

# IS YOUR HEART BROKEN?



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## Broken heart? Rejection? Failure? It Hurts (and Hurts, and Hurts)

If its heartbreak, it can be healed. I can help to you to help yourself mend your broken heart. I can help you to let go of hurt and learn to love again.

To fall in love is awfully simple, but to fall out of love is simply awful. Especially if you are the one who wanted the relationship to last. To stop loving is not an option. When those you love deeply reject you, leave you, or die, your heart will be broken. But that should not hold you back from loving deeply. The pain that comes from deep love makes your love ever more fruitful.

The trouble with the old saying that time heals everything, is that it takes... time! The heart wrenching feelings will pass when the time is right, but a little more quickly with a little help, and / or using proven therapeutic and self-help techniques.

We have all had our hearts broken. It was bound to happen to you sooner or later. Perhaps it was the loss of a person, a relationship, a career, or something else you treasured. But mostly it's about the loss of love. When you are in pain you need to begin by making a decision. This decision is about how you want to use your pain. The first and sadly most common, and also very human reaction, is to use our pain to hurt someone.

We want to lash out and make someone else suffer as much as we are suffering. Perhaps you want revenge, using your pain as a weapon. Perhaps it is the person whom you blame for taking away your love that you want to punish. Perhaps it is the third person, that intruder who stole your friend, who is the first on your hit list of hurt. Or perhaps it is the one whom you loved and who betrayed you, who deceived you, rejected and abandoned you, that you want to hurt.

## Decide How You Want Use Your Pain

Maybe you are using your pain to torture yourself, telling yourself that you're not good enough, worthless, a failure. Are you punishing yourself, in a mistaken attempt to pay off some kind of guilt? Beating yourself up by nurturing a broken heart is really adding insult to injury. Perhaps you feel that if you are heartbroken enough, the intensity of the pain proves how real the love between you and your former partner was.

Maybe you are using your hurt as a form of emotional blackmail. Maybe you are hoping that if your ex sees how much you are hurting, they will come back and make it better. In the process you are forgetting all the ways in which that relationship was wrong or harmful to you. You are forgetting that if it's a breakup, it means it was broken, even if you were not ready to admit it.

Perhaps holding on to your pain is a subconscious attempt to hold on to your love, or to resurrect the idol that your relationship was. An idol is anything or anyone outside of yourself that you make the source of your happiness, worth, and wholeness. Being broken-hearted is always a symptom of the fact that you are probably an idol-worshipper - that you seek happiness from outside of yourself, that you see the source of your happiness, and your unhappiness, outside of yourself.

A crucial insight toward healing your broken heart, is to realize that it is not what's happening that is hurting you. What is hurting you is your thoughts about what's happening. Nothing that happens can really hurt you. Only your own thoughts can hurt you. Please remember that you created the thoughts that made you love that person in the first place. That person didn't force you to fall in love. You fell in love by weaving a whole network of brain cells, and they can and must be torn apart for you to live joyously without that person again.

### The Healing Purpose of Pain

The most important decision you need to make is to decide to use your pain - not to destroy others, or yourself - but to destroy the thoughts that cause your grief. Properly used, the pain can also be used to destroy your erroneous thoughts about yourself and about love that caused you to choose a person who would hurt and leave you in the first place.

Emotional pain can be used to heal. Indeed, that is the purpose of pain. It's a bit like chemotherapy. If you have cancer, the chemotherapy is definitely going to make you feel rotten, but that's not its purpose. Its purpose is to destroy the cancer that might have killed you.

So, decide to use your emotional pain like chemotherapy - a chemical process in your body whose purpose is to kill off the network of thoughts in your brain that made you a worshipper of that idol.

Stop resisting and allow the pain to do its proper work. Begin to surrender, and simply to observe the wondrous - although painful - process by which nature re-organizes your brain cell networks and nervous system pathways in order to regain comfort and peace.

### Stop Saying "NO!"

Emotional pain always means in essence that you are saying "NO!" You are saying "no" to what IS. You want things to be different from the way they are. But you can decide to join with the purpose of the pain; that is, to destroy those perspectives that cause you to say "no", and to create new perspectives - perspectives that enable you to say "YES!"

If you say "no" to the pain, if you resist the process and purpose of pain, you are adding a "no" to a "no", and you are making your pain much worse than necessary. That is what is meant by the saying that pain is inevitable, but suffering is optional. If you resist the pain, you are adding suffering to it.

The pain is trying to create a place in your mind where you accept what is. Acceptance of what is, is the healing, and brings you peace. Knowing this, is the beginning of your constructive and creative use of pain. Indeed, this is a way of making your pain sacred. It is using your pain not to try to change others, or the world, but using your pain to change your deepest mind. A broken heart is open, and able to accept new understandings, new perspectives on yourself, and on what you really need.

Even if you are not a Christian, Christ is a supreme example of how to use betrayal and pain as the gateway to transformation. You too, can decide to use your heartache to destroy the thoughts that no longer serve you. Decide to use your pain to destroy the old you, in order to become a new person, a person who is wiser, stronger, more courageous, more mature, balanced, creative, loving, self-loving and peaceful. And above all a person who makes better choices in love - choosing appropriate, available, and trustworthy people to love.

### The Trouble with Heartbreak

The process of grief is usually divided into four stages. The first, denial, is where we try to reject what happened. In the second, we accept it, but still feel angry about it. In the third stage we acknowledge our sadness, and when we reach the fourth, we have accepted the loss and are able to look back and enjoy the happy memories we have.

The trouble with heartbreak, however, is that the natural process of grief does not always work properly. People can get stuck, repeating the same painful feelings over and over again. People have said that it is easier to recover when a loved one has died than it is if they have betrayed, rejected, and abandoned us, or worse, replaced us with another.

If a partner dies, the love we had is never questioned. But when a partner leaves us for someone else, it calls into question the love we had together. If we still live in the same town, it makes it all the more difficult to forget them and move on.

Every heartbreak is in some way a betrayal. It is the betrayal of the promise of love. It was a promise made in the past that was a commitment to the future. Our mind makes sense of our lives by relating the present to the past and the future. That is, by creating narratives. When your heart is broken, all that meaning is thrown up in the air. Your future is taken to pieces and your past is called into question. How can you have reached this point of heartbreak when you thought you loved each other?

With a broken heart, instead of heading toward a future we had planned and were looking forward to, we face the unknown. We feel desperate, because our mind is trying to make a meaning, any meaning, of an unknown future. It has changed our future and we don't know how or when we're going to feel better. The point is that right now, for a little while, it is well worth getting used to the unknown.

## How Grief Heals

Grieving is a specific process by which we gradually let go of our attachment to the people (or places or things or even possibilities) we have lost. Grief happens one bit at a time. You feel bad for a while and then it stops. You feel fine, then you feel sad again. It is important to know that grief works like this, so that we are not frightened that it will carry on for ever. It won't. It will stop. But while it does happen, it is important for your recovery.

We experience only as much sadness as is necessary for our feelings to adjust as far as they can at any time, then the feeling stops. When we have become used to that amount of change and loss, the unconscious lets us feel a bit more, and so on, until we have fully absorbed the significance of the loss. Don't worry, I promise you can trust your subconscious to hold back the feelings you cannot yet deal with, and to only bring up as much of the pain as you are ready to deal with right now.

"Focusing," developed by Eugene Gendlin is a wonderfully effective technique similar to Mindfulness Meditation, underpinned by research and the experiential reality that our problems actually exist in our physical body.

Your body-mind is a great and sacred mystery. It is a complex, life-maintaining system. The life-force in the body always tends in the direction of feeling better. The bad feeling is the body knowing and pushing towards what good would be.

Professor Gendlin correctly maintains that every bad feeling is potential energy toward a righter way of being if you give it space to move toward its rightness. The very existence of bad feelings within you is evidence that your body knows what is wrong and what is right. It must know what it would be like to feel perfect, or it would not evoke a sense of wrong.

While focusing on the physical process of the push from feeling bad to feeling good again - no matter how painful the sensations might be - you can relax and absolutely trust that there is no chance that your body will push you in the wrong direction. The sense of what is wrong carries with it, inseparably, a sense of the direction towards what is right.

### Letting Go of the Illusion

One of the most horrible parts of heartbreak is the feeling of need of that person; the feeling of helplessness, abandonment, incompleteness, even desperation. It feels as though there is an immense void in your life which only one person can fill, and that person has gone. The painful feeling of neediness is actually a combination of two things; a fear and an attachment.

The fear is of aloneness, of being on your own and being solely responsible for yourself and your feelings. The other part of the neediness is attachment. The attachment is the identification with your ex. It is the sense that they are part of your existence. That person was part of your world, part of your future, part of your understanding of life, part of you.

You might feel sad and hurt, but guess what? Even though your heart is broken, you can still love yourself deeply and completely! Being heartbroken invites you to undertake the personal journey through the void of emptiness toward complete and profound self-love. The fact that our relationships never prove to be more evolved than the relationship we have with ourselves obliges us to embrace our own empty and unloved places, for what we do not know, or will not face about ourselves, is bound to show up and impair the relationship with those we say we love. Eventually developing the art of self-love may in fact be our best way of loving others.

Doing this work is especially difficult, for it may require us to relinquish our chief, perhaps unconscious, desire - namely to be taken care of by another. If we do not recognize this heavily charged desire, every relationship will sooner or later break under the burden of expectation, for no one can, or should, or will, take care of us.

Let us change that sentence... we have met the person who is charged with taking care of us, and that is the one person with whom we lived since the moment of birth, and with whom we alone journey toward death.

## Habits of Thought

In a relationship we build up a huge array of habits of thought and behaviour, even if the relationship was brief or difficult. When the relationship ends, these patterns can still be running, even though they are no longer appropriate. Other habits are created by the intense experience of splitting up, such as the habit of thinking about your ex-partner and repeating the fact that they are gone. This causes a huge amount of unnecessary pain.

The point is that it is our thoughts and beliefs that create our feelings. However, much we love or loved that person, in the end each of us is in charge of our own feelings. There is no absolutely fixed meaning to anything in your life. Everything is affected by the point of view you bring to it and depends on the meaning you give to it.

The belief that your ex was “the only one for me” is both true and false. Simply put, there was a time when your partner was the only one for you, but that truth has now changed and now this belief is false. All feelings - whether positive or negative - are maintained by repetition of the thoughts and pictures that trigger those feelings. When we stop repeating them, the feelings decay.

Questions to starve thought patterns you no longer wish to nurture: Breathe deeply, relax and gently ask yourself:

1. Are you sure you really want to go forward with this thought pattern / emotional habit?
2. What desire / purpose does it serve? (Perhaps an unconscious desire to obey your unconscious Dark Law and be unhappy?)
3. How would this kind of thinking and reacting solve the problem? (That’s a no-brainer!)
4. Are you even certain you want to define the situation as a problem?
5. How would this thinking / feeling / behaviour serve my evolution / enlightenment? (Well, that’s another no-brainer!)



6. How is the situation a setup by my Higher Self / my Higher Power to serve my evolution / my learning / my life purpose / my enlightenment? (Now that's a really useful perspective.)

## Letting Go of Idols

We cannot be heartbroken unless we are looking for happiness outside ourselves. The purpose of every relationship is love, healing, and happiness, but when we begin to think of a relationship as the source of our happiness, we believe that we will be given something, rather than giving something ourselves.

Giving manifests itself as joy, while expecting to receive sets the stage for pain. Buddha stated that only happiness that came from within could be sustained; the rest is ephemeral.

Chuck Spezzano (in *If It's Heartbreak, It Can Be Healed*) says that when we look for happiness in a person, situation, or thing, instead of in spiritual peace, we create an idol. Idols are the things outside of ourselves that we think will bring us happiness. Idols begin with needs that become indulgence and turn into an addiction.

For many of us relationships have become idols. They then become the greatest source of our disappointment. Having been disappointed by one idol, we seek another; we seek idol after idol, and incur disappointment after disappointment, until we finally give up and want to die.

True peace and happiness can only exist within us, within our own giving and receiving in relationship, or within a spiritual relationship with our God. Every time we let go, we take the source of our happiness back within ourselves. We move one step closer to our God and to spiritual peace.

Letting go of heartbreak means letting go of our lost dreams and idols. Heartbreak is a place of illusion where we mistakenly act in a way that does not respond to the truth of the situation. We respond to things as we want them to be, not as they are. If we do not fully let go of the pain, we still have our idols. Holding on to the pain is a way of holding on to an idol.

## Techniques for Healing Heartbreak

Using **NLP (Neuro-Linguistic Programming)** techniques, you can learn the art of "reframing" to see yourself and your situation from a different angle, helping you to fall out of love with your ex and see this terrible event as an opportunity, by changing the neural pathways in your brain which create those painful feelings.



Thought Field Therapy (TFT) or Emotional Freedom Technique (EFT) involves tapping on certain acupuncture points on your body, thus creating change in the way your brain processes and codes trauma.

The Sedona Method devised by Lester Levenson and Hale Dwoskin is another powerful technique which can be learned to enable you to feel and release painful emotions on a moment-to-moment basis. It involves the use of a mantra-like series of questions designed to release sadness, grief, anger, fear, longing, and hurt pride, and restore your inherent state of courage, acceptance, and peace.

Using the principles and methods of Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT) you can learn to diffuse painful emotions and observe your painful thoughts instead of getting enmeshed in them. Even if you have never meditated before, you can learn to “surf” the waves of painful emotion while relaxing your body, thus creating the conditions in your nervous system that facilitate working through the situation and reconnecting to your natural state of balance and wholeness.

“Focusing” is a method developed by Eugene Gendlin, which enables you to deal with painful emotions in a relaxed and meditative way. It is really Mindfulness Meditation for Dummies, making the ancient art of Vipassana - Insight Meditation - easy to use.

Using Visualization: Our feelings respond to the pictures we make in our mind. When we think of a person, how we feel about them is coded in how we represent them in our mind. When we change the movies in our mind by using specific visualization techniques, we can change the way we feel about them.

## Words of Wisdom

From *The Prophet* by Kahlil Gibran:

*Your joy is your sorrow unmasked.*

*And the self-same well from which laughter rises was oftentimes filled with your tears.*

*And how else can it be?*

*The deeper that sorrow carves into your being, the more joy you can contain.*

*Is not the cup that holds your wine the self-same cup that was burned in the potter's oven?*

*And is not the lute that soothes your spirit the very wood that was hollowed with knives?*

*When you are joyous, look deep into your heart and you will find it is only that which has given you sorrow that is giving you joy.*

*When you are sorrowful, look again into your heart, and you shall see that in truth you are weeping for that which has been your delight.*

## Ten Best Tips to Properly Lick Your Wounds

What can you do to get beyond the pain? Here are the best 10 tips I've gathered from experts and from experience on how to patch up a broken heart, ever so gradually, and move on.

### 1. Take Heart: You Will Not Die

Even though it really, really feels like it. Even though you can feel your heart physically swelling in your chest and pain pulsing through your entire body and your ribs are sticking to your sides like macaroni on a microwave - you will not die from this. It might mess up your mental and physical health a little in the short term (you're allowed to eat some carbs, for Pete's sake). But you will not die. It still hurts, though.

A lot of the angst of moving on comes from self-judgments about when and how and why you should move on and what you did wrong. Don't compare yourself to others. You're not nuts; you're not strange; you're not obsessed; you're not a fool. Your big crime is ignorance. The only real sin you can possibly commit is doubting yourself. You're just human and you felt something. At the time, whenever that was, it felt right. Accept that your feelings are your feelings and let them be. If you work with your emotions instead of resisting them, you can reach wisdom that is more accurate than that of your rational intelligence alone.

When you are heartbroken the simple fact is that you feel bad because a relationship has ended. You want what you can't have. But for most of us, that's not the end of it. We feel scared of feeling so bad, or angry about it. We feel scared that we may never stop feeling bad, or ashamed of being such a ninny. All of these are feelings about the original feeling of heartbreak and add to the burden. Feelings about feelings can be stronger than the original feelings. Feelings about feelings create loops that amplify themselves. So, try to respect your feelings rather than treat them as problems.

When we look at reality from a different perspective, on a higher level, in a larger context, then we can start seeing how what we perceive as a tragedy on one level, can fit into the plan perfectly on a higher level. How it is a perfect part of a larger picture, of a longer journey. Then we can begin to understand how the pieces of the puzzle fit together. What a caterpillar calls the end of the world, God calls a butterfly.

Every ending is a beginning. Every cloud does have silver lining. For every door that closes, another door does open. It is always darkest before dawn. Every obstacle is a gift, every problem is an opportunity for growth. These are all expressions that refer to the paradoxical nature of life. The point is that there are different levels of reality, and that if you stop focusing on problems and obstacles, and start looking for the gifts, the lessons attached to them, the easier life becomes.

## 2. Treat Yourself Right

While making sure you bank sufficient emotional and other reserves, don't deprive yourself of little pleasures. Even small, seemingly unimportant sacrifices in your wellbeing during crisis may prevent you from emerging from confusion into clarity. A sensory bank account promotes wellbeing. An appropriate balance of input and output creates strength. Are you one of those people who gain weight like a Sumo Wrestler on a serious binge when things go wrong? Or do you stop eating altogether? Well, that can be a good thing for some, but not that good if you look like a forlorn Holocaust survivor two weeks into the breakup.

It is by no means easy to manage your sensory needs when your heart is broken, and your impulses may have gone haywire. Nevertheless, do ask yourself, what are the deposits to your sensory bank account? Anything that nourishes and delights your five senses without causing you harm in either the amount you are doing them or what you are doing.

Try to get out as much as you can (but don't force yourself to jump into something new or go out partying every night). Talk to your friends, even if all you can squeak out is "it's another rough one today". Don't worry about annoying them - even if you do, they are the ones who really know you and they will still love you. You can't fool them anyway - even if you don't say anything, they know.

Buy your favourite beer, enjoy an entire pint of ice cream. But don't go overboard - you'll just end up feeling worse. There's no hard-and-fast rule for when you're about to cross the line. I think you'll know your limit if you listen to your instincts. In fact, I believe our instincts will never, ever let us down, if only we would pay them heed.

Do expect missteps, faux pas, and other embarrassments - so give yourself a break. If you cross your line, that's okay. Mistakes are not bad, they are learning, and that is what life is all about, right? Sometimes there's nothing else to do but wear the pie on your face as a badge of honour!

No matter what, it is possible to be happy, joyous, and free - if you are willing to be scared and hurt, angry and sad. And please believe me, even if this one particular person no longer loves you...

You are Lovable.

You are Loved.

You are LOVE.

### 3. This Too Shall Pass

Things simply are what they are. And now they are different. They cannot be any other way. Life is a series of moments and all you really have to do in this life is accept them. No one expects anything more; and believe me, no one upstairs does, either. Sometimes those moments turn into chapters, but ultimately even the chapters conclude.

I know - I know - it doesn't feel that way right now, but the pain will pass. Reality bites and life will give your heart a ruthless pruning, but you'll grow back even fuller. You might miss a season or two - no worries, so did the damaged peach tree I watched my grandmother coax for 10 patient years. The fruit it finally bore was the best slice of sweet imaginable. That memory has always comforted me; find one that comforts you.

In fact, right now, take a deep breath and allow yourself to be carried back to a comforting memory. Allow this memory to transport you as it triggers another memory - the experience of comfort blending from one memory to the next, from one sense, sound, feeling, thought, taste, smell, to another. Allow the nourishment of comfort to remain with you as you open your eyes, seeking something in the room to notice that will bring you more comfort.

Make bedtime a moment of peace. Find an inspirational CD to speak over your own inner voice if you are having destructive "head speak." Perform a small ritual that assures you that things are being resolved as you sleep. Go to sleep knowing the first positive act you will take the next morning. Make a list of things for your subconscious to work on or resolve while you sleep.

We can have moments where we feel like God/life is punishing us and still know that “This, too, shall pass” and “More will be revealed,” that later on, down the path, we will be able to look back and see that what we perceived in the moment to be tragedy and injustice is really just another opportunity for growth, another gift of fertilizer to help us grow.

#### 4. Now Is Not the Time to Change Your Career or Emigrate

Initial small accomplishments can give you a bump, but if you’re using them to avoid feeling the hurt, that hurt will just come back with a wallop (I don’t know about you but I’m an expert at this one). Do make positive changes and invest yourself in projects that are both distracting and productive, because these things will help you move on with greater confidence. But just remember that as you take positive actions, don’t try to repress those feelings. Feelings always come out eventually.

Although, when they do...that’s good, too. Have a good, long lick and remember everybody plans picnics in the park. Everybody carries a private hurt (or hundred). Good for you for feeling something and taking a risk. That’s called living and all we can do is our best in each moment. There is no right or wrong; there is no should. There is only real.

When small children are in crisis, experts encourage us to give them sameness of people, place, and things, to anchor them fully in the power of their own being and in the security of familiar surroundings. In crisis, when our “adult” constructs fail, nourishment is needed by our original, essential, child self. The compassionate eyes and arms of those who love us, and the wisdom of those who have travelled our road before us, give meaning and support to our journey when we cannot find it within ourselves.

Now is the time, however, to change false beliefs. One of the false beliefs that it is important to let go of, is the belief that we need another person in our lives to make us whole. As long as we believe that someone else has the power to make us happy then we are setting ourselves up to be victims.

A knight in shining armour is not going to come charging up to rescue us from the dragon. A princess is not going to turn us from a frog into a prince. The Prince and the Princess and the Dragon are all within us. It is not about someone outside of us rescuing us. It is also not about some dragon outside of us blocking our path. As long as we are looking outside to become whole, we are setting ourselves up to be victims. As long as we are looking outside for the villain, we are buying into the belief that we are the victim.

As little kids we were victims and we need to heal those wounds. But as adults we are volunteers - victims only of our own choices. Robert Burney (in *The Dance of Wounded Souls*) says the people in our lives are actors and actresses whom we cast in the roles that would recreate childhood dynamics of abuse and abandonment, betrayal and deprivation.

We are / have been just as much perpetrators in our adult relationships as victims. Every victim is a perpetrator - because when we are buying into being a victim, when we are giving power to our childhood patterns of helplessness, dependence, and codependence, we are perpetrating on the people around us and on ourselves.

We need to heal the wounds without blaming others. And we need to own the responsibility without blaming ourselves.

#### 5. Go Through It, Not Around It

I realize the most difficult task for a person with a broken heart is to stand still and feel the crack. But that is exactly what you must do. Because no shortcut is without its share of obstructions. Here's a simple fact: You have to grieve in order to move on. If you try to go around some of the issues that are tearing you apart inside, then you will bump into them somewhere down the line, just like being caught in the centre of a traffic circle. By going through the intense pain, you will eventually surface as a stronger person ready to tackle problems head on. Soon the pain will lose its stronghold over you.

Laughter heals on many levels, and so does crying. You think it's just a coincidence that you always feel better after a good cry? Nope, there are many physiological reasons that contribute to the healing power of tears. Some of them have been documented by biochemist William Frey who has spent 15 years as head of a research team studying tears. Among their findings is that emotional tears (as compared to tears of irritation, like when you cut an onion) contain toxic biochemical by-products, so that weeping removes these toxic substances and relieves emotional stress. So, go grab a box of Kleenex and cry your afternoon away.

A ritual of grief brings accumulated losses into the open, to be grieved and thereby stripped of their destructive power. This, no doubt, is why virtually every formal grief ritual found in every culture in the world has an element of celebration. The following is an example of a personal healing ritual suggested by Steven Stosny (in *Love Without Hurt*):

- Take a hot bath and towel yourself dry as if in a kind of ceremony.
- Dress in freshly laundered clothes, as if they were vestments.
- Dim the lights.
- Play sad music especially meaningful to you.

Try to think slowly and deliberately of all the hurt you've experienced, every sad movie you've seen, every bruised shin, every loss that has sliced your heart. As you think of these painful incidents, envision chips of corrosive, rust-like pain loosened from the walls of your heart and washed out by the cleansing flow of tears.

As the pain washes out of your body, as you are freed of the dead weight of leaden shame, feel yourself growing. Once you have completed the grieving and healing process, you are free to attain ultimate peace. You will find a good place for your former partner in your heart, based on the love and positive experiences you once shared.

#### 6. Detach and Revel in Your Independence Again

Attempting to fill the void yourself - without rushing to a new relationship or trying desperately to win your lover back - is essentially what detaching is all about. The Buddha taught that it is attachment that leads to suffering. So, the most direct path to happiness and peace is detachment. In his book, *Eastern Wisdom for Western Minds*, Victor M. Parachin tells a wonderful story about an old gardener who sought advice from a monk. Writes Parachin:

"Great Monk, let me ask you: How can I attain liberation?" The Great Monk replied: "Who tied you up?" This old gardener answered: "Nobody tied me up." The Great Monk said: "Then why do you seek liberation?"

It is hard not to look at an infant and think wistfully of a time long ago, when we shared its purity and innocence as infants ourselves. So much of growing up seems to involve losing touch with our pristine self. The real you - your innocent, courageous self at birth, the being you were always meant to be - is not lost.

Remarkably, crisis can force us to get back in touch with this lost part of ourselves. You are so close, having arrived at this point - here, in this moment - to finding a way back to your original self and to bringing it forth in all its miraculous glory to create your new life.

One of the most liberating thoughts you can repeat to yourself when you're immersed in grief and sadness is this:



There is nothing that I need for my existence in this moment that is lacking. When you're experiencing the intense pangs of grief, it is so difficult to trust that you can be whole without that person in your life. But you really can. It is your job to fill the emptiness, and you can do it... creatively, and with the help of your higher power.

If your ex was your opposite, he or she represented a core part of your mind that got lost in childhood. You effectively rejected that part of yourself. You thought that if you acted in the way your ex-partner is acting now, you wouldn't survive, so you broke this part off and repressed it. As adults we go looking for our missing part, find someone who is acting it out, and feel greatly attracted to them. We feel as though they will complete us. Of course, they are simultaneously, but conversely, finding their missing piece in us.

To become whole again, make a list of the qualities or traits that attracted you to your ex in the first place, which often turned out to be the very qualities that you attempted to change in your partner as the relationship began to run into trouble. Perhaps you thought your ex was rational, organized, intelligent, extroverted, or sexy, while you thought of yourself as possessing the opposites of these qualities. Discover your ex's qualities in yourself, and you will become a much more balanced and complete human being than you ever thought possible.

## 7. Make a Good and Bad List

You need to know which activities will make you feel good, and which ones will make you want to toilet paper your ex-lover's home (or apartment). You won't really know which activity belongs on which list until you start trying things, but I suspect that things like checking out his wall on Facebook and seeing that he has just posted a photo of his gorgeous new girlfriend is not going to make you feel good, so put that on the "don't attempt" list, along with e-mails and phone calls to his buddies fishing for information about him.

On the "feels peachy" list might be found such ventures as: deleting all of his e-mails and voicemails, pawning off the jewellery he gave you (using the cash for a much-needed massage?), laughing over coffee with a new friend who doesn't know him from Adam (to ensure his name won't come up).

Seriously, make a list of the inner qualities that you want to nurture. These qualities of your inviolate self can be injured, buried, hidden, or distorted in some other way, but they always remain. These qualities may include:

- Love
- Stimulation
- Forgiveness
- Pleasure
- Connecting and understanding
- Nurturing
- Creativity and creation
- Motivation
- Insight
- Healing and soothing

These are some of your inalienable capacities and needs as a human being. You are gifted with and are valued for one or more of the things on this list. These are the constants that remain during any crisis, and from which you will build a new and more authentic life and definition of self.

#### 8. Work It Out and Breathe Better

Heartbreak is what you feel when you didn't want the relationship to end. Heartbreak is a shock that impacts on all the systems of our being. At a physiological level the body goes into shock because it cannot find a physical solution to the emotional pain. The body has prepared itself by triggering the fight or flight response. Blood flow is directed away from the body's surface to the major muscles, adrenalin is released, and digestion is halted. But there is no one to fight and nowhere to run. So, the body does not get any clear signals to release this state of tension and heightened alertness. Getting stuck like this is called stress.

Working out your grief quite literally - by running, swimming, exercising, walking, or kickboxing - is going to give you immediate relief. On a physiological level - because exercise increases the activity of serotonin and/or norepinephrine and stimulates brain chemicals that foster growth of nerve cells - but also on an emotional level, because you are taking charge and becoming the master of your mind and body. Plus, you can visualize the fellow who is responsible for your pain and you can kick him in the face. Now doesn't that feel good.

Another spinoff may of course be that you lose that extra weight and end up not only feeling, but also looking better. And what more soothing balm for a wounded ego than the look on your former partner's face when they bump into you and you look absolutely fabulous?

One of the reasons why exercise helps us to feel better, is that when we get the body moving, we automatically breathe more deeply.

Learning to control your own arousal or stress levels - mainly through breath awareness and breath control - is really the master key to a happier, calmer, more productive and creative life. A relaxed brain is plugged into its own guiding intuition and natural wisdom.

Diaphragmatic breathing is the most effective way to quiet and calm the mind and soul. It helps contribute to an overall feeling of wellbeing. And who doesn't need that? Better breathing also allows oxygen to be more freely distributed to every cell in the body. The brain and all of the body's organs work much more effectively.

Breathing a whole centring breath takes us from the centre of our physical being while uniting us with our mental and spiritual capacities. The physical, spiritual/emotional, and mental capacities work in accord. From here, we eat better, we exercise more regularly, we rest when needed. We simply make better judgements that empower life in balance.

Endorphins are endogenous opioid peptides that act as neurotransmitters. They are five hundred times more potent than morphine. They have physical and emotional pain-relieving capabilities and they give a person a sense of ease and peace. I can tell you from personal experience that deep diaphragmatic breathing releases endorphins.

## 9. Create a New World

This is especially important if your world has collided with his, meaning that mutual friends who have seen him in the last week feel the need to tell you about it. Create your own safe world - full of new friends who wouldn't recognize him in a crowd and don't know how to spell his name - where he is not allowed to drop by for a figurative or literal surprise visit. Take this opportunity to try something new - scuba diving lessons, an art class, a book club, a blog - so to program your mind and body to expect a fresh beginning... without him (or her).

Crisis offers us the gift of limitations, says Laura Day (in *Welcome to Your Crisis*). In crisis, we must use all of our resources effectively. We have no room to waste time, energy, money, thought, or even feeling on anything inessential.

You have to strip down to what is truly essential to deal effectively with the moment at hand. The gift of this, as you will find, is that you create, become, and surround yourself with what you truly love and value.

During heartbreak you are often experiencing the most difficult part of yourself. You feel that everything important is being lost. The loss itself feels annihilating. You are probably not sitting around, reading this and thinking, "Wow, I am constructing a truly meaningful and authentic life." The process does not have to feel good to work.

You choose what you end up in life. When you know what you value, you achieve it. If there is any such a thing as destiny, this is it. The stripping away of everything that we thought we needed is not usually a pleasant process. The rewards, however, are wondrous.

Every crisis allows true authenticity. In fact, often we don't have many of our old resources available to us, and we are forced back to a place we had forgotten, a place of fundamental values and truths. We carry with us many counterfeit needs and beliefs. We acquire them over time from our parents, our society, our friends, our loves.

Getting to that part of us that is uniquely ours, often takes the painful ripping away of false self. Just because something is inauthentic or even unhealthy does not mean that you are not profoundly attached to it. Although we can achieve an authentic life relatively painlessly over decades of evolution, heartbreak can speed up the process to an instant.

Revolution has its own rewards. The miraculous power of the healing we create through loss can be as stunning as looking at the sun.

## 10. Find Your Heart Through Forgiveness and Hope

There's a powerful quote in the movie *The Tale of Despereaux*: "There is one emotion that is stronger than fear, and that is forgiveness." But forgiveness requires hope: believing that a better place exists, that the aching emptiness experienced in your every activity won't be with you forever, that one day you'll be excited to make coffee in the morning or go to a movie with friends. Hope is believing that the sadness can evaporate, that if you try like hell to move on with your life, your smile won't always be forced.

Your heart is your connective tissue to life. Without it, you would wither away in a seemingly eternal winter, become old and die. With it, you go through each inevitable spring, no matter what your age.

Your heart is your capacity to love, to feel, to enjoy, and to know beyond any scientific certainty what your purpose in life is. Your heart is the root of your courage; your mind is the sum total of your soul. Together, they give meaning beyond the mere aggregate of facts.

It is important to examine the relationship that you have with your heart. How warm, open-hearted, human, compassionate, empathic, and giving are you? How good are you at enjoyment? How well do you receive? On the other hand, how defensive, dissociated, sacrificial, scared, cynical, bitter, or naive are you? How removed are you from life? Are you just going through the paces? Have you lost your sense of passionate giving? Have you lost your fire and zest? Are you tired, burned out, or used up?

These are signs that your heart has been lost - in part or in whole. If you have lost heart, then it is time to rest, reflect, and commit to a course of action to win back your heart because it is the cornerstone of your emotional integrity. It is not too late. It is your life; you choose: wholeheartedness or half a life?

### And remember to Love Again

Once our hearts are bruised and burned from a relationship that ended, we have two options: we can close off pieces of our heart so that one day no one will be able to get inside. Or we can love again. Deeply, just as intensely as we did before. Henri Nouwen urges us to love again because the heart only expands with the love, we are able to pour forth. He writes:

“The more you have loved and have allowed yourself to suffer because of your love, the more you will be able to let your heart grow wider and deeper. When your love is truly giving and receiving, those whom you love will not leave your heart even when they depart from you. The pain of rejection, absence, and death can become fruitful. Yes, as you love deeply the ground of your heart will be broken more and more, but you will rejoice in the abundance of the fruit it will bear.”

When I'm in pain, the only guaranteed antidote to my suffering is to box up all of my feelings, sort them, and then try to find a use for them. When you turn your attention to another person - especially someone who is struggling with the same kind of pain - you forget about yourself for a split moment. And that, on some days, feels like a miracle.

Face it! You need your heart. Without it, you can only live a partial existence, a half-life, because you cannot enjoy your living or give yourself. You cannot love. You cannot receive. You cannot feel.

Without your heart, you are reduced to being either a predator or prey in a grey mouse-like existence. Without your heart, you are part of the problem causing – directly or indirectly - whatever was done to you. Without wholeheartedness, you will not be able to give what you promised to give. You may have promised to love another person well, to foster a bond with a child or to save the world. To achieve these promises, you need to gather up your whole heart and to give yourself fully.

### The Lessons of Heartbreak

You can learn the lessons of heartbreak and correct your mistakes that led to heartbreak, in spite of the fact that the heartbreak seems simply to come from what your partner is doing. You can choose to bring yourself to a new level of maturity and render yourself available for true love once again. Some of the lessons involved in heartbreak are formulated by Chuck Spezzano in *If Its Heartbreak, It Can Be Healed*.

- Emotional pain shows that you are making a mistake. This mistake can only be corrected by you.
- Every heartbreak is a dark fruit that has its root in childhood.
- All hurt shows that you were trying to get or take something. When you only want to give, you cannot be hurt.
- You can only be upset if someone breaks your rules. Your rules are defences against old pain, and they beg to be broken.
- Every heartbreak is part of a power struggle.
- Heartbreak is a form of emotional blackmail that you use to lay guilt on your partner.
- Being heartbroken is an act of revenge on the person involved, your parents and possibly some of your ex-partners.
- Heartbreak is using pain as a weapon.
- A heartbreak pattern in relationships is also a defeat pattern in your career.
- Every heartbreak was planned by part of your subconscious mind, and you can access that part of your mind to see what was going on.

- Each heartbreak represents a mistake at a significant crossroad of your life. One in which you could have gone beyond your fear of intimacy and chosen the next step forward instead.
- There are payoffs in your heartbreaks that represent a choice for your ego's agenda rather than a choice for a new level of love.
- The main mistaken reasons you choose heartbreak are getting attention, being special, calling for love, protecting yourself from some fear, wanting to be independent, doing things your way, being right, fighting, attacking your parents, proving your point, using it as an excuse to hide and avoiding your purpose.
- Each heartbreak is a form of self-punishment in an attempt to pay off guilt. This means you are punishing yourself for some mistaken reason while refusing to learn the lesson involved.
- The magnitude of the heartbreak shows the size of the gift hidden within you that you are afraid of expressing. That gift still awaits you and that is one of the easiest ways to heal a heartbreak.
- No relationship ends unless both people want it to, in spite of what your conscious mind is telling you.
- When a heartbreak is used to end a relationship you subconsciously chose who is best suited to be the "independent victimizer" and the "dependent victim," so that you can both leave the relationship.
- A heartbreak represents the fear of the next chapter in your life. The time it takes to heal a heartbreak is how long it takes for you to gain confidence in the next step. The size of the heartbreak is how big the leap is.
- The number one cause of heartbreak is the balance of independence/dependence in relationship. If you don't learn this principle, you can never really succeed in relationships.
- One of the easiest ways to have a relationship succeed is to commit to equality. The more equality, the more love and creativity.



## Create a Vision of the Relationship You Want

A very important part of the work you need to do during your heartbreak experience, is to formulate a clear vision of exactly what you want in your next relationship. If you continue to recycle thoughts of deprivation, hurt and heartbreak, that is exactly what you will continue to attract into your life. Below is an example of a relationship vision.

### Relationship Vision

I am part of God as God is part of me.  
Therefore, I embody love, light, and the infinite power of creation.

I am also human and therefore I encompass all the darkness, the "sins," and the limitations of every other human being I have ever judged, rejected, or abandoned, as well as all the magnificence, abilities, and potential of every other person that I have ever fallen in love with.

I am whole and complete.

I am enough, I do enough, I have enough.  
There is nothing outside of myself that I need for my growth and wholeness.

I am the creator of all my relationships.

I take responsibility for having created love in the form of misunderstanding, betrayal, rejection, and abandonment. Without being conscious of it at the time, I did so in order to teach myself to forgive and to correct my former misperceptions of love.

I now choose to create love in the form of mutual nurturance, support, understanding, and acceptance, in order to teach myself to be strong, joyous, and loving in the presence of another.

My highest commitment is to myself.

I am married to my own Higher Self, as I dance with the perfection and sacredness in myself and in the one I love.

This beautiful extended affirmation by Louise Hay has helped me through my difficult times:

### DEEP AT THE CENTRE OF MY BEING THERE IS AN INFINITE WELL OF LOVE

I now allow this love to flow to the **surface**. It fills my heart, my body, my mind, my consciousness, **my very being**, and radiates out from me in all directions and returns to me **multiplied**. The more love I use and give, the more I have to give, the **supply is endless**. The use of love makes **ME FEEL GOOD**;  
it is an expression of my inner joy.

I love myself; therefore, I **take care of my body**. I lovingly feed it nourishing foods and beverages, I lovingly groom it and dress it, and my body lovingly responds to me with **vibrant health and energy**.

I love myself; therefore, I provide for myself a **comfortable home**, one that fills all my needs and is a pleasure to be in. I fill the rooms with the vibration of love so that all who enter, myself included, will **feel this love and be nourished by it**.

I love myself; therefore, I work at a **job that I truly enjoy** doing, one that uses my creative talents and abilities, working with and for people that I love and that love me, and earning a **good income**.

I love myself; therefore, I **behave and think in a loving way** to all people for I know that that which I give out **returns to me multiplied**. I only attract loving **people** in my world for they are a mirror of what I am. I love myself; therefore, I **forgive** and totally release the past and all past experiences and I am free.

I love myself; therefore, I live totally in the now, **experiencing each moment** as good and knowing that my future is bright and **joyous and secure**, for I am a **beloved child of the universe and the universe lovingly takes care of me now and forevermore**.

**AND SO IT IS**

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*Artwork by Vladimir Kush*

