THE PURGE

A Guided Exercise for Letting Go of an Unhealthy Relationship
and Reclaiming Your Space

You can’t fully let go of someone while continually surrounding yourself with reminders that pull you back to them.

After an unhealthy relationship ends, we often think moving on is something that happens entirely inside us. But our environment can quietly keep the relationship alive.

The photos you keep scrolling through.

The old text thread you reread.

Their name in your contacts.

The gifts sitting around your home.

Their social media you still check.

The places, playlists, and objects you return to when you’re lonely.

Each one can become a doorway back into the relationship.

The Purge isn’t about pretending the relationship never happened. It’s about becoming intentional about what you continue allowing access to your attention, your emotions, and your life.

You’re not erasing your past.

You’re creating space for what comes next.

Practical note: Before removing anything, preserve records or belongings needed for legal, financial, parenting, safety, or other important obligations. Choose the actions that are safe and appropriate for your situation.

PART ONE: IDENTIFY WHAT KEEPS PULLING YOU BACK

Before deleting or throwing anything away, take inventory.

Your Phone

- ☐ Old text conversations
- ☐ Photos and videos
- ☐ Saved voicemails
- ☐ Contact information
- ☐ Notes, screenshots, or messages
- ☐ Shared albums
- ☐ Other: _____

Social Media

- ☐ Their profile
- ☐ Their friends/family you follow primarily because of them
- ☐ Old photographs together
- ☐ Saved posts or messages
- ☐ Checking their activity
- ☐ Accounts you use to indirectly see what they're doing
- ☐ Other: _____

Your Physical Environment

- ☐ Gifts
- ☐ Clothing or belongings they left behind
- ☐ Photographs
- ☐ Cards and letters
- ☐ Souvenirs
- ☐ Objects connected to significant memories
- ☐ Items from the relationship you're holding onto purely because of what they represent
- ☐ Other: _____

Which of these things still creates an emotional reaction in me, and why am I choosing to keep it?

PART TWO: THE PURGE

Now go through what you identified.

For each item, make one conscious decision:

DELETE • REMOVE • UNFOLLOW • BLOCK • RETURN • DONATE • DISCARD • KEEP

Don’t remove something simply because it belonged to the relationship.

Remove it because keeping it keeps you attached to something you’re trying to release.

What does this represent to me?

What emotion does it bring up?

Am I keeping this because I genuinely want it, or because some part of me isn’t ready to let go?

Does this belong to the life I’m building, or the life I’m leaving behind?

PART THREE: THE DIGITAL PURGE

Go through:

> **Messages • Photos • Contacts • Social Media • Email • Saved Videos • Shared Albums**

And then:

> **DELETE • REMOVE • UNFOLLOW • BLOCK**

Stop reopening the wound.

No checking whether they viewed your story.

No looking to see who they're dating.

No rereading old conversations looking for answers.

No scrolling through photographs when you're lonely.

No manufacturing reasons to reach out.

No using mutual friends as a window into their life.

The goal isn't punishment.

The goal is removing the pathways you use to return to something you've already decided you need to leave.

PART FOUR: WHAT ARE YOU REALLY HOLDING ONTO?

Now answer these questions honestly. Write them down and then read your answers back to yourself.

If I completely let this person go, what am I afraid that means?

What did being wanted by this person make me believe about myself?

What did I tolerate because I was afraid of losing them?

Where did I abandon myself to keep this relationship?

What am I still hoping this person will eventually give me?

And then the biggest question:

Can I begin giving that to myself instead?

PART FIVE: RECLAIM THE SPACE

Don’t just remove. Replace.

Once you’ve completed your purge, deliberately change something.

Rearrange the room.

Replace the photograph.

Buy new bedding.

Change the playlist.

Move the furniture.

Take yourself somewhere new.

Create a new routine.

Put something in the empty space that represents who you’re becoming rather than who you’ve been.

Then:

The life I’m making room for now is one where I...

THE FINAL COMMITMENT

I can honor what happened without continuing to live inside it.

I can miss someone without returning to what hurt me.

I can appreciate what a relationship taught me without needing it back.

And I can let go of what no longer belongs in the life I’m building.

MAKE IT A DECISION

When you've completed this exercise, there's one final step I want you to take.

Sign your name and date this page.

Your signature represents something:

You've decided that you're no longer going to intentionally keep open the doors that pull you back into a relationship you've chosen to leave behind.

You're choosing your peace over another answer.

Your future over another look backward.

And yourself over the version of you who believed you had to hold on.

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Once you've signed it, keep this somewhere private.

Put it in a drawer. Place it inside a journal. Keep it somewhere you can return to if you find yourself wanting to reopen one of those doors.

When that moment comes, read what you wrote here.

Look at your signature.

Look at the date.

And remind yourself:

> **I already made this decision. I don't need to make it again just because today is hard.**

There may eventually come a time when you find this exercise again and realize you no longer feel the pull you once did.

When that happens, you can keep it as a reminder of how far you've come, or you can tear it up, shred it, or safely burn it as a final symbolic act of letting go.

Either way, the purpose of this page isn’t to keep you connected to the relationship.

It’s to remind you of the day you chose to reconnect with yourself.