

# How to deal with an emotionally shut down partner

SHOUNAK REZA

Dealing with an emotionally shut down partner can be difficult and unnerving, particularly when you are very expressive but next to nothing is reciprocated. It feels terrible when you go out of your way to show how much you care but mostly end up being met with what seems like apathy and indifference. At times, this is a solvable problem and can be dealt with, but there are times one needs to prioritize self-care and walk away.

These are some very basic steps that one can take to deal with an emotionally shut down partner.

## LETTING THEM KNOW

If you are hurt by something they did or said- or didn't say or do, for that matter- you should let them know about your feelings right away. If you keep little sparks of pain buried in your heart, they might eventually be fueled into great flames which would hamper your mental peace to a great extent. There is only so much one can put up with and your partner should know about the actions and words of theirs that cause you pain so that they can work on them.



## KNOWING JUST HOW MUCH TO COMPROMISE

While compromises and sacrifices are important, there is a limit to them. If you think you are having to sacrifice a lot, that your feelings are being unheeded to, you should talk it out with your partner. Nobody is perfect and it is very important that they understand the need to be more understanding, expressive and accommodative.

## MAKE THEM UNDERSTAND IT IS NOT HEALTHY

Emotionally shut down people often display

many other traits besides simply not acknowledging your efforts. When fights ensue, they usually try to evade them by changing the topic, leaving the issue unresolved. Make them understand how important confrontations are, how important it is for both of you to talk things out. Toxicity and negativity should be uprooted before they are watered and nurtured by further conflicts and problems- and yes, if your equilibrium is hampered because your partner refuses to acknowledge the problematic situation at hand, they are being toxic to you even if you

refuse to admit it.

## UNDERSTANDING WHAT CAUSED THEM TO SHUT DOWN

Some people are emotionally shut down because they are dealing with problems of their own. Depression - or any other psychological issue- could be a major reason and if this is the case, they need help. Make them understand that they need to see a therapist. Depression is an illness and it should not be left untreated.

If they have shut down because of a problem or a misunderstanding, ask them to discuss it with you. Silence is never a solution to anything. If there are cracks in a relationship, they can be repaired if there is effort and understanding on each side.

## KNOWING WHEN TO WALK AWAY

There are times you can't solve this problem no matter how much you try. Some people are emotionally shut down by nature and if it affects you and your mental peace, you should understand it is time you walked away. It is going to be painful, of course, but toxicity from a partner can go on to hamper your mental health and it needs to be prevented.

*When he is not dealing with mood swings, Shounak Reza devours books and tea and longs for eras he has never lived in. You can contact him at [www.fb.com/shounakreza](http://www.fb.com/shounakreza)*

# Friends Drifting Away

*Bryan Adams reminiscing about his sweet summer of '69 had always made me melancholic. The sickly nostalgia that oozes from the lyrics where he talks about the best days of his life were, I realised every time, just memories. Those days had drifted away beyond the point of no return just like some friends do.*



IQRA L QAMARI

The sense of losing a friend is similar to the utter loss of having your favourite "tong" shut down. The tinsed recluse, right around the corner alleys of your friendly neighbourhood that used to offer you that therapeutic, addictive tea. The tea which you kept buying on credit, owing to the good, old, rusted familiarity with the tong, finally ceases to exist making you feel directionless.

Life-changing episodes like graduation, a new job, moving to a foreign land for higher studies along with a million other reasons hover in the air for good things like friendship to come to an end. Surprisingly, there might sometimes be a profound lack of any reason at all. One might feel that their closely-knitted pack of friends is unsusceptible to the natural ebbs and flows of life and that they would always stay exactly how they remained in the photo album from their first trip together, laughing and carefree.

You will want to hold on to the bond you once shared with all your strength, but you will lose your grip slowly. However, this is not a downbeat article trying to convey a cynical message about how it's not worth holding on to people. In fact, I am here to tell you that it's okay.

When I stumbled upon this particular phase experiencing static in the connection I had with my then best friend, I turned into an anxious version of myself. I could not come to terms with the fact that we both were going on with our lives. That we would one day achieve all the professional feats in life we both had dreamt about as teenagers but now we will never giggle about our coworkers. But that is how life

functions. Regular conversations turn to occasional pleasantries and that plan of catching up remains dormant, occasionally becoming active in the form of a group chat which is usually muted later.

I did not need any earth-shattering epiphany to figure out that all these changes were part of growing up. I found myself smiling one evening while listening to a song, to the memories of that friend who was then a mere stranger. I concluded I still harboured the same amount of love for her in my heart and that realisation materialised into a text sent to her. We had connected after a long time. It did not mean we had a hysterical, tear-jerking reunion, but it felt like closure.

I understood that everyone we come across has a different purpose to fulfill. The weird bunch of people we pick up from a world of strangers and label as friends may not always offer a life-long of service.

It is best to shake off all the hostile sentiments we carry with us every day of our lives for people with whom we once used to burst out laughing. Funnily, it is a lot easier to accept that we enjoyed the time we were given, that we had provided each other with fulfilling memories which would present themselves spontaneously on a lazy afternoon triggering a million dollar smile. Forgiving ourselves and these friends who faded away would be the best closure a person can offer themselves. After all, memories should be look upon fondly or else they just might decide to haunt us.

*Iqra suffers from wanderlust, dreams of discovering the Loch Ness Monster and occasionally complains about Economics. Send her conspiracy theories at [iqra.kashmir53@gmail.com](mailto:iqra.kashmir53@gmail.com)*