

The Responsibility of Ending Your Match



Matches end for a variety of reasons and at different stages in the friendship. How the ending of your match is handled can be crucial to how a Little Sister is able to view future relationships. If an ending is not positive and leaves the Little Sister without the opportunity to discuss and resolve her feelings, it may make it more difficult for her to enter into, and to trust future relationships.

However, with appropriate support and an opportunity to say goodbye, that same Little Sister may in fact hold onto treasured memories and feel good about her role in this special friendship. The ending can also help her to be better prepared to deal with future separations which will be inevitable in her life.

The following are recommendations to assist you, as the Big, to say goodbye to your Little Sister in a manner that will be constructive and help her in the future.

Your Little Sister may go through some familiar stages in a grieving process. The following are some stages and suggestions on how to respond:

Denial

- Be clear and concrete that the relationship is ending
- Acknowledge that there will be an end and this is hard for both of you

Anger

- Accept the anger
- Acknowledge it
- Help her talk it out rather than acting out

Mourning

- It's okay to cry
- It's good for both of you to share sad feelings
- Getting feelings out means that they won't be festering on the inside

Independence

- Being aloof, alone, finding others
 - Let this happen
 - Don't take it personally
 - Your Little is "trying on" what it will be like without you in her life

Romanticizing about the relationship

- Help her to remember both the positives and the negatives in the friendship and to expect that no relationship will be perfect all the time.

If at all possible, plan ahead. Tell your Little Sister that it is time to close the match and end your Big/Little Sister relationship. Talk about her feelings and share yours. Give her time to reflect and go through the stages. Use the following to help with the discussion for both of you:

[Click here to view our Exit Questionnaire](#)

Be prepared that your Little Sister's reaction may not be what you expect. Each child will react differently. Just because your Little Sister doesn't appear sad in front of you, doesn't mean that she doesn't feel that loss, or that she doesn't care.

Don't make promises you won't or can't keep. If you don't follow through with a promise, you may undo all the good that you have done. It is better to create a pleasant surprise in the future than to create unfulfilled promises and unfinished business.

Beginnings cannot exist without endings. You have contributed significantly to a young woman's life and your impact can be meaningful even after your match is closed. The ending of this relationship can be a growing and learning experience for your Little Sister. Please help make it a positive one.