



Uncoupling: Turning Points in Intimate Relationships

Diane Vaughan

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Many books explain why relationships end, but never before has a book shown in riveting step-by-step detail precisely how they end. Through extensive interviews and original research, Diane Vaughan reveals the underlying pattern beneath every disintegrating relationship. This is a groundbreaking book that will help anyone who has ever left a relationship--or been left--to understand "what happened". Perhaps even more important, it will help some people who don't even know their relationship is in trouble to see what is happening. Armed with a new awareness of what is usually an unconscious process--until it's too late--the partners acquire the ability to either live with it, control it, or change it. Vaughan shows that no matter what the characteristics of the couple involved, rich or poor, straight or gay, married or not, and whether they've been together 18 months or 18 years, the dynamics of the uncoupling process are essentially the same. The key to understanding how two people separate, according to Vaughan, is the role they assume in the leavetaking. Most often, one partner--the initiator--wants out of a relationship while the other wants the relationship to continue. Although both people must go through the same steps in altering their perceptions of each other and themselves, they do so at different times. By the time the still-loving partner realizes the relationship is in serious trouble, the initiator is already gone in a number of ways. *Uncoupling* begins with the initiator's first secret awareness of discomfort, depicts his or her search for a confidant (who is selected is a telling factor), and reveals the subtle, often barely perceptible signalling of his discontent to the partner. Vaughan traces the initiator's groping for and testing of a new single identity and depicts the initiator's confrontation with the partner. She shows how two people try and why trying often fails. Finally, she explains how the partner makes his or her own transition out of the relationship. Replete with case histories, many poignant, the book provides answers to many puzzling questions: why one person can sometimes take the end of a long-term relationship so calmly...why counseling so often fails...why one member of a couple can be so much better prepared for a single life than the other...why some people never psychologically separate...and much more.

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