their anger, while anxiously attached participants tended to hold their anger more.

Avoidant attachment tend to blame the third person rather than the partner (Sharpsteen and Kirkpatrick 1997).



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#### Dealing with Jealousy

Dealing with jealousy is difficult.

People tend to mold their strategies for coping with jealousy according to themselves.

Buunk and Dijkstra (2000) developed three types of coping approaches in their study on jealousy.

- **Rethinking the situation**
- **Ignoring the partner**
- **Communicating with the partner.**

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#### *Causes of Relationship Breakdown*

- Deception - Betrayal

An intimate relationship between one person in a romantic couple and a third person is often referred to as cheating, betrayal or infidelity.

A number of theories have been proposed to explain infidelity.

These theories utilize individual, relational and social levels of explanation.

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#### *Causes of Relationship Breakdown*

According to Glass and Wright (1992), people justify cheating in four different ways.

1. The need for sexual diversity
2. The need for emotional closeness
3. Falling in love
4. Extrinsic motivations such as revenge against the partner

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#### *Causes of Relationship Breakdown*

One of the most difficult aspects of infidelity is dealing with the after-effects or the partner's infidelity.

Roloff, Soule and Carey (2001), in their study of people's reactions to relational violations, found that many people continue their relationships after being cheated on.

Possible reasons for this are fear of losing their partner and emotional attachment.



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#### *Causes of Relationship Breakdown*

Another study investigated the effect of one partner learning about the affair on the subsequent process.

Afifi, Falato, and Weiner (2001) measured people's reactions to infidelity on the basis of how partners learned that they had been cheated on.

The results show that the way of learning affects reactions to infidelity.

When the cheating spouse voluntarily disclosed the infidelity to his/her partner, the relationship was least affected.

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#### *Causes of Relationship Breakdown*

- Separation

Duck (1982), who examined the factors that cause separation, stated that **three main groups** of events or behaviors are related to separation.

- **Bad fate**

- **Mechanical failure/loss of process**

- **Sudden death**

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#### *Causes of Relationship Breakdown*

- Separation

- Bad fate refers to relationships that most of us knew from the beginning that it was not going to work out.

Haven't you looked at some couples and thought that this relationship is not possible?

Didn't you say that they could never work together?

Usually these couples have very different habits, styles, backgrounds, interests and the relationship ends in a breakup.



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#### *Causes of Relationship Breakdown*

##### -Separation

-- Mechanical failure occurs when couples have negative behaviors such as complaining and controlling or lack positive behaviors such as communicating well, acting lovingly, providing social support and failing in this regard.



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#### *Causes of Relationship Breakdown*

- Separation

- Sudden death implies that a partner cheated, abused trust or personally left the relationship.