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CENTERSTONE
Wellness Program

5 Steps to Reunite a Lost Relationship

Many people have relationships that dissolved due to past differences. Perhaps you had a misunderstanding with your sister, or feuded with your parents. Maybe you simply let a friendship slip away. Sometimes a bitter dispute from the past can keep loved ones from reconciling. However, with some effort you can begin to resolve conflicts and misunderstandings with friends or family. There are 5 key steps you can take to restore any relationship.

Know yourself

Before you attempt to contact a lost friend or relative, you should first assess your motive. Why is it is important to make this contact? Here are motives that may apply to your situation:

- You realize life is too short to hold grudges.
- You are willing to offer forgiveness.
- You seek forgiveness.
- You concede you have not made an outreach attempt before.
- You want to understand their perspective of the problem.
- You want to communicate your feelings before it is too late.
- You desire to regain the relationship that was lost and are willing to compromise.
- You acknowledge there is no perfect time to reach out to the other person, and there is no time like the present.

Humble yourself

After you clarify your motive for reaching out to a former friend or disconnected relative, you are more prepared to humble yourself and accept the risk of being vulnerable. You accept that there are no guarantees for reconciliation. The outcome of your efforts is uncertain. Do not let fear paralyze your life. Having the desire to reconcile without taking action makes you more vulnerable. By putting yourself on the line, you have a chance to get what you want. Learn to admit when you are wrong. The quicker we humble ourselves and admit wrongdoing, the faster we will be able to make peace.

Listen for understanding

There is no value in communication if shared listening is not the foundation. Take time to hear and understand the viewpoint of the other person. Withhold your opinions and truly seek to appreciate the pain or despair they may have also endured. Get rid of guilt trips. Defending your position while inducing a guilt trip on the other person will only reignite the flame that burned the relationship in the first place.

Offer forgiveness

Forgiveness is a powerful gift in any relationship. You must be willing to offer forgiveness if you truly want to move beyond the past. Offering forgiveness does not mean you agree with the other person. By offering forgiveness you do not allow your differences to rule your heart, mind and future. Remember, while you may be ready to reunite with your friend or family member, the other person may need time to think through your proposal and their response. Don’t rush the reunion, or the relationship may not have time to fully reconcile.

Have realistic expectations
Move forward with love

Without realistic expectations your hope for renewal will only lead to dejection. It may be unrealistic that your friend or family member will immediately proclaim their faults and beg your forgiveness. You cannot control their response or lack thereof. You can prepare yourself to deal with their reaction. You are responsible for your actions and the way you live your life. Reconciliation and restoration are powerful if they are base on authentic healing. No matter how the situation unfolds it is important to maintain dignity and respect for yourself as well as the other person. Move forward with your life and love the people you are with every day.

Centerstone (615) 460-HELP (4357)

About Centerstone

Centerstone (www.centerstone.org), a not-for-profit organization is the nation's largest provider of community-based behavioral healthcare. With a history that spans over fifty years, Centerstone provides a full range of behavioral health and related educational services to more than 69,000 individuals of all ages and their families annually. Children, adolescents, adults, seniors, and families all receive help from a multitude of different programs in more than 120 facilities and 150 partnership locations in Tennessee and Indiana. Centerstone is accredited by the Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities (CARF) in Tennessee and The Joint Commission in Indiana. For more information about Centerstone, please call toll free at (888) 291-4357.

About Susan Gillpatrick, MEd, LPC, CTS

Susan Gillpatrick, Centerstone Crisis Management Specialist, primarily works in the field with clients in critical incident response situations, and in Centerstone's wellness trainings and presentations. She is also responsible for planning and implementing marketing and growth strategies for Centerstone's Crisis Management Strategies.

In recent years, Ms. Gillpatrick worked for the Shelby County Government Victims Assistance Center in Memphis. There, she co-developed a model program for the state of Tennessee entitled, "Homicide Response." Her work in this area received the 2000 Achievement Award from the National Association of Counties.

Ms. Gillpatrick is a Licensed Professional Counselor, Certified Trauma Specialist, Certified Workplace Conflict Mediator, and Mental Health Service Provider in the state of Tennessee and a National Certified Counselor. She is also a member the American Counseling Association, the Association of Traumatic Stress Specialists, the Tennessee Mental Health Counseling Association, and the Middle Tennessee Employee Assistance Professionals Association. She is a frequent presenter at local and national conferences, and has had numerous articles published. She received her Master of Education degree in Human Development Counseling from Peabody College at Vanderbilt University.