

# How to cope with a broken heart!

Breaking up is hard to do — but you can survive divorce or the end of a romance if you recognize the 10 stages that everyone goes through when a relationship dies, an expert says.

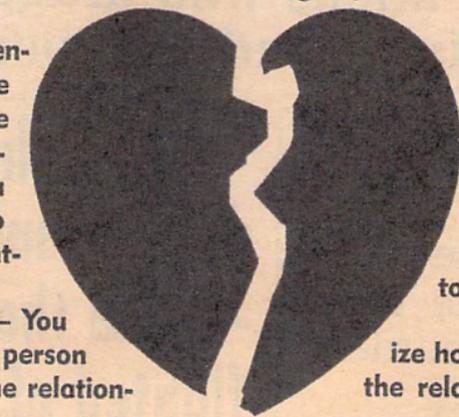
Here are the steps, according to Daphne Rose Kingma, author of *Coming Apart*:

1. "I can't believe this is happening" — In the beginning of a love affair we all think we're going to live happily ever after. So when that relationship is ending, eventually you must face facts. One out of two marriages ends in divorce and countless romances break up every day.

2. "You can't do this to me" — You feel like a victim because the other person wants out and you want to keep the relationship going. But there's no point — if your partner wants to split up.

3. "I'll do anything, just say it isn't so" — At this point you become frightened and try to bargain to keep the relationship going. Deep down you know it's over but you're afraid to admit it.

4. "I'll never stop crying" — When you realize the romance is



over, you're flooded by grief. But time really does heal all wounds.

5. "It's really over" — You realize that there's no way to salvage the marriage or romance. Now you can begin to feel better.

6. "It's all your fault" — The phase that follows sorrow is anger. Lashing out is a natural feeling, but

it passes when each partner realizes a breakup is nobody's fault.

7. "Did I want to break up?" — The person who asked to end it often has second thoughts. He or she wonders if separating was a mistake. And you, the jilted lover, will question whether you're secretly glad the relationship is over.

8. "I'm not myself anymore" — When a relationship ends you define yourself in a new way. You begin to shape a new identity.

9. "The old me is back" — You realize how much of yourself you sacrificed in the relationship. You devote more time to yourself, resume old activities or go back to school.

10. "The door to my heart is closed" — In this last stage, you stop thinking of the person you once loved with longing, regret or anger. You think of them simply as someone you knew during a period of your life. At last you're ready to get on with your life.