



FEELING HEARTBROKEN AND ALONE?

How to Pick up the Pieces When You are Estranged

By Marie Morin

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Marie Morin is a licensed therapist and wellness coach at Morin Holistic Therapy in New York. Marie's writes a weekly blog, a monthly guest blogger on Sixty and Me, and has a YouTube Channel. Marie is passionate about helping busy women overcome limiting beliefs and let go of critical self-talk so they can finally step into their most aligned, confident selves.

As a therapist and wellness coach, I equip people with tools and strategies to overcome their limiting beliefs to live their best life. For as long as I remember, I've been listening to others and supporting them with conversational kindness, and if invited, strategies for gaining control over their lives. As a wife, mother, sister, daughter, and grandmother, I am keenly aware of the dynamics and difficulties of family relationships. Family stuff can be stressful. Having my own estrangement story, I understand the toll it can take.

My passion is to help you discover joy despite the magnitude of broken heartedness. You will find how a few critical daily changes can get you on your way. You will also gain insights into what you might be experiencing. There are suggestions and ideas for you to ponder.



DEDICATION

This book is dedicated to those who experience the throes of estrangement. Your strength and courage to move forward with self-compassion are remarkable. Your story is unique, but you are not alone. I am grateful to those who have trusted me with their estrangement story.

Note to Readers:

Everything here will not necessarily fit you. Suggestions offered here are suggestions. If it suits you, take it and run with it. If not, leave it behind.

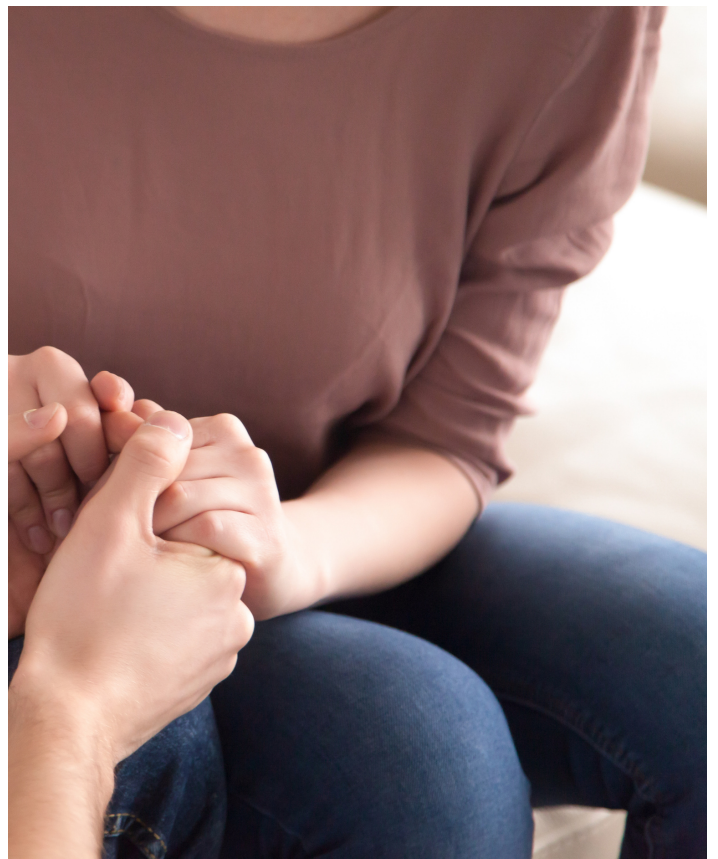
Glue Me Back Together

Being connected to others is wired into your being. When things become so messed up that our family becomes splintered, it can hurt tremendously. I wish there were a formula to make it all go away.

You can do simple things to improve your quality of life, be more peaceful, and feel joy again. This book will teach you what will help you in your process of moving forward.

Talking and processing can be very helpful, especially since those who experience estrangement tend not to share their stories. There can be embarrassment or shame, great disappointment, and maybe even the idea that you should be able to do this on your own.

Often this is possible. For some, you need a consistent dose of support and guidance.



How to Deal With Estranged Family- Finding Peace and Joy

Family estrangement is more common than you think. Seventy million people in the United States report experiencing estrangement from one or more family members.

For some, estrangement is a choice due to self-preservation against impossible family circumstances. Perhaps you have been the recipient of someone's decision to detach.

Estrangement is a topic often held in the shadows with little or no support due to the gravity of its impact. Being scorned or ignored can be extraordinarily distressing. It is also unbearable for those who choose to detach.

This book discusses five keys to navigating your wellbeing if you are estranged. Also, it discusses everyday emotional experiences, the fallout of estrangement, the relationship of grief and loss to estrangement, and reconciliation.



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Whether during the holidays, or your daily experience, estranged people can struggle with the onslaught of what families should look like in movies and social media. Specifically, we have songs and Hallmark movies during the holidays, nothing remotely close to portraying family estrangement. Happiness can feel elusive. Ordinary days, and especially the holidays, can be brutal.

The fallout from being estranged is real, but many, if not most, suffer in silence. It can bring on the notion that others will think something is wrong with you. The trap of relentless self-blame and criticism will make you feel stuck.

You may have chosen to separate from your family member. Perhaps you had a toxic relationship you could no longer sustain. You may have had a good reason to detach. There may have been substance use, mental illness, and just intolerable behaviors.

You may have felt such anxiety around this person or persons it was unbearable to continue.

You may dread the idea of reconciling because you suspect your relationship would once again be torturous. Maybe a part of you wants to try, and you're worried it won't ever work out.

If you find yourself here, there are options such as those given in this book. You can also find supportive therapy that will help you create boundaries. Wherever you find yourself, you don't need to struggle alone.

Fallout of Estrangement

Are you experiencing sleepless nights, fatigue, or excessive worrying? Have you found yourself depressed, sad, feeling hopeless, and disappointed? Do you feel bewildered, confused, alienated, or shocked? Have you lost your confidence in yourself or, worse, lost the ability to trust yourself?

Are you struggling to reconcile the uncertainty of the relationship with acceptance of the loss? Do you feel grief-stricken but can't seem to move forward as though frozen in time?

You are not alone! Indeed, the range of reasons and situations that encompass estrangement are as varied as the emotional roller coaster you may experience. Being alienated is often kept as a hidden secret due to the stigma of splintered families. It's rare that one voluntarily offers their heart-breaking story to someone whose family seems intact.



The tendency to isolate and or keep it secret can further exacerbate feelings of shame. Shame shows as thoughts or misbeliefs that you may have deserved or caused this. You may feel there is something wrong with you. Not everyone will have this response.

Shame, the uncertainty of the relationship, worry, self-doubt, and helplessness can complicate your physical and mental health. Prolonged strong emotions can cause chronic stress that is harmful physically and mentally. Stress and strong emotions require assistance.

If you are struggling with depression and or anxiety, are exhausted, worn out, and not sleeping well. It is time to see your doctor and mental health professional to get help navigating your care.

Grief and Loss

In her 1969 book "On Death and Dying," Elizabeth Kubler Ross introduced the world to the "Five Stages of Grief." Her studies have helped individuals adjust to the loss and the grief of losing a loved one.

Mental health professionals now know that when one struggles with grief, they can experience one or more simultaneously, and these stages may not necessarily follow any order.

Being estranged is the loss of a loved one without closure. Nonetheless, the experience of being cut off or intermittently alienated creates grief and loss.

The Five Stages of Grief include denial, anger, bargaining, depression, and acceptance. Your experience may not follow the stages precisely, but the value of Kubler Ross's studies can support you in finding the courage to move forward.



While you are not dealing with a death of a loved one, it may feel like the end of your attachment to this person. Undoubtedly, navigating estrangement may be one of the most difficult challenges.

You may pine for your loved one until you ache. Offer yourself solace and reflect on your ability to accept what you cannot change. You have wrestled yourself about what you did wrong. Consider what you can change.

You can quit being hard on yourself and practice self-compassion and kindness. You can actively improve your mental state and lower stress.

You could enlist the help of a professional to speak freely and openly to loosen the hold of your hurts. Contemplate what it would feel like to wake up in the morning feeling less burdened.

Many have had to lower their expectations of what a restored relationship may resemble. They have had to accept and settle for restrictions their loved ones have placed. Likewise, they understand that a restored relationship may look different from what they hoped.

Some cope by pushing away the thoughts and sensations to numb themselves from feeling; Some bury themselves in distracting activities and work.

Coping in this way is not uncommon or wrong. Ignoring your memories and emotions is a safety mechanism that can be helpful in the short term.

Ultimately, the internal stress of estrangement may rear its ugly head in your physical state, agitation, feeling overwhelmed, and possibly depression and anxiety.

The loss and grief of being disconnected can take their toll. You can learn to be safe with your emotions and express your discontent.

Acupuncture, yoga, Qi Gong, and yoga Nidra meditation can help you learn to feel safe in your physical sensations. When we feel safe in our bodies, bringing our emotions to the surface where healing can occur.

Think of it as a multi-pronged approach. Relaxation techniques, breathing exercises, regular daily movement, meditation, prayer and intentions, support, connection to others, daily self-care, self-compassion, and kindness are all options to help you.

What about Reconciliation?

There is hope that you may one day reconcile with your loved one. Maybe It's likely you cannot imagine the possibility even exists. Indeed, there are circumstances where your loved one is closed off to your communication.

There is no way of knowing how your attempt might go. You cannot make someone want to be in your company. However, you can learn skills to improve your quality of life and communicate better.

You may consider the long-term implications of being estranged. What message do you want for your younger relatives? My deepest regrets involve what my children learned from my behaviors and experiences.

Sometimes, families have a history of estrangement that cutting others out is acceptable. Indeed, being willing and ready is a personal matter.



Some circumstances are intolerable. For many people, the unthinkable happens in the heat of the moment.

Also, the decision to detach may have been a thoughtful process. Whatever the case, the results of estrangement affect others in the family—your consideration of how the effort of reconciling may be an option.

Many have restored their relationships with the help of professional support. It may seem impossible to be hopeful when there is an extended disconnection. However, learning what to say, when to say it, and what to avoid prepares you for a better possible outcome.

There may be hard lessons and awareness that will facilitate the healing of the relationship. The art of communicating comes with practice and patience. There is hope if you are up for the challenge and the commitment to honor your needs.

Perhaps, forging ahead with determination to find peace within yourself by practicing self-care and self-compassion might surprise you.

Alternatively, strong emotions will wear you down, creating chronic stress and loneliness. As a therapist and wellness coach, some of my clients have wrestled with solid emotions by denying they hurt.

They put on a solid front to protect themselves from their grief and loss. Some plot their journey of estrangement by visiting their emotions, intentionally carving out time for self-care, summoning their power of choices, connecting with others, and committing to having support.

The Power of Choice

There is no doubt that being separated from those you love can be more than problematic. More than likely, you didn't have this in mind for your family. Find the power of choice, so you learn to believe joy is more than possible. It is a choice to accept to live despite the loss.

Each day you get to decide what you will do with your time. You can choose to heed the call of nurturing yourself or not. You can choose to call a friend, join a group, volunteer, and find gratitude in something.

You can pray, set intentions, do affirmations, watch a funny movie, do a yoga class, meditate, or go for a walk. The choice is yours to do the work necessary. Keeping a daily routine can be very grounding. Learn to reframe your thoughts to ones that will be life-giving. Be mindful of the negative thoughts you have, then state evidence.



You might be thinking, “I should have been less hard on my daughter; I was constantly critiquing her.”

Try reframing with “I could have been less critical, but I did the best I could at the time.” Reframing your negative thoughts shifts the perspective from less self-condemning to thoughts you can work through.

Processing your thoughts works best when you offer a more compassionate bend to your assessment of yourself. Practicing self-kindness is key to coming out of ruminating about where you may have fallen short.

No one is perfect; we make mistakes, we say and do what we regret; it is the human condition. But we have contributed positively to others, and that counts too. We benefit greatly by knowing our humanness and accepting ourselves.

Each day you choose your well-being. Your circumstances may be far from your desires, but you can decide to move forward. Daily stress can bring on strong emotions. If time allows, visit with your feelings.

You can stop and reflect. Feel and come back to something that pleases you. Or you can classify, stall the exercise, and do something you enjoy. The day is yours; you have options, choose yourself!!

Holidays can be extra stressful and bring so many expectations. Consider dropping those that keep you stuck. If someone in your family does not want to be in your company, gather with voluntary kin.

Be alert to the things that trigger you and do something different. Decide to spend the day doing something you like to do.

Connection

There is nothing more critical to well-being than being connected to others. Strong feelings can sometimes cause us to isolate. Strongly resist the temptation to cut out connecting with others. Push yourself to be around people you like.

Arrange to go out to dinner with friends. Please share your story with a friend and enlist their help. You will find that there are many people with similar levels.

During the holidays, the expectation is for family gatherings. Being disappointed that you cannot have your ultimate holiday can hurt. Accept what is and make lemonade instead.

It is appropriate to ask a friend to join her gathering. You can also host a small meeting. You may have some of your family you can see, be sure to enjoy them wholeheartedly.



Studies tell us that human connection aligns with better health and happiness. We are happier when we are genuine and share human moments with others. Decide to make friendships a priority.

Self-Care

Daily self-care is essential to well-being. Even on your busy days, take time to meditate, lather yourself with lotion, go for a walk, eat a nutritious meal, and listen to music. Self-care is so much more than getting a manicure. Self-care is prioritizing you enough to take the time that elevates your mental and physical health.

Your self-care is a personal matter. Your individual needs inform what practices will work for you. Research shows a positive relationship between people who follow a daily self-care routine and reduce stress. Daily mindfulness practice can improve self-compassion and empathy for self and others.

A stack of yellow sticky notes is placed on a blue textured surface. A silver pen lies diagonally across the bottom right of the notes. The top note has the words "SELF CARE ISN'T SELFISH" written in red marker, with "SELFISH" underlined.

SELF
CARE
ISN'T
SELFISH

Visiting Your Emotions

Estrangement occurs when one or more intentionally creates distance with another. Sometimes there is a sudden break of the relationship, yet often it is a process of distancing. The loss of closeness, particularly of an adult child, hurts. Varying coping mechanisms to avoid pain can increase our stress because pain doesn't go away on its own.

It requires careful compassionate appointments to explore and then return to your courage to move forward. Journaling can be part of these visits with simple writing. There is no right or wrong way. Just let it flow. Handwritten journaling is best, so you slow down, think, and feel. Using your computer will work too. The idea is to pause so you can express and process. Think of it as an opportunity for intimacy where you accept what you feel and allow it to be.



Estrangement from family, any time of the year, is not fun. Often our adult children choose to separate; we may blame ourselves, feel guilty about our words and deeds, and wonder why our child no longer seeks our company. When we journal our thoughts and feelings, we get to unfold the contents of our hearts slowly. If tears come, welcome them. If it hurts badly, remind yourself you can, and you will get through. Each time you visit, experiment with more self-compassion.

You may want to get a particular journal book, light a candle, sip on your favorite tea. Honor yourself with time to survey the quiet places and noisy places. Above all, bring a heavy helping of self-compassion, remind yourself that you are doing the best you can, and offer forgiveness. Visiting your emotions is an exercise in patience and determination—practice patience in letting the contents inside unfold. Determine to come through knowing yourself better.



Support

Estrangement can catapult stress to epic proportions. Wherever you are on the stress scale, support will be a considerable comfort.

Regularly talking to others in a support group or seeing a therapist can help navigate strong emotions.

Likewise, support can help enlarge your insight, teach communication skills, offer options, and provide a safe place to ventilate.

Talk to someone who is there to uplift you and come alongside you.

Estrangement can be disturbing, and loss has no magic wand. Sometimes the pain is too much to handle alone.

Professional assistance will help you navigate your triggers, assess your emotional state, and provide a safe, enriching experience. There is no shame in getting help if you are stuck. You are not alone, and you do not need to struggle longer than necessary.

Discover the Art of Self-Compassion

Self-compassion is your key to better living. Being a member of humanity, the experience of hurting is real. Practice positive self-talk that is encouraging and positive.

Learn to treat yourself as you would a friend. Be compassionate in all things. Judging and criticizing are as useless as a hangnail.

Extend kindness to yourself and view each day as an opportunity to find gratitude.

The experience of estrangement is painful. You can decide to move forward by honoring the places you can find gratitude.

Who has extended kindness and you appreciated their support? What enriching experiences have you had that have meant a lot to you?



Have you seen a flower or a smiling child? Think about these times, let yourself feel the warmth of it, linger here for two minutes. Finding gratitude in even the more minor things will transform your perspective.

Your journey is personal and unique, but you are not alone. You are in the company of scores of others who have felt scorned and rejected. Others like you have decided to accept what they cannot change, and those that have dared to attempt and commit to reconciling.

Well-being and Belonging

The key to getting glued back together is to decide to move forward, practice daily emotional visits, self-care, prioritize connection to people you enjoy, and practice self-compassion. You have been through extraordinary challenges before. Summon that same courage and strength. Remind yourself you are doing the best you can.

What will you gain by practicing the suggestions shared in this book? What might you lose by remaining as you are? Remember, you have the power to choose. Choose your well-being.

Family bonds and human connection is key to our well-being. We feel better when our families gather and operate in harmony. The fallout of stressful circumstances within families hurt everyone. It is incredibly unsettling when we are hurting and our families hurt.



The alternative is to move forward with a daily strategy to address your needs. Is it time for you to actively participate in your wellness journey? Are you ready to invite time and determination so you can better connect with yourself?

As we grow in self-care, we offer ourselves a needed internal pause from stress and unhelpful thinking patterns. We learn to prioritize better and make better decisions. The day looks less clouded, and our perspective of ourselves improves. The mindfulness of your needs will help you decipher your best timing.

Your decision to move towards reconciling will come in time. You may need just to get right with you first. Remember, in everything; there is an option for self-compassion and kindness. Compassionate living is the secret sauce to your well-being.



Being estranged and alienated is heartbreaking. You can do simple things to improve your quality of life, be more peaceful, and feel joy again. I hope that the information in this eBook has been a help in your process of moving forward. My hope is you have found some relief. The key to getting glued back together is to decide to move forward, practice daily emotional visits self-care, prioritize connection to people you enjoy, and practice self-compassion.

Talking and processing can be very helpful, especially if you struggle alone. Navigating what to do with your feelings and hopes can be less burdensome when you have support. You have been through extraordinary challenges before. Summon that same courage and strength. Remind yourself you are doing the best you can. What will you gain by practicing the suggestions shared in this book?

Need someone to talk to? It is always good to have someone in your corner to support you in your journey. Call or email me and let's do this together.

Blessings,

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