



WHEN IS IT TIME TO START A NEW RELATIONSHIP?



Australia wide call 1300 635 221

info@melca.com.au
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Starting a new relationship – how do you know you're ready?

After separation or divorce, the mere thought of meeting someone new can bring about mixed emotions. From excitement about a new relationship, anticipation about who it might be and what joy they may add to your life, to feelings of uncertainty and trepidation. You may feel stressed about how best to navigate this new chapter. You may be wondering:

- ◇ How do I find the right person?
- ◇ Am I looking for a serious relationship or just something casual and fun?
- ◇ What will I do if I want to introduce the children to them? What is the best way to do this?

The biggest question to begin with and probably the most important is **how do you know when you're ready?** Let's look at some questions you can ask yourself before navigating this new experience.

Many people will receive lots of well-meaning advice from friends and relatives about this new and exciting chapter. Some people will encourage you to date or explore your options. Others will caution you to avoid opening yourself up to new experiences. But the only person who knows if you're truly ready, is you. You can determine this feeling by acknowledging where you are emotionally and psychologically on your separation journey.

Please see pages 2, 3 and 4 of this document for a helpful worksheet to write down some thoughts and plans to help you with navigating this decision.

Are you thinking about separating or recently separated and wanting to know more about our process?

Get in contact one of our friendly and expert team members. Telephone: 1300 635 221 | info@melca.com.au | www.melca.com.au

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Worksheet for you.

Where it says yes or no, fill this section out with your experiences. You may find there are parts of both sections that you can include.

Remember when completing these tasks try to be honest, constructive and respectful.

Have you detached from your ex? Or are you still wondering what they are doing, where they are going, who they are hanging out with?

Yes	No
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Have you reached the acceptance stage of the grieving process? Or are you still feeling a lot of sadness and regret? Give examples of feelings and behaviours that suggest that you have (or have not) accepting that your relationship has finished.

Yes	No
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Are you still caught up in the emotion of hope that your ex might want to rekindle the relationship? For example, how do you feel when you need to communicate with your ex? Do you find excuses to contact with your ex? Again, think about your reactions and note them down in the boxes below.

Yes	No
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Do you feel that you have grown as a person? How do you see yourself? Do you feel you are able to manage life well on your own? Can you take responsibility for your own happiness and well-being? What activities do you now do that you haven't in the past?

Yes	No
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Do you feel like you have reclaimed or developed your identity? How do you describe yourself? Can you easily say why someone would want to spend time with you? Are you able to express to others what you need from them? Make some notes in the boxes below.

Yes	No
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Do you have independent interests and are you able to enjoy life on your own? Give some examples of activities that you enjoy and why you are interested in those activities. Or think about what you would like to do and what is holding you back.

Yes	No
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If you answered yes to all of the above, you may be ready to start dating again and bring a new partner into your life who will add value to the amazing person you are.

If you truly and deeply know that you are at that stage of self-fulfillment and self-love and you're ready to share your world with a significant other, consider this next chapter as a journey rather than a sprint. When coming out of a relationship of years or even decades, we recommend to start off small and slow. The idea of meeting someone and feeling obliged to go on a romantic dinner date, see a show, or head off on a weekend getaway can feel terrifying. Instead meet for lunch or a coffee to get your feet wet and then build yourself up to the bigger dates.

If you answered no to any of the above questions, it may be a good idea to hold off on the idea of finding and accepting someone new into your life, and continue to look within. Having time on your own can be incredibly valuable. It can allow you the time to reconnect with yourself, work on areas you may have been ignoring and allow you and your children to adjust to a new life. You and your children may benefit from more time to adjust to co-parenting before grappling with introducing them to a new partner. You may find this worksheet helpful in guiding you and helping you get ready for the next stage.

Worksheet for you.

When we write things down and have a plan, we seem to have much better clarity of our future.

Remember when completing these tasks try to be honest, constructive and respectful.

Do I have any hobbies or interests I want to explore that I've been putting off? What are the first steps you could take to start your exploration? What might hold you back? What do you need to do to overcome this? What action will you take tomorrow to start you off?

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How comfortable am I spending time alone and doing things for/by myself? eg going out for breakfast, walking along the beach, hiking, travelling solo etc. Give some examples of things you have tried or would like to try and what you could do to make the experience as easy as possible for you. Write down 3 actions you could take.

What do I want out of my next relationship? What are my non negotiables? For example, I want someone who is happy to have quiet nights at home or I want someone who is interested in exploring in the natural environment, maybe you want someone who is interested in going to parties and events. I want someone who takes pride in their appearance. I want someone who is relaxed and easy going? Be specific.

Once you feel confident and comfortable with yourself and have a clear picture of the sort of person you would be happy to spend time with, take it slowly as discussed above.

If you feel you are still struggling with your new life and being single, we can recommend people who can help you in really practical ways to move beyond where you are. Please reach out via our website.

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