**Termination of Romantic Relationship: A Serious Issue and It's Effects**

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**Abstract**

In this article, I explored and concluded the research results in recent years, discussing how termination of a romantic relationship can be a considerably serious social issue, refuted some challenges that claim such termination should not be considered to be a real problem, and urged the society to pay attention to this problem.

**Keywords**

romantic relationship, love, adolescence, mental health, social issue

**BACKGROUND**

During the long period of adolescence, besides their schoolwork, one of the most energy consuming things young teenagers have to handle with in their life must be their relationship. As their body rapidly growing, various kinds of hormones and pheromone secret actively as well. As a result, on a certain day, teenagers may find themselves strongly attracted by certain people around them, maybe their friend, classmate or even a stranger passing by. In English, we call such kind of emotion "love". Under the influence of love, teenagers will start to seek romantic relationship with those certain people who generated such attraction, which, by natural, is the very original stimulus that make human being and many other creatures with sexual reproduction survive, preserve, evolve and spread vigorously on this very planet.

However, not everyone can be fortunate enough to successfully pursue their version of happiness with little problem, but have to suffer from rejections and/or breakups. During the process, happiness may be enjoyed, but agony has to be suffered from as well for most people, even if they had already been involved in a long-term relationship. As a matter of fact, not just adolescents who just approached their maturity, but most people all around the world have to share such awkward situation. According to a research published in 1998, over 85% of adult Americans have experienced at least one breakup of a romantic relationship (Battaglia, Richard, Datteri, and Lord, 1998). As people's attitudes towards love and relationship become more and more casual, this shocking rate is still rising up and gradually get more and more people involved.

Here is the status quo that is widely known but has rarely been paid attention to, depression, anxiety and pressure caused by termination of romantic relationship has become one of the major reasons that undermine victims psychological status and mental health condition, especially for teenage girls (Soller, 2014) , and, as a result, reduce their productivity in schoolwork or career seriously. In modern time, a termination of romantic relationship can indeed become a considerable problem that has serious influences and effects. Although there are such researches argues that it's not a very serious case, it's not just a health issue, but it is also a social issue that worth paying attention to.

**DISCUSSION**

**Mentally harmful**

A peaceful and enjoyable relationship always plays the role of stabilizaer in human's life. People with it tend to present immense passion, happiness and productivity. Vice versa, the opposite will experience very different situations.

If the separation is unwanted, typical initial symptoms including panic and confusion may happen to victims, since a sudden breakup is similar to other traumatic events a person can experience (where something familiar and trusted is taken from them, often without warning.) Later various different kinds of emotions will emerge depends on which kind of case the certain person is in.

The first is pain. Psychological pain is always experienced by people who have experienced rejection, betrayal, or abandon. The same part of the brain that processes physical pain is activated when the emotional pain of a breakup is felt, and the person feels, behaves, and reacts in a similar way as someone who is in a great deal of physical pain. (Anita, 2015)

Since romantic love activated the components of human's brain that respond similarly with that react to food and drug, alike "addiction", namely, obsession will occur. (Anita, 2015) In addition, it is widely experienced that people who just suffered from a break up will have a difficult time stopping thinking about their former partner. Most of people would repetitively review that part of memory to figure out what exactly they did wrong that cost their precious relationship, but rarely get any correct or accurate answer and the repetition can provide victim nothing but continuous pain and suffering.

When people are in this status, even recalling the previous memory with happiness will hurt their mental health condition. The person is attempting to come to terms with a traumatic event, the end of an important relationship. Like other traumatic events, a person can respond with feelings of shock, being in denial, attempts to bargain with the ex to reconsider, feeling angry and sad, grieving, and eventually coming to accept that it's over. (Anita, 2015)

Identity shift creates identical agony like that caused by physical illnesses (Anita, 2015). An unstable status of relationship itself is a very serious problem as well. Research shows that marriage has also been consistently associated with better *mental* health. Compared with their married counterparts, single men and women have higher levels of depression, anxiety, mood disorders, adjustment problems, and other forms of psychological distress (Coombs, 1991; Cotten, 1999; Simon, 2002).

What's interesting is that, to many people's surprise, the dumpers themselves will de facto experience a hard time as well. Since most decisions made to end the relationship are not from impulsion, dumpers may experience dread and anxiety during the progress of considering the possibility. Guilt plays its role as well, many times the person who ends a relationship feels intense guilt over causing harm to someone they (used to) care about. Also, even though the dumpers are always perceived as "bad guys" for doing harm, they do experience similar feeling of isolation (Anita, 2015). Sometimes, it's neither dumpers' nor dumpees' fault, but regardless of who initiates the end of a relationship, psychological effects of significant relationship breakups are almost always bad and painful and thus worth considering.

**Hard to Heal**

If we take a view at these problems from an even more interesting sight and judge from a more general point of view, not only negative emotion caused by a failed relationship, but also research conducted by researchers from Belgium shows that sorrow is the emotion that last the longest and takes people about 120 hours to get over, which follows by hatred, about 60 hours, happiness, about 35 hours, and shame and disgust, which only lasts about half an hour (Verduyn, Philippe, and Saskia Lavrijsen, 2014). This result, I reckon, in some way can provide a reliable explanation to the moody status created by rejection or break ups, since those emotions we have discussed above, since it’s belong to the subset of all possible reasons to cause such unpleasant feelings.

As a matter of fact, inertia does not just exist on object in physical universe, similar mechanism also exists in human's psychological world that affect people's behavior subliminally. All of the eventual losses and changes in lifestyle that can result from a breakup. (Anita, 2015) It is well known how difficult it is in order to change a lifestyle even if it is wanted and prepared. Just think about how jet lag makes people weak and sleepy during day time and overactive in the night, one can clearly imagine how much power it has. And, obviously, end of a romantic relatioship is much more serious issue. The person experiences an immediate shift in identity from being a part of a couple to being single again. Rapid shifts in identity cause disorientation for most people, requiring time and emotional and cognitive processing to reorient to their new identity. Changes and losses that must be dealt with, but are not often anticipated. Such negative last too and consistently and affect people's quality of life for identically long time. When the time is enough, even water drops can penetrate a stone, the accumulation of the effect of the termination of relationship is by far more than considerable.

**Reduce Productivity**

Those who live with better relationship experience tend to be more energetic and productive while working or studying and thus more likely to make great accomplishements. Take the case of staff of Secondary School in Massachusetts as an example, research including 630 teachers in Massachusetts shows that, three common health conditions, namely obesity, depressive symptoms, and smoking, adversely affect theproductivity of high school employees. In another more general study, researchers also found out that workers whose total well-being risks decreased over time had improvement in several measures of productivity. A five percent reduction in well-being risks was linked to approximately a 0.75 percent decrease in absenteeism, a 2.40 percent decrease in "presenteeism" (time spent at work with reduced productivity), and a 0.25 percent increase in job performance (Alker, 2015).

This is not just an isolated case. According to a set of data provided by Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, In a given year, 18.8 million American adults (9.5% of the adult population) will suffer from a depressive illness while in a 3-month period, patients with depression miss an average of 4.8 workdays and suffer 11.5 days of reduced productivity (Valenstein, Vijan, Zeber, Boehm, Buttar, 2001). And approximately 80% of persons with depression reported some level of functional impairment because of their depression, and 27% reported serious difficulties in work and home life. (Pratt, 2008) As a result, depression is estimated to cause 200 million lost workdays each year at a cost to employers of $17 to $44 billion. (Stewart, 2003) I'm not saying that all cases of depression are caused by termination of romantic relationship, but based on the situation that has been previously discussed, this existence of such cases would cause serious reduction in productivity, and as a result, business may suffer from loss as well we the entire society.

**Public Security at Risk**

Falling in love by accident is no one’s fault, even when there is a rejection, we still have no valid reason to blame or accuse any of the people involved, voluntarily or accidentally. After all, both the rejecter and the rejectee just did what their heart tells them to do. However, these kind of misfortune do have some serious effects on the people involved. On the one hand, depression, intention and even attempt to commit to suicide is universal among all those people who are suffering from it, especially for girls (Soller, 2014). On the other hand, rejections, break ups and inauthenticity may also cause violent behavior, or bully in school or company. It is also believed that people with stressed mood, mental disorder may lose the control of their own behavior, act violently to the rejecter and even commit to felony like stalking, rape and even murder. Especially, girls may become victims of dating violence (Silverman et al. 2001).

In addition, a study based on more than 47,000 people in Sweden shows that people diagnosed with depression are roughly three times more likely than the general population to commit violent crimes such as robbery, sexual offences and assault, according to psychiatric experts. (Fazel, Seena, Wolf, Chang, Larsson et al., 2015) The study tracked the medical records and conviction rates of 47,158 people diagnosed with depression over a period of about three years. It then compared the data with the records of 898,454 people with no history of diagnosed depression. And it turns out that researchers found that 3.7% of men and 0.5% of women committed a violent crime -- a conviction for any of the following: homicide or attempted homicide, aggravated or common assault, robbery, arson and sexual offences (including indecent exposure, and illegal threats or intimidation) -- after being identified as clinically depressed. This compared with 1.2% of men and 0.2% of women in the general population. That's an incredibly large rate of the diagnosed population, and unless we pay enough attention to this urgent problem, public security will be continuing at risk.

**DEFENCE**

Some researchers claim that people will tend to overestimate or even exaggerate their reaction to their break ups because of their own *psychological immune systems*, so that they will feel less pain when they really encounter such events. (Gilbert, Lieberman, Morewedge, & Wilson, 2004). Evidence validated this theory to be true, but it just cannot undermine the seriousness of a termination of a relationship. As people who are familiar with how human's immune system works know, immunization is a kind of passive and reflexive function that was triggered by the invasion of external damage, which means it only start to work after a considerable damage is done to our body. The same is true for human's psychological system, the immune system only start to work after the break ups actually already has some extent of effect to our mind.

Another challenge is called *focalism,* which means people's tendency to focus only on the emotional event in the survey they participated in while making forecast and ignore those events in daily life that increase or decrease their psychological distress (Wilson, 2000). It is very likely for people to become flurried when considering the worst outcome, especially when facing all these possibilities alone. The potential event could occupy most of one's focus and create unexpected overeaction and distress, which can be suppressed by the company and comfort by closed ones and distracted by substantial events in daily life. However, this argument is not as valid as it claimed itself to be. Again, it says that because people tend to "ignore those events in daily life that increase or decrease their psychological distress", which exactly proves that the initial effect caused by the termination of a romantic relationship is strong enough to become considerable. Although this previous statement is true for sure, but is it really possible that people will always be fortunate to encounter things that decrease their distress? In fact, according to Murphy's Law， "Anything that can go wrong, will go wrong." (Sack, 2006) And sometimes it's just not that misfortune will attract each other and accumulate as a result, but when people are in depressed status, they are very likely to fail to accomplish anything else, and as a result, furtherly worsen their situation.

A third challenge to this that derived from the over-estimate theory is called *empathy gap* (Loewenstein, 1996, 2005) whereby participants insufficiently correct their forecast to counteract the biases introduced by their status quo (Gilbert, Gill, & Wilson, 2002). However, over-estimate stress does not mean mis-estimate stress. Even if one over-estimate ten enemies to be ten thousand enemies, it still can not make him feel relieved or safe after they find out that only ten exist. It is harmful without doubt and should be taken seriously in practice.

**CONCLUSION**

According to all those researches presented above, although many people regard "breakup", the termination of a romantic relationship to be trivial and not worth paying attention to, they seriously under-estimate the power of such misfortune. In conclusion, end of such relationship will have serious effects that does not only cause personal health issues but also many economic and social issues. As a result, more research and focus is needed in this area to figure out it's mechanism with more verified details and solutions that can help people with getting over such awkward situation.

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