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about it.Perhaps you and your ex simply kept speaking daily after you broke up, and you shared the idea of losing them completely, so you always replied to his or her texts and agreed when they suggested hanging out.If that's the case for you, and you can see it, you'd be able to hang out when your ex wants to get together. Make sure you "already" have plans with a friend" if your ex proposes doing something together, and don't be afraid to ignore their calls once in a while.Maximize Your Odds Of Getting Back TogetherIt's often difficult to handle your ex when they want to be friends and you want to be lovers, and you need to tread carefully. That's why I dedicated an entire section of my #1 best-selling guide to getting your ex back, The Ex Factor, to this topic.Click here to claim your copy of my comprehensive program (which is backed by a 60-day money-back guarantee) and learn more about the proven tactics that over 100,000 of my clients have used to get a fresh start with their ex.Best of luck avoiding the dreaded "friend zone"! I welcome any questions or comments, so please feel free to share your thoughts in the comments section at the bottom of this page. Source: Andrea Piacquadio/Pexels Reminiscing is an appealing venture. It helps us connect our past to our present and gain insight into how we became who we are. And reflecting on old times, especially the positive ones, is beneficial to people of all ages. In fact, researchers have shown that when people use cognitive imagery to conjure up rich and detailed images of past positive events in their minds, it increases their feelings of happiness (Bryant, Smart, & King, 2005). So if the mind is indeed a rich resource for positive past events, is there any harm in reminiscing about an ex? And while you're in that positive headspace, should you take a few moments to reach out? No, there's not much harm in reminiscing. But also ... No, you shouldn't reach out to an ex-partner. Here are five scientifically-supported reasons why: 1. Your memory is tricking you into making you believe the past was better than it really was. One of the most oft-cited biases of memory is something called the positivity bias. This refers to our tendency to recall positive events more easily than negative ones. So when reflecting on times with your ex, you might remember that time he sent you those perfect song lyrics or when she brought you those delicious cupcakes from the vegan bakery you love. You're probably forgetting about the fights you had, or how he ghosted you during your breakup. 2. Your memory is affecting your emotions, too. Coupled with the positivity bias, the fading affect bias (Skowronski, Walker, Henderson, & Bond, 2013) makes it more difficult for you to recall negative feelings about past events. Positive feelings about past experiences last longer than negative ones, which translates into you feeling more warm and fuzzy than rejected and angry when thinking about your past partner. 3. Connecting with an ex is associated with anxiety and depression. In a 2015 study, Tsai, Shen, and Chiang found that people who accepted a friend request from an ex on Facebook had higher levels of trait anxiety and more severe depression than those who did not. Although correlation does not equal causation, the authors of this study suggested that seeing an ex-partner in happy posts and possibly in a new relationship could have a negative effect on your psychological health. 4. It might signal that you're still obsessed with the relationship. If you just send a text with a simple, "Hey—hope you're well," it's probably fine. However, if you're scrolling through their social media, poring over every picture or comment, it may be a sign that you're not over your ex. And unfortunately, stalking a past partner's social media might not be healthy—it's associated with additional breakup distress, especially among people who didn't initiate the breakup (Fox & Tokunaga, 2015). 5. If you're in a relationship, reaching out to a past partner could spell trouble. This may be obvious, but there are scientific studies that drive this message home. First, ex-partners are likely to be back burners (i.e., people with whom we communicate with the prospect that they might one day be a romantic or sexual partner). And research has shown that thinking about back burners, even for a few minutes, can lower investment in a current partner (Drouin, Miller, & Dibble, 2015). Second, communicating with an ex has been associated with lower levels of satisfaction with a current partner and higher satisfaction with the past partner among those who derive self-worth from their relationships (Rodríguez et al., 2015). Combined, these studies suggest that reaching out to an ex may not be the best way to maintain a current partnership. And here is a bonus reason: If you reach out, you may not get what you are looking for. Do you think your ex is suddenly going to give you everythng you want? That relationship failed for a reason—try hard to remember why. Try to find someone new who wasn't the cause of (or a participant in) your failed relationship, or if you have already found someone new, try reminiscing about your good times with them. The positivity bias works for a current partner, too. Think about what made you fall for them, and relish in those happy thoughts. Facebook image: G-Stock Studio/Shutterstock References Bazzini, D. G., Stack, E. R., Martincin, P. D., & Davis, C. P. (2007). The effect of reminiscing about laughter on relationship satisfaction. *Motivation & Emotion*, 31, 25–34. doi:10.1007/s11031-006-9045-6 Bryant, F. B., Smart, C. M., & King, S. P. (2005). Using the past to enhance the present: Boosting happiness through positive reminiscence. *Journal of Happiness Studies*, 6, 227–260. Drouin, M., Miller, D., & Dibble, J. (2015). Facebook or memory—Which is the real threat to your relationship? *Cyberpsychology, Behavior, & Social Networking*, 18, 561–566. Fox, J., & Tokunaga, R. S. (2015). 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By rejecting non-essential cookies, Reddit may still use certain cookies to ensure the proper functionality of our platform. For more information, please see our Cookie Notice and our Privacy Policy. Showing your support for a friend who's just ended a relationship can be a really important part of helping them through a difficult period. Unfortunately, once a friend has decided to end their relationship with a partner, it can be tricky to figure out if you're also required to sever any remaining friendship with their ex, too. But, can you still be friends with a friend's ex without damaging your bond? As you might've suspected, navigating this situation can be very tricky. I spoke to NYC-based relationship expert and love coach Susan Winter to find out whether or not it's OK to keep hanging out with a friend's ex. According to Winter, this isn't a one-size-fits-all issue, so it's important to consider the specific details of every individual situation. "It depends on the circumstances within the couple's relationship, and your relationship to those individuals," Winter tells Elite Daily. "It's okay to remain friends with your friend's ex if it doesn't bother your friend." If you're not sure how your friend feels about you having social contact with their ex, it's important to communicate honestly and openly about it to avoid hurt feelings. "Firstly, talk to your friend," recommends Winter. "Staying friendly with their ex could be a real violation of your friendship rules." Will your friend feel like you're picking sides, or diminishing your existing friendship by associating with their ex? Make sure you know how they feel about this before you take any action. "Figuring out how to deal when you're stuck in the middle of a breakup between two people can get even more complicated if you were friends with both of them before they even began dating. If this is the case, Winter says that you should be able to maintain separate friendships with both parties involved. "You shouldn't be asked to give up one of your friends simply because their relationship didn't work out," says Winter. The truth of the matter is that if you consider both people to be close friends, then choosing a side is going to end up rubbing someone the wrong way. If, however, you're honest about wanting to stay friends with both your friend and their ex (even though they might not be thrilled), hopefully they'll be able to understand your wish to stay impartial. On the other hand, if one of the friendships far outweighs the other in terms of importance and significance to you, then Winter recommends letting that be the guiding factor in deciding which course of action to take. "Here's where you need to prioritize who is more important: Your friend, or their ex," says Winter. "That should be the driving factor in your decision-making process and will lead you to the correct answer."As someone who's been caught in the middle of breakups in a very tight-knit friend group, I can tell you that sometimes it can feel almost impossible to keep everyone happy. But, from my experience, one of the keys to preserving both relationships is being as honest and transparent as possible. You shouldn't have to be dishonest about who you're hanging out with as long as you're willing to make time for both people separately. So instead of keeping your concerns and worries to yourself, consider following Winter's advice and start an honest dialogue. It's the first step to keeping the peace. Be the first to know what's trending, straight from Elite Daily Download Article Plus how to interact with an ex-friend when you "do" have to see them Download Article Ending a relationship with your best friend is sometimes harder than ending a relationship with a lover or family member. When these friendships fall apart, you have to make time to take care of yourself, learn to cope with your feelings, and (eventually) move on. Healing from friendship breakups and having to deal with your ex-best friend may not be easy, but these tips will help you cope with the emotions and work toward happier future friendships. Plus, we've included expert advice from licensed psychologists Dr. Asa Don Brown and Dr. Adam Dorsay. In the immediate aftermath of a friend breakup, let yourself grieve and focus on your other relationships and things that bring you joy. Get some distance from your ex-friend and avoid them as much as possible. If you're allowed to feel sad, wallow, and grteve—regardless of what side of the conflict or breakup you were on. Take a few days or a couple of weeks to really be down in the dumps about the end of your friendship, then do whatever you'd normally do to get over a romantic ex.[2] Eat guiltily pleasure treats, seek out quality time with your loved ones, spend time doing your favorite hobbies, watch your favorite tearjerker films, and get plenty of rest. 2 Reframe the story to consider both sides—without beating yourself up. After a friendship breakup, you might be placing a lot of blame on yourself or on your friend, depending on the situation. Even if you were the one to dump a friend, you might feel a sense of shame for not being able to work through the issues in your relationship or having a so-called "failed" friendship.[3] Take a moment to step back and look at the situation objectively—try to see your ex-best friend's perspective and how they might be feeling, and avoid beating yourself up over anything you did to lead to the dissolution of the friendship. While it's great to take a look at areas you could work on in order to be a better friend, it does more harm than good to spiral about being a bad person or bad friend, especially if your best friend was the one to end things. Instead, reflect on how both you and your friend contributed to your conflicts, and keep in mind that everyone has relational traits they can work on—and no one has kept every single friend they've ever made in their life! Advertisement 3 Write your friend a letter or email to create a sense of closure. To be happy, you will need to acknowledge your feelings, process them, and move on to the next stage of your life. Write a letter or email to your friend that expresses all of your feelings. Keep it brief but sincere—you might explain why the friendship ended, how it made you feel, and clearly state that it's over. Try to use kind and neutral language—this letter isn't the place for blaming, although you can express your anger and frustration.[4] If you feel it's best not to contact your friend at all, you can write the letter and not send it, or instead perform a ritual to symbolize the end of the friendship and find some internal closure. For a ritual, take a meaningful item that your friend gave you and bury it, burn it, or throw it away. 4 Spend time with old and new friends. When you're ready, invest some time and energy in your other friendships. Take a moment to appreciate the friends that they do have and all the ways they love and support you. Then, try to develop some burgeoning friendships or go out of your way to make new friends. Join a class, attend a Meetup activity, or ask a coworker or classmate to go for coffee. By putting more effort into your current and future relationships outside of your ex-estie, you'll begin to realize that there are other people for you to build great connections with.[5] 5 Take care of yourself. Make sure to look after your physical and emotional self with healthy habits and self-care techniques like mindfulness exercises. Start with small changes like eating well and getting enough sleep. Do things that you enjoy doing, and allow yourself to do thoughtful things for someone else.[6] These tasks may feel daunting at first, but you'll feel so much better once you do them. Go watch movies that you like, eat at your favorite restaurants, and try new things to see what makes you happiest. Don't be afraid to seek comfort in other people. Spend time with other friends or close family members. EXPERT TIP Asa Don Brown, PhD, DNCCM, FAAETS Clinical Psychologist Dr. Asa Don Brown is a Clinical Psychologist with over 30 years of experience. He specializes in working with families, children, and couples; while treating a variety of psychological disorders, trauma, and abuse. Dr. Brown has specialized in negotiation and profiling. As a prolific author, Dr. Brown has published four books; contributed to multiple other books; published 500+ articles in professional and popular magazines, journals, and peer-reviewed publications; and has recently published a number of creative and literary works. Dr. Brown earned a BS in Theology and Religion with a minor in Marketing and an MS in Counseling with a specialization in Marriage and Family from The University of Great Falls. He has also received a Master of Liberal Arts from Harvard University. Furthermore, he received a PhD in Psychology with a specialization in Clinical Psychology from Capella University. Choose activities that may help to calm your inner person. Consider meditation, journaling, deep breathing, athletics, creative hobbies, and more. These positive distractions are helpful, but avoid using them as a way to remove all noise in your head—it's important to deal with your emotions so you can move on. 6 Talk to a counselor or therapist about the situation. Friendship breakups are emotional, life-altering events, just like a romantic breakup. In these situations, it can be extremely helpful to talk to a therapist or counselor so that you can process your feelings and get help moving on. Whether you were the friend who initiated the breakup or not, you probably have lots of thoughts and feelings about the relationship bouncing around in your brain—a mental health professional can give you tools to help you calm these thoughts, recognize your triggers, and deal with your former friendship's fallout.[7] It's normal to have these sorts of spiraling thoughts after a major emotional event, especially one that you feel guilty or shameful about. These thoughts are called intrusive thoughts, which Dr. Brown explains as "unwelcome thoughts that permeate our conscious and subconscious."[8] Advertisement 1 Give yourself as much distance as possible from your former friend. Take a step back from any activities that you used to do together, locales you used to frequent, or routines that heavily involved your ex-BFF. Mute or unfollow your friend on social media and decline (some) invites to group hangs with mutual friends.[9] There will be instances where you and your former friend have to co-exist, but limit contact with them as much as possible. If you go to school with this ex-friend, you might explain the situation to your teacher by saying that seating you together or pairing you together for projects may keep you from focusing on your task. Similarly, if you work together, you might speak to your HR department and ask to be placed in different departments or on different projects and shifts whenever possible. 2 Set boundaries about and prepare yourself for future encounters. You might be in a situation where you have to see your ex-best friend often—such as if you work together, go to school together, or still have mutual friends. Or, maybe you run the risk of bumping into them by accident or even being asked by your former friend to rekindle the friendship later on. The best way to prepare for these situations is to decide now how you want to deal with your ex-estie if and when you see them in the future or if they ever mention being friends again. If you have to see each other on a daily basis, you may want to tell your friend that you don't feel comfortable speaking to or seeing them more than is strictly necessary. You can agree to both be polite, but don't need to act overly friendly toward each other. If you have mutual friends, decide together what events and group hangs you'll both be attending or alternating attendance at. You may also want to speak to your friends about the friendship breakup, but avoid sharing too many details with them or speaking badly about your former friend. If you think your ex-friend may ask to reconnect in the future, practice saying something like "I am flattered that you want to be my friend again, but I think it's best we don't go there." Apply this to social media as well by declining any friend requests. You could send a private message with a similar statement. 3 Be polite but brief when you have to speak to each other. You are likely to run into your ex-best friend again at some point. When this happens, you need to be calm and collected. If you can avoid talking altogether, that's great. If not, say hello and be polite.[10] However, being polite doesn't mean that you have to entertain your ex-best friend for a long period of time. Answer any questions briefly, if you're able to do so. If you're asked for advice, offer it if you're comfortable doing so. Be honest but brief, and avoid going on your way. Be polite if they try to start a casual conversation. For example, if they ask about your mom, say something like "My mom is doing well, thanks." The key here is not to add anything that might continue the conversation, such as "I hope your parents are well" or "How is your mom?" 4 Avoid being so accommodating that your friend misinterprets your feelings. If you have no interest in rekindling your friendship, do not be too friendly while interacting with your ex-best friend. Be polite in the moment, and leave that moment with closure. If you make it appear as though you miss your ex-best friend, then that opens the door to restarting the friendship back up.[11] You don't have to say "It's great to see you," or "See you again soon." Unless they're sincere, these polite phrases may give your ex-estie false hope for reigniting the friendship. End the conversation with something like "I'm glad you're doing well, but if you'll excuse me, I need to go talk to my date (or any other person you can think of). Goodbye." Advertisement 1 Ignore any negative things that your ex-friend says to or about you. Your former best friend may make the unfortunate choice to spread rumors about you or otherwise make nasty comments or rude gestures (whether to your face or behind your back). As hurt as you may feel by these behaviors, the key to dealing with this drama is to ignore it.[12] If these comments are being made to other people, "setting the record straight" or retaliating with similar comments about them will just have you playing into the dramatic feud between the two of you, and it may even jeopardize your other friendships and keep you from moving on. If the comments are made to your face, they're probably done to get a reaction out of you. If you don't give your ex-friend a reaction, they'll probably leave you alone that much faster. Stay positive by realizing that what your ex-best friend says about you doesn't actually define you. You should also allow yourself to feel good for ignoring the immaturity and letting the situation go. 2 Avoid involving mutual friends in the conflict or making them choose sides. Nobody wants to pick sides, and it isn't fair to ask your mutual friends to do so. Avoid gossiping about your ex-best friend to mutual friends—if you need to vent, do so with a family member, therapist, or friend that's outside your mutual friend group. If you feel resentful that your friends are still friends with your ex-estie, try to make your peace with it—unless your ex-BFF did something egregiously hurtful to you, they have every right to choose their own friends.[13] Plus, consider how you would feel if your former friend was badmouthing you to your friends behind your back. It's an upsetting feeling that is likely to turn out poorly for everyone involved. Advertisement 1 Reflect on the factors that led to the breakup before deciding to reconnect. Before rekindling the friendship, consider why it ended in the first place. Sometimes, two people just need some time and space before coming back together to the same (or an even stronger) friendship. However, some friendships end due to crucial conflicts, so it's important to ask yourself why you and your ex-best friend parted ways and if the circumstances around that decision have changed. Try asking yourself the following questions:[14] What was the reason for the breakup? Did your friendship end over deeper-rooted issues? Have those issues been resolved? If they haven't (or you don't think they will be), will anything be different this time around? If not, it may not be the right time for rekindling. Why do you want to reconnect? Do you think this person will contribute joy and happiness to your future self? Or do you just miss them because you feel nostalgic about the memories you shared together in the past? If the latter, it may not really help to reconnect. Are you prepared for rejection? If your friend tells you that they're not interested in reconnecting, will you be deeply hurt? Will it start the friendship breakup healing process all over again? Or will you be able to accept their answer and continue to move forward? If you run the risk of getting really hurt, it may be better to press pause on rekindling. 2 Call or reach out to your friend if you do decide to rekindle your friendship. If you believe that you can reconnect with your friend and resolve the issues that led to your breakup, Dr. Dorsay recommends to avoid overthinking and "just call. So many people feel like they have to call with something to offer or on a specific occasion, like a birthday. Just dial the digit. You get a voicemail! Leave a voicemail!" [15] EXPERT TIP Adam Dorsay, PsyD Licensed Psychologist & TEDx Speaker Dr. Adam Dorsay is a licensed psychologist in private practice in San Jose, CA, and the co-creator of Project Reciprocity, an international program at Facebook's Headquarters, and a consultant with Digital Ocean's Safety Team. He specializes in assisting high-achieving adults with relationship issues, stress reduction, anxiety, and attaining more happiness in their lives. In 2016 he gave a well-watched TEDx talk about men and emotions. Dr. Dorsay has a M.A. in Counseling from Santa Clara University and received his doctorate in Clinical Psychology in 2008. Tell your friend you're thinking of them and mention a nice memory. For example, leave a voicemail like, "Hey, I'd love to reconnect, let me know if/when you have time to talk. And also, remember that thing with the dog in Ojai? Anyway, I was just thinking about that recently. Call whenever you feel up to it." Advertisement Friendship breakups can be difficult for a number of reasons. Many people describe their platonic breakups as equally (or even more) painful as their romantic ones. There are many complex reasons for this phenomenon, including a lost support system, shared history, and the societal norms around the value and longevity of friendships.[16] Loss of support: Close friends provide us with emotional support, so losing a friend often feels like losing a crucial confidante and key part of your life. Shared histories: Friends share mutual memories of secrets, trips, adventures, and losses. Losing a best friend can feel like they're taking that history with them as well. Societal norms: Friendships aren't treated with the same importance as romantic relationships—but they should be! [17] People may not take your pain as seriously, which can create shame, anxiety, and uncertainty. Whatever the reason, it's completely normal for a friendship breakup to feel extremely difficult. Just the fact that this very article exists is reason to believe that many, many people go through the same experience that you are. You're not alone! Read these friendship breakup quotes for motivation and to feel less alone. Sometimes, reading quotes or listening to songs about something that we're going through helps us to feel less alone. Other people have gone through (and survived!) these same experiences, and that knowledge can be a comfort—no matter the challenges that you're facing in the present moment. Check out these popular quotes to see if any resonate with you as you deal with or cope with a separation from a former friend.[18] "Hard times will always reveal true friends." — Unknown "It takes effort to be a real friend and to find a true friend." — Peyton List "Some people only enter your life as a temporary happiness." — Bob Ong "If you're brave enough to say goodbye, life will reward you with a new hello." — Paulo Coelho "If my absence doesn't affect your life, then my presence has no meaning in it." — Unknown "Letting go doesn't mean giving up, it means accepting that some things weren't meant to be." — Lisa Brooks "Sometimes, the people you love the most are the ones who teach you the most painful lessons." — Unknown "Sadly enough, the most painful goodbyes are the ones that are left unsaid and never explained." — Jonathan Harnish "When you see your friends change, don't be sad. Realize the people who stayed with you are the ones who truly matter." — Unknown "Social media has given us this idea that we should all have a posse of friends when in reality, if we have one or two really good friends, we are lucky." — Brené Brown Advertisement Add New Question Question How do I not go back to my ex-best friend? Asa Don Brown, PhD, DNCCM, FAAETS Clinical Psychologist Dr. Asa Don Brown is a Clinical Psychologist with over 30 years of experience. He specializes in working with families, children, and couples; while treating a variety of psychological disorders, trauma, and abuse. Dr. Brown has specialized in negotiation and profiling. As a prolific author, Dr. Brown has published four books; contributed to multiple other books; published 500+ articles in professional and popular magazines, journals, and peer-reviewed publications; and has recently published a number of creative and literary works. Dr. Brown earned a BS in Theology and Religion with a minor in Marketing and an MS in Counseling with a specialization in Marriage and Family from The University of Great Falls. He has also received a Master of Liberal Arts from Harvard University. Furthermore, he received a PhD in Psychology with a specialization in Clinical Psychology from Capella University. This article has been viewed 313,637 times. Co-authors: 40 Updated: October 26, 2024 Views: 313,637 Categories: Friendship Problems Print Send mail to authors Thanks to all authors for creating a page that has been read 313,637 times. "Somebody who was trying to get in between me and my dearest BFF finally got in between us two and decided to steal my bestie. I eventually had to get her to choose between me and my enemy, and she unfortunately chose my enemy instead of me. My eyes fill with tears each time she sur, but I do try to move on. This tutorial helped a lot for inspiration and advice. I think it's really gonna help with my relationship situation. ". . ." more Share your story