

Relationship Challenge

A wise teacher once said, “Be that which you seek”. Developing the qualities of being at peace with ourselves, and showing confidence in who we are seems to attract others to us. Relationships often flourish in a positive atmosphere of genuineness and mutual respect. A balance of confidence, humility, and compassion are much more comfortable to be around than negativity and arrogance.

Life is a process of choices and growth. We can choose to become involved in life or live in a powerless realm of avoidance, denial, fear and worry with anxiety and depression close at hand. Not to discount the presence of biological, environmental, mental, and spiritual elements, we do control a certain amount of choice, responsibility, and consequence. There are extremes to most things and people. One possibility is to find the middle ground. I am suggesting a sense of balance. Our actions, words, and self-esteem project an image of who we are and what we want. Sometimes we fool ourselves into believing that someone is “perfect” or exactly what we want, only to find out later that they are not who we thought they were. That is most likely, but not always, a projection. The result is often a sense of loss, followed (at a rate determined by you) by another search for the “perfect” match, and the pattern may continue. What is the alternative?

A few suggestions:

- ❖ Get to know yourself (the good, bad, ugly, and the beautiful). Know your strengths and weakness, your ways of coping in this life that work and do not work. This can help you in making decisions and recognizing when you may be repeating a pattern that has not worked for you. If you do not know who you are, find out. Get into counseling; you are worth the effort. You are uniquely YOU. Look at your patterns in past relationships and learn from every situation.

- ❖ Make a list or think about what you want in a partner, and make a list of what you bring to the relationship. Are you looking for a short-term, long-term, physical, social, and/or spiritual connection? Are you looking for commitment to a monogamous (one person at a time) or polygamous (many people at one time) relationship? Can you communicate what you want and need to someone you are attracted to? Do your beliefs, morals, and values match or find common ground?

- ❖ Be yourself and recognize that we are all imperfect and hopefully, doing the best we can. Accepting ourselves is important, and there are ways to change some things in ourselves through diligent awareness and consistent effort. How your relationships turn out may be reflected in how you treat yourself.

- ❖ Strong relationships are built on mutual respect, acceptance of one another (as much as we are capable), direct communication, and clear individual boundaries for self and the relationship. Love, sex, mutual goals, similar interests, and a variety of other things are all a part of the development of strong relationships and deserve to be explored when the attraction is present.

- ❖ Understand that people are who they are and you will not change them. We can change only ourselves. If you expect people to become exactly what you want, you may find disappointment and resentment just around the corner. Figure out what you can live with and what you cannot. Discuss it, and find compromises that work for both of you. Hopefully, you can find a relationship that is much more positive than negative. Yes, it takes real effort and it is worth it if you are willing to see the opportunity for growth and continue in the process of finding your bliss. Happiness is more a product of what is within you than “out there”.
- ❖ Give yourself and your prospective partner time to get to know one another in various situations. When trying to develop a relationship, most people put their best foot forward to make good impressions on others. The image you see may not be the whole truth of the individual. Take the time, if you want a strong and lasting relationship, and do not allow physical/sexual encounters to become the starting place or anchor. It is much more difficult to see the real person when lust or desire dominates the relationship. If it is to work, time and experience will build the foundation. If not, recognize the differences and, without blaming, move on.

The many experiences in our lives can be viewed from the perspective of a victim (out of our control and more negative than positive) or as an opportunity (some sense of influence or participation and more positive than negative). It often depends on your view of yourself and the world. Whatever your belief system or perspective, consider participating in your life’s journey by becoming consciously aware of how and why you do what you do, and how that influences your choices and the kinds of relationships you experience. As you get to know yourself and enjoy your process in this life, you may find that special someone smiling back at you and wanting to walk with you in your journey.

If you seek love and acceptance, peace, respect, compassion, and the “right” partner for you, **BE THAT WHICH YOU SEEK**, start with yourself.

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THINK SIMPLE NOW, A MOMENT OF CLARITY BY TINA

Taken from: <http://thinksimplenow.com/relationships/how-to-get-over-breakups/>

How to Get Over a Break Up

Falling passionately in love with someone is one of the most exhilarating feelings, as if you had wings and you are flying high in the sky, feeling the wind romantically blowing through your hair. And usually, when love ends, it feels as if you've been dropped like a rock in mid-air. You scramble to grab a hold of something ... anything, as you witness your body falling at great speeds, and then shattering on the earth below.

Whether we're talking about breakups, or facing the reality of a one-sided romance, it is painful. So much so that it disrupts our normal flow of experiences, causing us to not function normally.

With so much emotion invested and our identities tied in with these experiences, it's no wonder that this is the number one topic requested by readers. Over the past year, I have regularly received email from readers sharing their own takes on painful breakups; tales of guilt, of fear, of regret, and of resentment. Although the stories were different, the underlying message was universal and one in the same, "I am in so much pain from not being with this person – what can I do?"

Sometimes, the pain of lost love is so intense that it can shake our beliefs about romance and relationships. When these emotional bruises are not understood and have not healed properly, they become invisible baggage that drag with us into the next relationship. This article focuses on the healing process from "love lost".

Personal Story: The Gift of "Love Lost"

I categorize myself as a very passionate and emotional person. I cry easily at movies and at the sight of passers-by with physical disabilities. When I love, I give it my all, and when it ends, the pain of feeling abandoned can become overwhelmingly and cripplingly intense.

In fact, my journey into personal growth began when I was confronted by a painful breakup five years ago. Out of despair, I had picked up a copy of the *Seven Habits of Highly Effective People* – the only personal development book I had heard of, at the time. Although I would recommend a different book now for similar circumstances, at the time, this book introduced me to new concepts that helped me make sense of my emotions, and I was hungry for more.

Over the next few years, it was through dealing with recurring relationship issues that I experienced several rewarding revelations and was able to trigger several major growth spurts in my own self-improvement. While these emotionally-infused episodes of "love lost" might have seemed unbearably painful at the time of happening, they were also the catalyst for personal growth, and played a critical role in my becoming a more wholesome and complete person.

The Origins of Love and Pain

Before diving into the practical how-to of healing, let's first look at what love is, where it comes from, and why we experience so much pain when it ends.

I believe that love is a universal energy infused in all forms of life. It is something that lies within the core of every one of us. When we are in a state of conscious awareness, the intense feeling of love and connectedness is clear and undeniable. When we are in this state of clarity and inner peace, our thoughts and actions are based in love and truth.

Within the depths of our souls, we are all connected by this unifying and essential energy of life – love. We occasionally experience glimpses of this deep connection through various and accidental happenstances, such as:

- A gratifying and intimate conversation with another person. Sharing and expressing your thoughts honestly and openly.

- Creative expressions such as playing music, writing, drawing, dancing, cooking, designing or even computer programming.

- Meditation, prayers or communing with your chosen religious group.

- Communing with nature during a hike, a walk or while sitting by the bed of a river flowing beautifully in front of you.

- During sexual orgasm (The Dalai Lama has written about this.)

When we fall in love with another person, we are essentially experiencing the love that was within us all along. The person is merely acting like a mirror reflecting our soul back at us. Technically, we can't "fall" in love, because we are already made of love. The other person, much like a musical instrument, is the catalyst allowing us to recognize the beauty that's already within us.

Because of our lack of understanding that love resides within us, and that we actually have the power to invoke it on our own, we credit it to the other person for giving love to us. This feeling is so strong and extraordinary, that we become addictive and possessive. We want to capture it and keep it fixed, so that we can – at last – keep this heightened feeling forever.

The desire and dependency to keep this form fixed, becomes a source of self identification that artificially justifies who we are as physical beings. We become attached to the fixed idea of how our relationship should go and our ego quickly becomes the main investor in this fund of a relationship.

The truth is that, everyone and everything is in a constant flow of change. The changes in us and in our external circumstances are inevitable and undeniable. When we change, the dynamics of our relationships change – not just romantic ones, but also friendships, family ties, and our relationships with co-workers.

Over time, some relationships strengthen and some grow apart. When people grow apart, it doesn't mean that either one of them was a bad person, but rather that they've learned all that they needed to from the other person, and that it's time to move on.

When it's time to move on, we hold onto this invisible box that contains an idealized and fixated form of how things should be. We unconsciously and instinctively fall into the false believe that we must stop the love when we are no longer romantically involved.

Because we attribute love as being 'to' this other person external to us, pain happens when we forcefully try to kill the love, which is actually within us.

Let's repeat: Pain happens when we forcefully kill the love that's within us.

When we forcefully try to kill the love within us, it physically feels as if someone has stabbed a knife into our heart, and a sharp pain surfaces in our chest area. In reality, we are that someone doing the stabbing, because we are trying to sever our innate connection to love and our Soul is now bleeding. Our Soul is crying for help, asking us to stop the stabbing, to stop the pain.

A Love Affair & Emotional Freedom

“When it comes to love,
you need not fall but rather surrender,
surrender to the idea that you must love yourself
before you can love another.
You must absolutely trust yourself
before you can absolutely trust another
and most importantly you must accept your flaws
before you can accept the flaws of another.”

~ Philosophy: Falling in Love

My preferred suggestion to healing from love lost is the same as the one for finding love: to love yourself, first.

In previous relationships, we probably depended on our partners to make us happy, to make us feel special, to make us whole and complete. Our self-worth may have been wrapped up in how much attention our partner gave us. This is a 'lose-lose' formula that works against our personal happiness, because it relies heavily on external circumstances beyond our control and is not sustainable in the long term.

Truth is, nothing external to us can give us the security we need. Only we can give that to ourselves, by loving and accepting ourselves completely.

By learning to love and appreciate ourselves, not only do we free ourselves from the chains that keep us in pain when a relationship ends, it also makes us more attractive to the outside world. Even when you don't explicitly speak about it, something in the grace of your movement will spread that message to others, like a summer breeze softly blowing the scent of a flower to neighboring plants.

7 Tips Getting Over a Break Up

1. Letting Go

What would you do if your house was burnt to the ground, and everything you owned was destroyed? I'm sure you'd be frustrated and angry at first, but at the same time, no amount of anger will undo what has been done. It is what it is. Your best bet is to begin moving on, and working towards creating a new home.

Similarly, when a relationship ends, you'll want to practice letting go and allowing the healing process to begin quickly.

If you were on the receiving end of a breakup, do not dwell on whether the person will come back or not, if they broke up with you at one point, chances are, something is wrong with the fit of your partnership, and you'll be better appreciated elsewhere, with someone else. Even if you and the ex get back together, it is unlikely to last (from my experience).

Trust that everything in the Universe happens for a reason, and it benefits everyone involved in the long run, even if the benefits are not yet clear. Trust that this is the best possible thing to happen to you right now, and the reasons will become clear in the future.

2. Release Tension and Bundled Up Energy

We all have the need to be understood and heard. Whether we're on the receiving end or the initiating end of a breakup, we often carry with us the tension and any unexpressed emotions. We can release this extra energy by:

Talking about it with a friend.

Voicing our opinions honestly and openly with our ex-partner, which have been bottled up in the past.

Punching a pillow and crying freely for 10 minutes

Screaming out aloud and imagining unwanted energy being released with your voice (seriously, I've done a meditation that incorporated this, and I instantly felt better).

Writing in a journal (more on this later).

Exercise and body movement.

Meditating.

3. Love Yourself

The practice of loving yourself is the most important aspect on the road to personal happiness and emotional stability. I've personally had my most valuable personal growth spurts during the period when I vigorously worked on this aspect of my life.

I did everything from cooking myself fancy dinners, to spending every Sunday on my own doing the things that I loved, to taking myself to Symphonies, to taking overseas trips on my own. Each one had its own challenges and confronted my beliefs about loneliness. Through overcoming the fear of loneliness, I experienced deep joy all by myself. It was so gratifying, refreshing and empowering.

Here are some ideas to cultivate the art of loving yourself:

Take yourself on romantic dates as if you were on a date with another person. Put on nice clothes, maybe buy yourself flowers, treat yourself to something delicious, and take long walks under the stars. Whatever your idea of a romantic date is.

Look at yourself in the mirror. Look yourself in the eyes. Smile slightly with your eyes. Practice giving gratitude to what you see. You don't need words. Just send out the intent of giving an abundance of love to the eyes that you see, and feel the feelings of love within you. As you are looking into your eyes, look for something you admire about your eyes – maybe the color, the shape, the depth, the exoticness, or even the length of your eye lashes. This will be a little weird and uncomfortable at first, but just trust me, and continue with it. Do this for a few minutes every day.

Sit or stand in front of a mirror, or sit somewhere comfortable (mix it up, and do both on different days), put both hands on your chest and say to yourself, "I love you, <insert your name>". Repeat a few times, slowly. Continue with qualities you like about yourself, or things you are good at. Be generous and list many, even if they sound silly. Example, "I love that you always know how to make your salads so colorful and appetizing.", "I love that you have the discipline to go to the gym regularly, and you really take care of your body.", "I love that you are so neat, and can keep your desk so organized."

Practice doing things on your own to challenge your fear of being alone. For example, if you have a fear of eating alone in a restaurant, go out to a restaurant on your own. Your mission is to find the joy within that experience.

4. Love Your Ex-Partner

Allow the love within you to flow. Try practicing forgiveness and open up your heart.

Over the past few months, my friend Tom Stine and I have been chatting about the topic of overcoming breakups. Tom had been married for 13 years and went through a divorce that took him 2 years to emotionally recover from. When asked about how he got over his ex-wife, he had a few snippets of wisdom to convey:

“I let myself love her. Even when it felt like my heart was going to break. Adyashanti says something amazing – when people say, ‘My heart feels like it is going to break.’ He says, ‘Let it break. If you let it really break – really, really break, it will transform you.’”

“LET YOUR HEART BREAK WIDE OPEN. Let go of every possible belief or thought that says your ex is anything other than the most incredible, amazing, wonderful person in the Universe. You gotta love them and open your broken heart, WIDE OPEN!!!! That’s how to get over a break-up, really get over it. Anything short of that is not gonna do it.”

“The key for me was getting utterly clear: we are apart, and the Universe never makes mistakes. We are over. And I can still love her. That was HUGE. I can love her with all my heart and soul and we never have to be together. And when I realized that, I felt amazing. And still do. The freedom was great. I could finally own-up to how much I wanted out of our relationship. All the hurt and anger disappeared. I was free.”

The underlying message of love in Tom’s words is pretty clear and powerful.

5. Give it Time

It takes time to heal. Be patient. Give it more time. I promise the storm will end, and the sun will peak through the clouds.

6. Journal Your Experience

Spend some quality time in a comfortable chair, at your desk or at a café, and write your thoughts and feelings on paper. No, not typing on a laptop, writing on paper with a pen. Follow your heart and flow freely, but if you’re stuck, here are some writing exercises you can do:

Drill into the why – Start with a question or statement, and continue to drill into why you feel that way until you have a truthful and satisfying reason. The exercise isn’t to issue blame or blow off steam at someone else. It’s meant to gain clarity and understanding into how you feel, so you can alleviate unnecessary pain. For example, you might start with the statement, “I am in a lot of pain, ouch!”, and your why might be “because she left me”. Now ask yourself, “why does that hurt so much?”, and one possible why might be, “because I feel abandoned”. The following why to “why does feeling abandoned hurt so much?”, “because it makes me feel alone”, etc. More than likely, the real reason has something to do with our own insecurities or fears.

Finding the Lessons – What did you learn from the relationship? What did you learn from the other person? How is your life better because of it? How will your future relationships be better because of it?

7. Read Something Inspirational

Books that deal with our emotions and ego are incredible tools at a time of healing. They help to enlighten our understanding of ourselves and our experiences.

Here are some recommended books:

The Power of Now

You Can Heal Your Life (Illustrative Edition)

Loving What Is: Four Questions That Can Change Your Life

Parting Words

Socially, we view the end of a relationship with a negative connotation and give it the label of a 'failure'. Just because a relationship has ended does not mean that the relationship was a failure. Both parties likely gained something substantial in either learning about themselves or for the benefit of future partnerships.

"Every relationship will end someday, whether by break-up or by the death of one partner. Relationships have cycles. They are born, they live, and they die. Just like every part of life. It is merely a part of life."

-Tom Stine

Capture the beauty of time shared together, and note the valuable life lessons learned. Be thankful for having experienced love, and know that you are a better person because of it.

No challenge is ever presented to us, if we are un-able to handle it.

For those currently in relationships, cherish and honor your partner for who they are as form and formless Beings. Accept the reality that life is full of change, and dance with the changes and challenges as they come. And when they come, view each one as an opportunity for personal growth – when you do that, nothing is lost.

All is well, and so be it.