

6 Keys to Help You Heal, Whether You Stay in Your Relationship or Leave

By Susie and Otto Collins

It very easy to get into a relationship, but when the relationship begins having major challenges, goes sour and you don't know what to do, then your decisions become much more difficult.

Whether you decide you want to stay with your partner and begin working to revitalize your relationship or to move on, here are some strategies and ideas to help you move forward in a more empowering way.

It seems that everywhere you look, many long-standing relationships and /or marriages are troubled or dissolving. If you're like most people, when this happens, you find yourself stuck in thinking about the past, wondering what went wrong, and unable to move from the pain of the relationship. It doesn't matter whether you leave, stay or were left—one of the best pieces of advice we can give you is to leave the past behind and not carry old "baggage" into the new life you would like to have.

We have each been through the break-up of a major, long-standing relationship and have come to appreciate those times in our lives—even though both divorces were very painful. We each, in our own ways, learned how to begin healing by not burying our feelings and to start moving toward what we wanted most in our lives instead of living in the past. It's this information, plus the experience of working with many people in our coaching practice who were in similar circumstances, that we'd like to share with you.

If you've been living with the question of whether to stay or go for any length of time you have undoubtedly experienced a great deal of painful feelings surrounding the challenges of this relationship.

The problem is, when conflict and challenges come up in most relationships, people tend to react in one of three ways:

Fight, Flight or Freeze.

You've probably heard these words "fight, flight or freeze" many times before but for most of us, just being familiar with these words still doesn't stop us from going into these patterns when things get difficult.

We've learned that most people go into "fight, flight or freeze" to protect themselves against painful feelings that are difficult or impossible to experience at the time they are happening. But, the problem is many people get stuck in this mode.

These "fight, flight, or freeze" defense mechanisms are useful sometimes in our lives but if you want to begin the healing process and create close, connected, alive relationships, you have to be willing to explore what you are feeling and have the courage to change this reaction.

For us, we think that the goal is to be so conscious and aware of what we are feeling that when we get triggered by what someone says or does, we are able to simply express what we are feeling without fear, judgment or blame and without jumping into past patterns.

Fight, Flight or Freeze can manifest in a number of different ways. All three of these reactions stem from the fear that your wants and needs won't be met. For example, fighting doesn't necessarily mean putting on the gloves and throwing things at each other.

Fighting can mean anything from holding onto the need to be right, staying stuck in your anger, holding on to the desire for validation and to be understood, or yelling, screaming and what you think of as fighting. Fighting is holding your ground with your "rightness" no matter what.

Fleeing (flight) doesn't only mean running away physically. It most often manifests as withdrawing emotionally to protect yourself so you won't have to speak or feel painful feelings and emotions. Fleeing can be turning on the television, eating or going to visit a friend instead of dealing with the situation. When you flee or run from what's going on emotionally or physically, the issues are there and won't go away until you come back and deal with them.

Freezing means getting stuck and not being able to move from the impasse of the situation. Very often we freeze because we don't know what to do next, don't have the confidence in our abilities or in ourselves, or have the belief that our life situation will be different beyond this moment. Many people who are frozen and are feeling stuck in their situations have adopted the belief that it's better to deal with the devil you know than the devil you don't know. Because of this, they stay stuck right where they are in situations they are unhappy with and which do not serve them.

To move from the fight, flight or freeze reactions, we suggest that you learn to tune into what you are feeling in each moment and embrace those feelings, whatever they are. When you focus on your feelings, you are not pointing fingers at someone in your past or your current relationship. You are just looking at the situation as it is and when you do this, you quit pointing fingers and the healing process can begin.

When you find yourself reacting in one of those three ways with the people in your life, stop your normal pattern and reaction, recognize what it is you're thinking and feeling and begin the process of healing the conflict between the two of you.

No matter how much fighting, fleeing, or freezing seems to be serving you in the moment, the undeniable truth is that when you are stuck in any of these patterns, it is impossible to begin creating close, connecting, alive relationships with the person you are now with or someone else as long as you remain stuck.

It's important to learn from the past but it's equally as important to not stay stuck in it. Whether you have decided to stay or go, you have to move forward as if you are starting fresh with a brand new relationship. We're about to share with you the six keys that we find are the most important to help move you from your past to healing and start you on your way to creating a new, more vibrant life.

Key 1: Never look at a relationship (or anything else) that hasn't so far worked out as a failure

Often it's the seed of a current or past "failure" that fuels you to the very success that you've always dreamed of. It sounds trite, but there's always something you can learn from every experience.

Past relationships give you a clearer picture of what you want and what you don't want in a relationship if you take the time to examine them. It's the power of contrast that living in an unfulfilling relationship may give you.

A woman we'll call Connie brought her intimate relationship to an end after several years of turmoil with her partner. After the break-up, she realized what this relationship had taught her and that it wasn't a "failure." This relationship had helped her to define the type of partner she would really resonate with--someone who was on a similar spiritual path, someone she could have a deep connection with, and someone who loved to be with groups of people.

This partner who she left wanted to always be alone with her and she liked to be with people. They also did not have the same spiritual interests which created distance between them. She learned to bless the relationship and let it go to make room for the type of partner she wanted to be with and to free her previous partner to find a more appropriate mate. She learned that her relationship wasn't a "failure" because of what it taught her about herself and her life—what she wanted and what she didn't want in a relationship.

People come and go in our lives. Some people are with us for a brief instant, for five days or for fifty or more years. The impact of these relationships on our lives can all be great. Sometimes we don't understand why we are involved with someone in a particular relationship or why someone has such a hold on us. We don't understand why someone comes into our life for a brief time and then leaves.

What we've learned is that if a relationship isn't working out, it is not a bad thing or a failure that our society likes to label it. It just may be that you have learned what it is that you were supposed to learn by being in a relationship with that other person and it's time to move on to other "lessons."

We're not suggesting that you take your relationships lightly and throw them away at the first sign of conflict--Quite the contrary. What we are saying is that the purpose of all relationships is to help us to grow--personally and spiritually. Even the relationships that are the most troubling to us can be gifts in learning more about ourselves. Those people who really get under our skin can be our best teachers. We suggest that you look at all of your relationships as growth experiences and move forward consciously by learning from them.

So instead of looking at a relationship that didn't work out the way you had hoped as a failure, look at it as growth experiences and move forward consciously by learning from them.

Key 2: Turn from the past and look toward the future ...YOUR future

Sometimes after a separation or during the process of rebuilding a relationship, we find ourselves dwelling in the past, our thoughts consumed with that other person. You will begin to heal when you start thinking and writing about what you want for your life.

After Susie's husband of 30 years left their marriage, she found herself thinking about him, wondering how he was doing and if he was happy. It wasn't until she decided to stop focusing on the past and her ex-husband's life and start focusing on what she wanted, that her life began to move forward in a powerful way. It was almost a physical sensation of turning her body forward toward **her** future. She began to create new goals for her life and pushed past the fear of being alone.

Setting goals is very important in this process of turning to your new life. The famous motivational speaker, Zig Ziglar said that he had never met a truly depressed person who had goals for his/her life and we know that

this is true. Take some time right now to create some new goals for your new life. What have you always wanted to do? What activities have you always wanted to try but something kept you from trying them? Are there any groups that you have wanted to join? We've found the key to moving forward in your new life is to figure out what you want your new life to look like and you can start small—but start.

Here are some things that can help you move forward:

- If you or your partner left your relationship, remove photos of your past partner that are prominently positioned in your house (You don't have to destroy them. Just put them away.)
- If you're staying in the same house that you and your partner shared, move the furniture and put some different things on the walls. Different inexpensive items that are "you" can really help you to move from your past into your present and future. Even if you are revitalizing your relationship, clear out some clutter together and you won't believe how that will help.
- Sign up for a class that will get you physically active—yoga, Tai Chi, martial arts, aerobics, swimming, tennis. Get your body moving! When you get your body moving, endorphins are released into your bloodstream that help you to feel more positive and uplifted.
- If you are on your own, find a support group—people who will not support you in being a victim or rehash why you left, but groups who will stimulate you into new thought and new ideas.
- If you are revitalizing your relationship, taking a class together at your local university, church or community center can help steer you in new directions together. Also thinking about setting and implementing new goals for yourselves and for your relationship will create movement which in turn creates healing.

Key 3: Know and understand that there are no "accidents" and that everything happens in divine order

Every thought, every moment, every action, every relationship and every event that happens in your life, happens to propel you toward your next phase of learning and personal growth.

Recently, Otto had a conversation with someone that he couldn't get out of his mind. In this conversation Otto was telling this person about some challenges he was having in his life. This person told him that a wise person once counseled him that when things in your life aren't making sense and you are confused and frustrated to understand that when you get to the end of your life and look back, everything will make perfect sense.

We thought this was a great way of looking at relationships that we believe didn't work out the way we'd hoped or planned. Sometimes we don't understand why we are involved with someone in a particular relationship or why someone has such a hold on us. We don't understand why someone comes into our lives for a brief time and then leaves. Then there are other relationships that we might have our entire lives--some good, some not so good. The point is that at the end of our lives, if we take a conscious look at our relationships, every one of them will have served us in our growth in some form or the other.

Before we came together, Otto had a relationship with a woman that although lasting only a few months had a dramatic effect on his life. He didn't realize it at the time but later completely understood the purpose of that relationship. After the relationship with this person was over, they both completely understood that her role in his life was to be a bridge.

This relationship gave Otto the vision of what was truly possible in relationship that he wasn't able to experience with his first wife. Even though this relationship was very brief, had he not met this person, he

would not have been ready to create the incredible relationship he now has with Susie.

So instead of looking at that relationship as an “accident” and one that didn't work, he looks at it as a blessing from God and is thankful everyday for what she gave him.

In one of our workshops, we asked the people in the group to consider the following questions about a person who had come and gone in their life:

- What did I learn about myself by being in a relationship with this other person?
- How did it help me to move forward and heal, learn and grow?
- What new beliefs did I take on or let go of as a result of being in a particular relationship?

As a result of considering those questions, one man in the workshop beautifully described a new revelation about his wife’s lengthy illness. He now realized how his wife’s illness of many years helped him to grow spiritually and as a person.

We invite you to consider those questions about your partner who has either come and gone or is still in your life. Your answers to these questions may bring an “ah-ha” moment for you too and bring a new appreciation for that person, what you learned by being with that person and what he or she has brought to your life.

Know that every person who comes into your life--whether for 5 minutes, 5 years or 50 years--can be a powerful teacher for you if you will only open yourself to the possibility and know that there are no “accidents.”

Key 4: Take 100% responsibility for the relationship —no more and no less

When a relationship experiences challenges, very often we want to assign fault and blame. When you are in a healthy relationship with another person, both people are equally responsible for the relationship. If a relationship isn't working, the same thing applies. No matter who appears to be at fault when challenges come up, both people are responsible. If you are taking more than your share of your responsibility for the relationship not working out the way you would like, you are being a martyr. If you take less than 100% responsibility for the relationship not working out, you are being a victim. You can only heal when you have let go of "fault" and "blame" and focus on letting go of the past and how you can do it differently in the future.

This can be a very difficult process if you are hanging on to the need to be right, anger, judgments and unexpressed resentments—especially if you feel your partner hasn't or won't take any responsibility for the health of the relationship.

Forgiving and forgetting may seem to be beyond reality for you now. It's like if someone says to you, "Don't think of the color blue" "Don't think of the color blue" "Don't think of the color blue," no matter how hard you try, you probably can't stop visualizing or thinking about the color blue.

The same thing happens when you try to "forget" a negative situation that has an emotional charge to it. No matter how hard you try, you just can't seem to do it. We believe that instead of forgiving and forgetting, you have to forgive and let go.

Many people write to us wanting to know how they can forgive when they have been wronged--a spouse cheated on them; they've been abused in one way or another; or maybe their feelings have been hurt and they don't feel loved or valued. What we have found is that the process of healing oneself when a relationship has ended or when a relationship is given a "second chance" requires more than forgiveness. You must also let go.

But let go of what?

In almost all cases when you are having a difficult time forgiving someone, you are holding on to an attachment of some kind or another. The attachments most commonly manifest themselves in the need to be justified, the need to be honored, the need to be right, the need to be vindicated, the desire for revenge, and the inability to move past fear.

So when you are holding onto an attachment, what you are actually doing is holding onto a position which is serving you in some way but it is not moving you forward in healing the relationship. We suggest that you let go of negativity and attachments by deciding to drop them—by deciding that you no longer want to carry and live with the pain and suffering that you have been living.

Key 5: Learn from the patterns of the past. Stay conscious in all your relationships so that you won't repeat the same mistakes

One woman we know is trying to do it differently after several relationships that ended. She is opening her heart to the possibilities of having the type of relationship that she has wanted but has somehow, up until now, eluded her. She is starting a new relationship without expectations and is just focusing on being real, authentic and being true to herself. She's not playing any of the roles she's played in the past as she enters this relationship. There is a different feeling within her about this relationship because of it. She is letting go of some of the destructive ways she has interacted with other partners in the past.

This is the first relationship that she has been honest about whether she wants to go somewhere with her partner or not. In the past, she would always agree to go wherever her mate wanted to go because she wanted to please him rather than please herself. After doing this for a period of time, she would lose sight of who she was and what she wanted and resentment

would build. Now, she is just allowing herself to open to the possibility of something wonderful happening and being herself in the relationship.

We suggest that the first step in healing any pattern that is a challenge for you or causing you pain is to become aware of what you are feeling within your body when you experiencing the issue. Susie had the pattern of not speaking her truth when there was conflict in past relationships. When she and Otto came together, she wanted to stop that pattern because unspoken words and feelings would always turn into resentment and create walls with her previous husband. She became aware that she felt a fluttery, sick feeling in her solar plexus and stomach when she didn't speak her truth and held back words. With Otto, she came to recognize those feelings, honor them and allow herself to speak the words she was holding back.

The first step to creating any change is awareness and allowing yourself to notice what's going on in your body—whether it's tightness in your chest, neck pain, headache or nervousness in your stomach. Go back in your mind—when did you notice you would have these sensations in previous relationships. Susie traced her feelings and inability to speak her truth to her childhood. Ask yourself, where did this feeling come from, who was there and what was the situation?

In a new relationship, as well as any, it's very important to differentiate what has happened in the past from what is happening now. Your feelings can guide you to uncovering your patterns and to creating healthier ways of being in your relationships.

Step 6: Give thanks for the lessons that you learned and change your attitude

Haven't many of us been told or maybe we've "learned" that relationships were hard and filled with misery? We're here to suggest that it

doesn't have to be that way. You can decide to have the relationships that you want and "to make up your own state of mind."

As painful as it is to hear, the truth is that everything in your life (including your relationships) is a result of the choices you have made up until now. If you don't like the circumstances in your life or relationships, decide to make other choices.

This could mean changing your attitude. It can mean focusing on what you like about your partner instead of what you don't like. It could mean opening up to bring new people into your life. It could mean deciding to be a better person in your relationships.

Whatever your challenges are, only you can decide to take one step forward toward having the relationships and the life you want. If you are having challenges moving on from your previous relationship, we suggest you start by honoring that person as a teacher, here to help you on your journey. When you find yourself feeling the victim or blaming the other person, change that thought to love and send it to him/her. Sooner or later you will actually be able to give thanks for the lessons that that person taught you.

Giving gratitude for your relationship and your life, whether you have stayed or left, will be positive movement to what you want in life. Change your attitude and you will change your life.

Finally . . .

If you would like to heal your life and your relationships, we have a new philosophy you may want to adopt. This philosophy is called "Up until now..."

What the "Up until now..." philosophy means is that no matter what mistakes you feel you've made, challenges you've had or problems you've encountered along the way, today is a new day and anything is possible from this moment forward.

One woman we worked with expressed her concern that her relationships constantly turned out miserably. She had never been able to create what she considered to be a good relationship and was fearful that this would be the way it always would be.

We told her that this may have been true up until now but in this moment, she had the opportunity to learn to do her life differently. Whether you're 20, 30, 40, 50 or 80 years old, it's never too late to begin again.

Whether your challenge is in the area of love and relationships, money, health, overcoming fears or any other challenge, it's never too late to learn a new skill, go to college, take more responsibility for yourself, meet new people, have more fun, make more money or find the love of your life.

So, how do you do this?

Step one is to acknowledge for yourself that there are other people who have exactly what you want for your life and to adopt the belief that if it's possible for someone else, then it's possible for you too.

Once you begin to believe that yes, other people do have what you want and it's possible for you too to have it, then begin opening yourself to opportunities that will come your way.

Don't beat yourself up if you fall into old patterns that don't serve you. Simply recommit to creating the life or relationships that you want.

If you feel that you must talk to others about your disappointments about the way things have been in the past, always use the phrase "Up until now... ". By using the phrase "Up until now...", you are opening your heart and mind to possibilities.

We suggest that when you think that you can't have what you want in your life, think of all the people who didn't give up on their hopes and dreams.

If you don't have the kind of relationship or the life that you really want, chances are excellent that there is one of two things standing between you and having what you want-- either there are things that you are not willing to do in order to have what you want or you are holding onto beliefs that are keeping you stuck.

We know from our own experience that when we have held onto limiting thoughts and beliefs, such as "I can't... or I could never...", we remained stuck. It wasn't until we opened ourselves to possibilities and changed our beliefs about those situations that we were able to move forward with those goals and heal.

Whether you have decided to stay in your relationship or leave, we invite you to change your thinking, create positive thoughts and affirmations and take some action that will help you to create the life that you want. As you read through this special report, you probably thought of some ways to move forward. We now invite you to take this opportunity to move past your fears and start moving toward the relationships and life that you really want.

About Susie and Otto Collins

In addition to being the creators of Passionate Heart— where we help people create passionate, loving, connected relationships that last—we've been called one of the world's leading experts on keeping the spark alive in a relationship.

As [Breakthrough Relationship coaches](#), soul mates, spiritual and life partners, we are passionate about making this world a more loving place by teaching people how to love themselves and each other.

After our first marriages both ended, we met at a local spiritual study group and had the proverbial "soul mate" experience with time standing still and a feeling of coming home. We've been together ever since and quickly found that even though we were "soul mates," we could lose our close connection

if we didn't learn some relationship and communication skills that we didn't have in our previous marriages.

Since 1999, we have been writing, teaching and sharing what we've learned about how to keep the spark alive, overcome jealousy, communicate with love and many other relationship topics.

We regularly offer workshops and talks on relationships and are prolific writers on topics that relate to helping people create connected, close vital, alive relationships.

Our free online weekly relationship newsletter reaches thousands of people all over the world. Along with our books and audio courses, we offer relationship and life coaching to singles and couples, in person and by phone.

We are co-authors of "Magic Relationship Words" "Stop Talking on Eggshells" "Red Hot Love Relationships" "Should you stay or should you go?" "No More Jealousy" "500 Communication Tips & Secrets" and many other books, audios and programs.

We passionately believe that life can be lived in a joyful, conscious, loving way and we are committed to helping others to experience the potential of what is possible in their own lives and relationships. The desire to be loved the way we wanted to be loved took each of us on a journey of discovery of how to create the relationship of our dreams. We believe Spirit put us together for our own personal growth and to shine the light of hope for others. Our goal is to help others create outstanding lives and passionate, alive, connected relationships.

We offer in-person or telephone coaching for couples, one person in the relationship or singles. This means that no matter where you live, you can still work with us personally to create the relationship breakthrough you want and the life you deserve to lead."

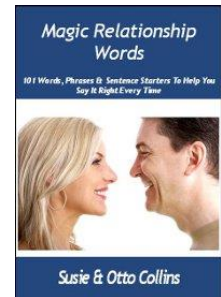
For more information about our work or to schedule a relationship coaching session, [email](#) or call 614-568-8282.

Susie and Otto's Books and Courses

Magic Relationship Words

Over 100 magic words, phrases and sentence-starters to make sure you say it right every time to your partner, spouse or lover. If you are looking for better ways to express what you're feeling and thinking and want to learn how to interpret what your partner is saying more effectively, this will help.

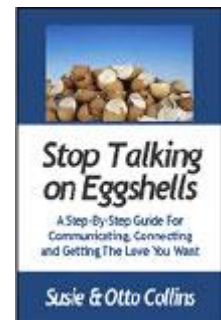
www.MagicRelationshipWords.com



Stop Talking on Eggshells

You'll learn how to talk with your partner (or anyone) without fear in this step by step guide for communicating, connecting and getting the love you want. When you apply this information, you'll feel more understood, loved and more connected than you ever thought possible.

<https://susieandotto.com/stop-talking-on-eggshells/>



Relationship Trust Turnaround

If trust is an issue for you or your partner, here's how to rebuild trust in your relationship or marriage, even after an affair or infidelity.

This complete package of information has been carefully chosen to give you all the information and help you're going to need to start turning trust around and rebuilding your relationship right away.

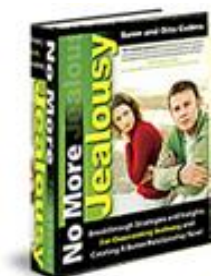
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No More Jealousy

This course is for anyone who wants to overcome and eliminate jealousy from their relationships and their lives.

<http://www.NoMoreJealousy.com>



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Should You Stay or Should You Go?

Should You Stay or Should You Go? is a book filled with compelling questions and insights to help you make that difficult relationship decision.

<https://susieandotto.com/stay-or-go/>



Breakthrough Relationship Coaching

Individual or couples coaching from anywhere in the world by Skype, phone or in person in our office in Columbus, Ohio. Find out more how we can help you resolve your communication or other relationship challenges so you can have the connection and lasting love that you've always wanted.

<https://susieandotto.com/coaching/>



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