

Generations

Breaking up is always hard to do

A couple of weeks ago, a good friend of mine called, very upset that her boyfriend had called it quits via a text message.

As I listened to the details between sobs, my mind wandered back to the memorable "Sex and the City" TV episode during which Carrie was dumped via a Post-It note stuck onto the screen of her laptop and her gal pals provided their shoulder to cry on like it would be my duty to do with my friend.

When I could finally get a word in, and there was a sense of calm from her end, I ended the call with, "It's going to be OK and every day will get better and better."

I know she didn't believe me, but there's not much else one can say when a friend is hurting. She's young, beautiful, smart and has the whole world at her beck and call — but she isn't going to believe me no matter how many times I tell her that.

I've been dumped many times in the past, and the first couple of days are pretty tough. But the

text-message part of her split got me wondering if there was a right way and a wrong way to break up with someone.



Peg DeMarco
In today's electronic age, is a text message or a Post-It

note now considered sufficient to do the deed?

For the older generation, it used to be what we called a "Dear John" or "Dear Jane" letter, but since no one seems to write letters anymore, I suppose that method has become extinct.

A nice card might suffice with a picture of a puppy or kitten — no, that is probably too corny and tough if one of the two is planning to take complete ownership of the pet after the breakup.

Facebook? Instant Message? Twitter? I think not. No one wants to tell the world that kind of bad news.

All advice references I checked said to definitely do the uncoupling in person if at all possible (un-

less continents separate the two parties).

If the relationship is relatively new, you might be able to unhook over the phone, but if you've been out on more than a handful of dates, it's best to do the right thing and end the relationship in person.

According to www.wiki-how.com, it's also important to choose the right time. The article said to avoid holidays and special occasions like birthdays and anniversaries at all costs.

Naturally, Valentine's Day would be the worst day of all. Statistics show that most students break up during summer break. For everyone else, Monday seems to be the most popular day of the week for breaking up.

That must be true, because the Mamas and the Papas made a million-dollar hit song with their lyrics: "Monday, Monday, can't trust that day; Monday, Monday, sometimes it just turns out that way; oh, Monday morning you gave me no warning of what was to be; oh, Monday, Monday, how

could you leave and not take me?"

Next, according to all reports, one must pick an appropriate place. The less public, the better.

Don't do it in a place where the person on the receiving end isn't going to feel especially vulnerable, and avoid these break-up locations at all costs: the office, at a wedding, in a car, at school or in a restaurant or nightclub. No one wants a dish of pasta thrown or a perfectly good martini wasted — shaken, not stirred.

Judging from the places not to do it, I suppose places like a park (without a nearby river) or a church might be a pretty good option (for extra help from above).

Also, don't lie. A sudden job transfer to Australia, an incurable disease, a decision to enter the clergy, or your mom made you do it may seem surefire ways to get out of the relationship, but they're guaranteed to blow up in your face and not worth risking your reputation or making the recipient's blood boil.

Be honest, but sensitive. No one likes to get dumped, but we at least appreciate the truth when it's over. There's no point being negative, so try to exit with as much decorum as possible. The phrase "It's not you; it's me" should be avoided at all costs. It's been over-used, and no one believes it anymore.

Keep your emotions in check. Don't seem too happy about the breakup because you'll come off as mean-spirited. Just be kind, caring and considerate.

Don't react. Some people don't handle rejection well. Some people yell, scream or cry. But it doesn't mean you should react to their meltdown. Be honest and sensitive, and try to listen to his or her emotions and act upon them.

Recently, my gal pal called and said she had just met the love of her life. It was on a Tuesday, of course.

Peg DeMarco is a Morganton resident who writes a weekly features column for The News Herald. Contact her at pegdemarco@earthlink.net.