

SHATTERING

Waves of Shattering show up when you feel your relationship may end or actually ends. It also swirls back over and over until you are fully healed. Likely the most painful stage as your activated amygdala is acting like an overprotective watch dog, perceiving your loss of emotional attachment as a threat to your life and worthiness. It can feel like you are lost in the forest alone and in danger. Stress hormones are activated and painful.

I feel a crushing, stabbing feeling in my heart

I am feeling high anxiety (can even lead to panic attacks)

I feel an alarming sense of aloneness like I'm in a crisis

I feel fractured or like my soul is actually breaking

Despair, suicidal feelings, and overwhelming sorrow

I am triggered and stressed, making it hard to function at work or in any aspect of life

I feel severed from connection, as if I have been rejected from humanity

I am convinced I will be alone forever and the pain of this is overwhelming

My sense of self feels destroyed and life feels pointless

I feel like I am grappling to breathe because the heaviness in my heart is too much

I feel a cold gripping feeling in my heart and throat that is unbearable

It is like my inner alarm system is going off and my nervous system is activated like I'm under attack

It feels like a painful tear in my heart or like a devil's fork stabbing within

I can't sleep very well and may toss and turn (due to elevated stress hormones like cortisol)

My digestion is messed up like if I eat something it goes right through me or I get constipated

I may have no appetite one moment and then be ravenously hungry due to glucocorticoid stress hormones

WITHDRAWAL

Acute “neuro-biological crisis” similar to heroin withdrawal, as it involves the opioid system. Drop in oxytocin levels lead to pathological loneliness and depression. Shifts in serotonin and dopamine so you to feel 'on edge' with sleep and digestion issues and more. May idealize ex, loop in thoughts of being alone or long for a new 'love fix.'

I am experiencing a nagging depression feeling

I feel shame and believe my aloneness means I am not worthy of love

I am feeling painful loneliness

I feel shame and believe I am doomed and will likely be alone forever

I have an empty void feeling in my heart that longs to be filled

I feel like I can't move forward, make decisions, am stunned or stuck in a heavy quicksand-like sinking feeling

I feel less-than at family or friend gatherings

Being alone is dreadful especially when it comes to grocery shopping

I need to put on a happy face so people won't feel sorry for me

I feel so needy, like an overwhelming burden

What used to bring me joy, no longer does

I know it is my job to love myself but I can't seem to love myself enough

I have a kind of anxiety that I cannot seem to get rid of

I feel rejected because my friends and family cannot fill my emptiness

I feel exhausted, foggy or drained

I feel worthless, hopeless and have no sense of purpose

INTERNALIZING

This phase has more to do looping in regrets, faults and self-berating thoughts than feelings and emotions. Internalizing and self-blaming provides a bit of relief from the painful Shattering and Withdrawal phases because it gives us a sense of power and adrenaline which feels better than powerlessness. This is why self-berating can be addictive. Like any addiction however, there are damaging effects.

I am looping in regrets at all the ways I screwed up in relationships or even in life overall

I feel I should have tried harder and done better to save the relationship

I believe if I were _____ (prettier/ richer/smarter/calmer) I'd be in a relationship and/or more lovable

A part of me feels I am not good enough to be chosen and loved

I keep comparing myself to others and what makes them better

I feel shame and believe maybe I do not know how to love the right way

I keep thinking about how I should have done this or that better

I believe I need to fix myself before I am ready to be valued and loved

I am noticing my Inner Critic keeps berating me with insults

Now that I think about it, I do not really deserve to be loved yet

I feel somewhat addicted to replaying in my mind all my mishaps and imperfections

Having a failed relationship makes me feel like I am a failure

I have so many flaws, it makes sense to me that I keep failing at love

I feel defective like there is something about me that just makes me unlovable or incapable of love

I feel the need to be perfect in order to deserve love and commitment

Being single means I am less-than or inferior to those in relationships

RAGE

Turning point in the healing process when you refuse to accept all the blame. Stems from prolonged feelings of helplessness and depression. Surges of anger and retaliation fantasies towards your ex or displaced on others. Learn healthy anger-processing tools, as this essential to fully healing. This is where a lot of people get stuck, without fully healing because they do not have healthy skills to process through rightful anger.

I am having angry outbursts

I feel 'on edge' and do not trust myself to be calm enough around others

I feel violated by my ex, their behaviors, their narcissism, etc.

I am more irritable than I am used to

I keep thinking about how my ex betrayed me or hurt me

I feel like I should 'be over it' by now but I keep finding myself in anger

I have a burning feeling in my heart

I feel angry about how I wasted my time, care, ____ (money, love, etc.)

I keep thinking about how my ex disappointed me or failed me

I am angry at how my ex failed me

I feel somewhat addicted to replaying all of my ex's screws over and over (maybe so I don't forget)

I have snapped at family, a friend or an innocent bystander recently

My ex has so many flaws, I can't help but feel angry at them

I am having retaliation fantasies towards my ex, I want them to feel pain and hurt like I am

I feel the need to be perfect in order to deserve love and commitment

I feel like I don't know how to process through my rightful anger so I can feel better and heal