

UNDERSTANDING ABANDONMENT

"I Felt Like I Was Never Good Enough."

THE **HOPE** LINE



TheHopeLine.com

For many people, feelings of abandonment begin in childhood, when they are most vulnerable and aren't receiving the emotional or physical protection they need. Their environment is unstable, and the feeling of "I'm alone in this world" or "the people who should love me don't care" are internalized.

Feelings like that don't just go away as you grow up. They fester and cause a lot of pain, often turning into a destructive force as a teen or adult.

But it doesn't have to be that way. You can heal, and you can be happy.

A person walking away from the family, divorce situations, and even suicide of a parent can lead to deep feelings of abandonment and communicate to a child, "You aren't worth being connected with."

Dawson McAllister



Abandonment isn't usually tied to just one incident. It's a cumulative wound of the losses and disconnections over an entire lifetime. Over the years you internalize the message that you aren't important or worthy anyone's time. Abandonment can manifest or come from a variety of emotions, actions and situations, such as:

- A general feeling of isolation or being unloved
- A husband or wife leaving their spouse for another person
- Grieving the death of a loved one
- A parent emotionally neglecting children
- Feeling replaced by another person, activity or thing in a friend/loved one's life
- Wanting to connect with a parent but he/she is emotionally unavailable
- Dealing with major life issues such as death, divorce or life changes in quick succession
- Going off to school, or moving away from family and friends.

TYPES OF ABANDONMENT

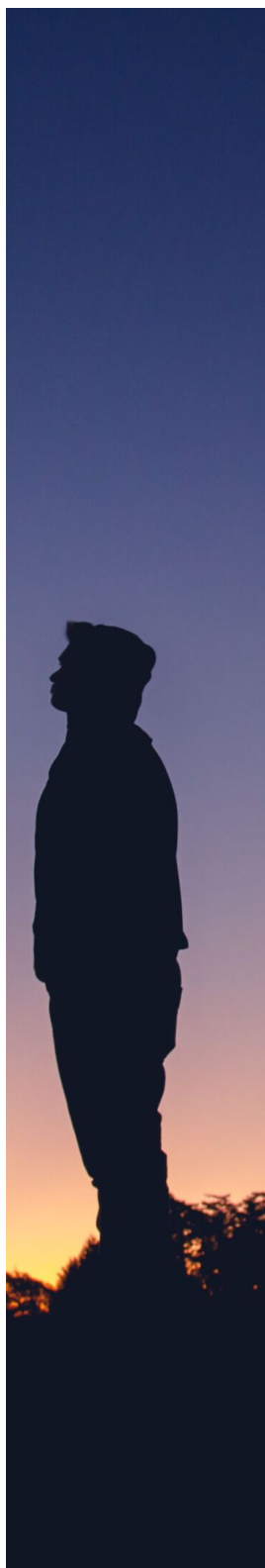
Abandonment falls into two basic categories: physical and emotional. It is possible to experience one type of abandonment without the other, such as feeling emotionally abandoned by a parent yet having physical needs, like food or clothing, fully provided.

Physical abandonment occurs when appropriate physical conditions are not met, such as:

- Lack of appropriate supervision
- Lack of loving affection and nurturing
- Inadequate provision of nutrition and meals
- Inadequate clothing, housing or shelter

Emotional abandonment occurs when parents/guardians/spouses foster a toxic emotional environment through their actions, such as:

- Unrealistic goals of achievement or expectations
- Being held personally responsible for other people's behavior or feelings
- Constant disapproval, criticism or discouragement
- Verbal abuse by parent/guardian/spouse
- A loved one being emotionally distant or withholding affection



As a young adult, you cannot carry the blame for a grown adult's abusive decision.

Dawson McAllister

ISSUES RELATED TO ABANDONMENT

Since abandonment is deeply personal, it's no surprise that it often has very destructive implications. Those feelings of insecurity and trauma can manifest themselves in a variety of ways, including:

- Anxiety
- Chronic depression
- Self-esteem issues
- Addiction
- Self-medication
- Emotional responses to abandonment triggers like criticism or rejection
- Vulnerability in social situations including social anxiety
- Feeling invisible, lonely, unloveable, rejected, betrayed, insecure or unable to trust
- PTSD (Post Traumatic Stress Disorder)

If you are experiencing PTSD, addiction, anxiety or chronic depression, please seek professional medical help. Also, TheHopeLine is here for you.

[Click here to chat with a HopeCoach.](#)



PARENTAL ABANDONMENT



A common childhood experience for many people is being emotionally abandoned by a parent.

When parents are critical, dismissive, invasive or preoccupied, this communicates to a child that "Your feelings don't matter" or "Your feelings are unacceptable."

This makes the person feel unloved, unaccepted and misunderstood, putting the blame on themselves. The emotions become internalized. Since children often don't understand how to process abandonment, the blame and negative thoughts become deeply embedded, resulting in adult anxiety, depression and addiction issues, etc.

Sadly, parental abandonment is usually a cycle that repeats itself, with one generation hurting the next and creating a toxic, broken family environment. Parents who have experienced parental abandonment often cause it themselves and need healing too.

The good news is that the cycle of destruction can stop with you. It is important to process feelings of abandonment and deal with the related issues in a healthy manner so you can be a whole, healthy person who is capable living a full life. Then if you want to, you'll be prepared to create a more supportive home for your own children one day.

I was raised by my aunt and uncle and my mom showed up in and out of my life whenever it was good for her. I tried to be the perfect girl so that everyone would love me. I thought if I was perfect, my mom would want to be around me more.

Samantha



DEALING WITH ABANDONMENT

The wounds of abandonment run deep but there is healing available for you. It is important to understand that abandonment isn't a reflection of the person being abandoned. Rather, it is a reflection of the flawed thinking and false beliefs on the part of those who have caused the hurt. While you may not be able to go back in time and change circumstances, you can make a fresh start now.

Talk to someone you trust. Find a licensed therapist or trusted adult to discuss your abandonment issues with and begin the healing process. If you need someone to talk to, our trained [HopeCoaches are available to chat at TheHopeLine.com](https://www.thehopeline.com).

Don't isolate. Identify kind people and healthy activities that you can get involved with. Cultivating functional relationships and filling your time with fun or hard work can do a lot to help you heal. As you stay in relationship with others, your heart will slowly begin to realize that you can trust others to care about you, even though in the past you received the message that you weren't worthy of someone's time.

Get creative. If you feel discouraged or overwhelmed by emotions related to abandonment issues, find a fun way to let them out. Try writing in a journal to work through your thoughts, go on a hike, start painting, or write a song. Develop a healthy outlet you can turn to when the feelings get too loud.



HELPING A FRIEND

deal with abandonment

Encourage your friend to talk with a professional. Let them know that you are always here to talk, but you may also want to encourage them to find a trustworthy counselor to meet with. Abandonment is a difficult topic that often uncovers other issues, which a counselor is trained specifically to handle.

Be there for them, even in the rough times. Dealing with abandonment and related issues can be an emotionally raw time for that person. Stay positive and prove that you aren't going to abandon them.

Stay connected. Even if you don't see your friend every day, check in on them often. Texts and chats are great but nothing beats hanging out in person, having conversations or doing something you both enjoy. The feeling of connection and community will go a long way in the healing process.

[Share this guide.](#) If your friend is struggling, share this eBook with them to start a conversation or just to let them know you care.

Chat with a HopeCoach. Helping a friend through a difficult situation can be emotionally exhausting so be sure you have an outlet to talk things through or just vent. [Our trained HopeCoaches are here for you to chat with them anytime.](#)

A Spiritual Perspective on *Abandonment*

Abandonment is a deep wound that is painful and can be destructive.

If you're dealing with abandonment, please know you aren't alone. You are valued. There are healthy ways to deal with and overcome abandonment so you can experience life without feeling constantly weighed down. It's important to get help and encouragement from friends, family, counselors, and others who can help. Here at TheHopeLine, we truly care about you and want to help you overcome abandonment.

Feeling seen, heard, and understood by others is a healing experience, especially after feeling invisible or unloved in the past. Did you know that Jesus knows exactly how it feels to be abandoned?

He once cried out to his own father, "Why have you forsaken me?" He never wants anyone to feel that way, so He became the solution to the problem of abandonment.

THE SOLUTION

The Bible says that Jesus came to earth and died so everyone can have "real and eternal life, more and better life than they ever dreamed of..." [John 10:10 The Message].

You are loved and accepted, regardless of what has happened in your past or your current struggles. God wants to have a real, personal relationship with you and to help you discover your true self-worth and identity in Him.

***If you want to know more
about having a relationship
with God or have questions
about abandonment,
chat online anytime
with a Hope Coach at
[TheHopeLine.com](https://www.TheHopeLine.com)***



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