

## How to Cope When Others Hurt You

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People likely won't understand how your personal problem affects you. You need to be able to cope. This article should help. Find author Bill Allin at <http://billallin.com>

### How to Cope When Others Hurt You

'More hearts pine away in secret anguish for unkindness from those who should be their comforters, than for any other calamity in life.'

- [Edward Young](#), English poet (1681-1765)

We don't think in terms of hearts "pining" away these days. But then, Edward Young lived some time back.

Today people are sad, depressed, withdrawn or just plain "hard to get along with." We take pills, eat too much, go dancing, join clubs, watch endless reruns on TV. Or we just mope (pine away).

Loneliness and poorly developed social skills no doubt play a large part in people pining away. It's easier to pine away and be lonely if you don't know how to make new friends. Edward Young brings our attention to one cause we would all rather not think about. Living with someone who is unkind or who doesn't care enough to make life really worthwhile. In most cases, a person suffering this fate reacts the same to each of the two because they can be the same problem with only slightly different faces.

What is an unkindness? It sounds bland and meaningless, unless you're the victim. An unkindness is an act of behaviour by one person that hurts another. It's not the intent of the doer, but the reaction of the receiver that matters. Neglect can also be an act of unkindness.

Of course you may be tempted to think that something considered an unkindness is personal, that, as some believe of happiness, unkindness is a personal choice. In that case, if a person chooses to see the action of another as an unkindness, it is, but if the person chooses to ignore the act, it's not an unkindness. Choose to see something as unkind or choose to not think anything of it.

It doesn't work that way in real life. Unfortunately, it's not that simple. What one person considers unkindness seems beyond their control. If an act violates the basic life values of a person, that person is incapable of controlling their reaction. If the unkindness is in the form of neglect, that may be outside of their control as well.

What's the choice? The choice is to consider unkindness from someone we care about as not worth time or thought. Just ignore it. But ignoring behaviours that used to hurt stuns the emotions, makes them "cold." No one who is capable of deep feelings for others wants to lose that, to become cold, to maybe lose the ability to love in the process.

Therapist offices fill each day with people who feel others have been unkind, are unkind, continue to be unkind to them. They don't know how to cope with a problem they believe rests with the other person. More lives are ruined by an inability to cope with problems than for any other single reason.

So is living with or being close to a friend, neighbour or workmate who is unkind--who commits unkind acts--hopeless? It is if you believe it is.

If the unkind person is someone you live with and you want to continue that relationship, you need to show the unkind person more love. That doesn't necessarily mean you have to love them more or have sex more often. We humans assess the weight or value of the love that others have for us by touch. The more someone touches us, the more we feel that person shows their love. The touch may be casual, such as touching the other's arm as you pass. It could also be a lingering touch, such as when you watch television sitting next to each other or do something else together. Just don't linger long enough that the touch seems fake or contrived. That's turns people off.

Of course the touch method of assessing love works both ways. But many people don't know that. In fact, some people find touch--even loving touch--in some circumstances almost offensive. That kind of person lacked love and touch as a child. Learning to touch and to be touched may take that person years, but they will come around.

Consistency and persistence matters. They can change if they want to and if the other person tries hard enough for long enough.

Friends, workmates and neighbours can also find ways to touch each other casually. Often that involves a hand touching the arm of the other as a means of emphasis in a conversation. That kind of touch is always brief, never more than a second or two. Longer than that could cause alarm or suspicion.

Dealing with a situation of repeated unkindness almost always involves doing something you are not accustomed to doing. If you were doing it already, the unkindness may never have occurred.

Will this method work for everyone? No. Some people are emotionally cold and can't be changed. The choice then is to stay or leave, keep the friendship or find other friends. Staying with an emotionally distant mate does not necessarily mean living a life in the belief that the other person doesn't love you. It means accepting what you can't change and doing something differently yourself.

Join a group or activity where touching is a part of the activity. Take dancing lessons, for example, or join a group where close contact is the norm. Or help others. Many volunteer situations involve circumstances where two people touch in the course of an event. Volunteering can help both the person who needs help and the volunteer. Both benefit.

Often people who need help from others have found themselves in that situation because they could not cope with their life circumstances. Sometimes those life circumstances involve needing loving touch and having no way to get it. Lives can literally dribble away when people need love and touch, don't know it, and waste their life away looking for something they don't understand in places they will never find it.

Any problem you may have with another person may be very hard to cope with. Now you have a choice. You have a way to improve the relationship between you. Or you can leave. The latter choice may not be easy, especially if the other person is a spouse or life mate. It doesn't guarantee eventual happiness either, especially if leaving means finding yourself in a life situation where you need social assistance just to survive.

Learning coping strategies may be the best answer. It isn't easy. Life problems and working through them never are.

Bill Allin is the author of ***Turning It Around: Causes and Cures for Today's Epidemic Social Problems***, a guidebook for people who need to learn what they missed as children or who want to teach their own children what they need so they won't grow up to be socially or emotionally unbalanced adults.

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