



***BROKEN
RELATIONSHIPS***

NOW YOU'RE FEELING PAIN

You've been in a relationship, and now separated. A marriage, and it's broken up. You've been living with someone, and now they're gone. Been going out together, but no more. You're out of tune with your parents, with your child . . . And you're feeling pain. Very real pain.

Some people can deal with the grief of death better than they can with the pain of a broken relationship. In a broken relationship, the two human halves live on — but separately, no longer a part of one another's lives.

HOW DO YOU PICK UP THE PIECES?

If you're lucky you've got friends who'll listen to you. Some will hang in there and listen to it time and again. These ones are very good friends, and you mustn't hate them for it when you've started to get back on your feet. Sometimes it's these patient listeners whom you'll reject later.

It's only natural. It's a bit like going to a party and making a complete idiot of yourself. You never want to see the people at that party again. You feel you've made yourself vulnerable.

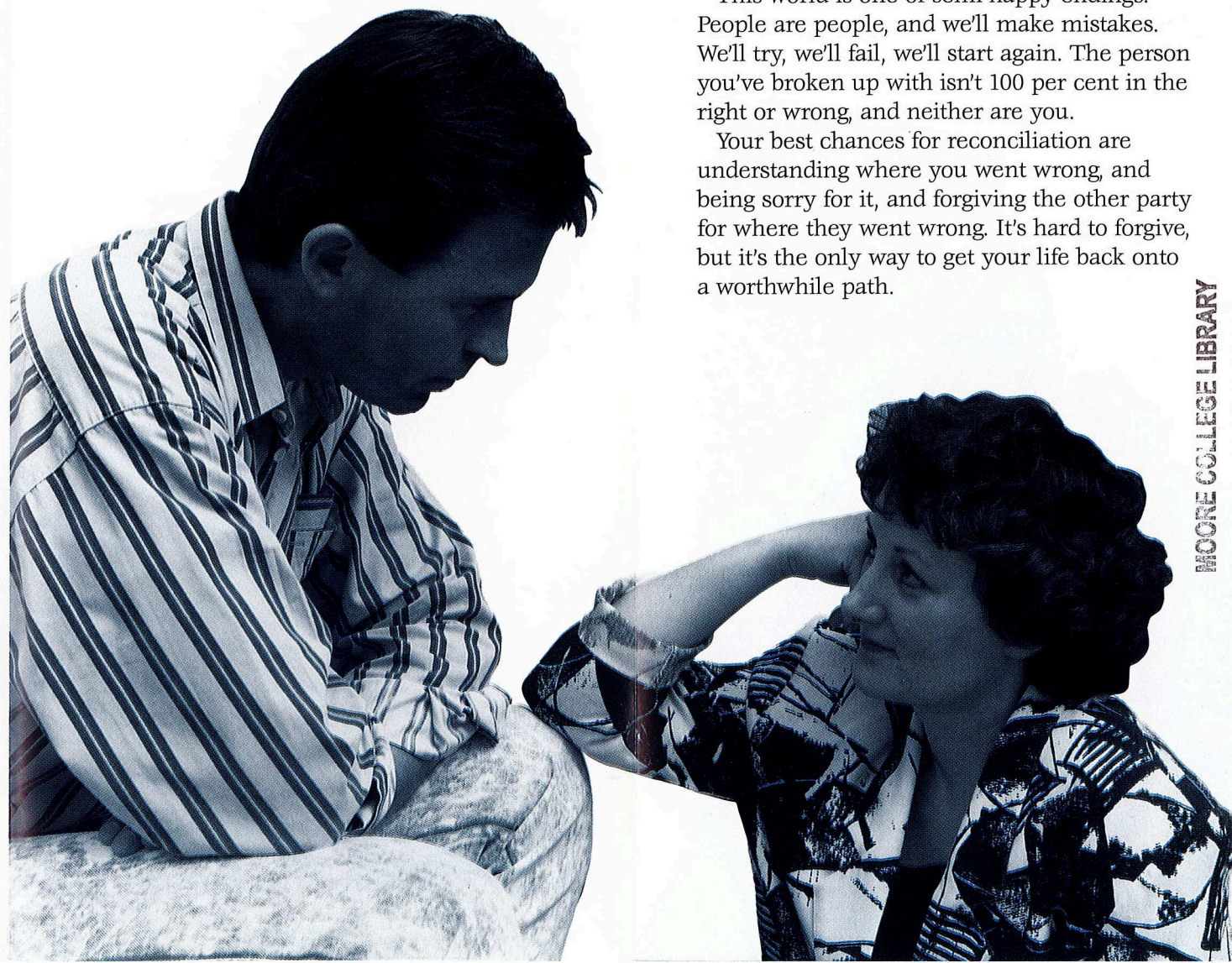
YOU WILL GET OVER IT

At the moment you don't think you'll ever get over it. If it was a good relationship it's no wonder you feel that way. If it's the relationship of child and parent that's broken, then you may feel that part of you is missing and that you'll never be quite the same person again.

If it was marriage, then a breakup is the tearing apart of one flesh. And that applies whether you've been married by a priest or a celebrant. The pain of breaking up feels the same. If the marriage has produced children,

double the pain.

"If you have a divorce, you're angry for a year. If there are children involved, two years" is the brutal rule of thumb. Some people break up, spin out, and go straight into another relationship which happens to work. And it ends up just about the same.



CAN YOU GET THE RELATIONSHIP BACK?

Some people do, some people don't. We can't *make* someone love us — no matter how hard we try — by being sexy or macho or through money or being a doormat. If we're being honest with ourselves, we know that we're not perfect. So try and hold on to the fact that what has broken up was not perfect, because none of us is perfect, not even you.

This world is one of semi-happy endings. People are people, and we'll make mistakes. We'll try, we'll fail, we'll start again. The person you've broken up with isn't 100 per cent in the right or wrong, and neither are you.

Your best chances for reconciliation are understanding where you went wrong, and being sorry for it, and forgiving the other party for where they went wrong. It's hard to forgive, but it's the only way to get your life back onto a worthwhile path.

BETTER LOVE THAN HATE

Cars are made to run on fuel, not pea soup. The way the world's been made, it runs better on love than hate. And that's not self-love as in the soapies, but 'other person' love, even when you think they don't deserve it. Especially then!

This may not seem clear right now. Perhaps you feel the other person's done you wrong. They've hurt you, and anger feels better than hurt. Anger gets you through many a bad night. You feed off it.

The trouble is, we become what we eat. We eat garbage, we become garbage. We eat anger, we become twisted by it.



YOU'RE NOT ALONE

We've all experienced a failed relationship. We come through them in one way or another. It's only by God's grace that such emotional healing can take place. And it's only through growing with Jesus that we can make good of the bad relationships, and all of our past hurts.

While human love is never perfect, while people always fail and need to be forgiven for those failures, there is a love which is perfect.

You're in a broken human relationship. But without Christ, you are in another broken relationship — an even more imperfect one — you're out of relationship with God. Fix that relationship first. Then ask Christ to sort out your other relationships and heal the hurt. He will, in the way that is *best* for you.

In a world where everyone seems turned against you, God loves you more than you could imagine. After all, he knew you even as you were being formed in your mother's womb. You might be in darkness now, looking out into more darkness. But the light is there, and we all desperately need to see.

Written by Tony Morphet in consultation with the AIC Committee.

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