

Reader Reviews on the Juggernaut App

‘An excellent read, and not only for people with a broken heart. Very well written and structured. A treat to read. Looking forward for more books of Dr Shyam Bhat’
—Sabina Basha

‘Really nice book’—Vidhyaniwas

‘Not only for the ones who are going through breakups, but should also be read by the ones who are single and prone to feeling lonely. This book helped me to value myself more. I keep re-reading the book in parts whenever I need some affirmation’—Ananya Ghosh

‘I’m not one for self-help kind of books in general, but this book makes so much sense as it helps you understand the scientificity of your feelings. And... it’s just the right length too!’—Sneha L

‘I went through the book in less than days. I started with my quest for answers to heartbreak and its causes and consequences. I had some memories I wanted to examine in the light of knowledge I was reading. I ended up by learning many things and in fact unlearning many as well. The author has deconstructed and demystified many things. I think I will handle myself better not from the

point of view of a heart, but from the viewpoint of human rationality. The respect for eastern science may grow now onwards inside me. A must read for all. Don't miss this man and woman'—**Jitendra**

'Awesome'—**Kosana**

'Lucidly written. Very easy to comprehend even for a lay person. Most important, it is not only useful for heartbroken people but also to those who suffer from dysfunction of any other intimate relationship. The book gave me deep insights into human emotions. Thank you'—**Kanti Khanvte Hodarkar**

'Clear and without fluff. Love the pointedness of the solution provided. 9/10 would recommend'—**Tanzila Anis**

'Though the book is short, it provided some much needed ointment to heal a broken heart. The author writes as if he's speaking to the reader and the reader, thus, forms a connect instantly. Very, very cogent arguments, and true understating of human relationships in the Indian context make this book a worthwhile read'—**Rahul Sharma**

'This book is like the Bhagwad Geeta for heartbreaks. Every time you read it, the book throws up different aspects, clearer thoughts. It is therapeutic'—**Anklesh Agarwal**

‘Good book’—**Tummalapalli**

‘A great read! To the point and very concisely written...
Eases the mind...’—**Gayatri Behera**

‘Great book to get over a heartbreak’—**Lakshaya Sachdeva**

‘I read this book in one sitting. We need more information
on this subsect. And we need credible writing as well.
Thank you. It’s a good book’—**Ganesh Pol**

You Will Love Again

A Guide to Healing from
Heartbreak

Dr Shyam Bhat

 juggernaut

JUGGERNAUT BOOKS
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The client stories in this book are composites of real cases; however, names and details have been changed to protect the clients' identities.

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*To the women who broke my heart – you taught me
what books can't teach about love and loss.*

*To the many people, men and women, who share
their stories of heartbreak with me – you inspire
me with your courage, resilience and strength. It's a
privilege to facilitate your journey to healing.*

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Introduction

So she left you. Or he doesn't return your calls any more. Your love has ended. Your heart is broken. And you are reading this wondering – what is this guy going to tell me that my friends don't tell me? What does he have to offer that the Internet and countless agony aunt columns have not taught me?

Here's what's different about this book. First, it is born of experience. I too have ended relationships and suffered. But then, so has most of the world. The difference is that I am also a psychiatrist. And as a psychiatrist, I have seen heartbreak in countless people who have come to me suffering from feelings of sadness and pain, and I experienced these same emotions in myself,

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and wondered – what is the strange nature of this experience that even the most rational mind cannot seem to change?

The pain of heartbreak is mysterious. It comes from the deepest reaches of our being, our mind, our body and our soul, and when we learn to deal with heartbreak, both to heal and then to love again, we discover the best part of us.

As a psychiatrist, I have learned to take this emotional experience seriously, for it is at the root of a great many emotional disturbances. I have seen people whose lives, after the end of a relationship, have spiralled out of control, degenerating into addictions, meaningless relationships and illnesses, battling loneliness and problems in their careers and, in the worst instances, ending in suicide.

In fact, the leading cause of suicide among the youth appears to be heartbreak-related depression. **More than 1.35 lakh people commit suicide in India every year and as many as 20,000 of them end their life because of heartbreak.**

For many of us, heartbreak is our first really

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deep emotional experience. This means that it can shape us and our relations with others forever. You fall in love with her and you feel like you have never felt before. You are obsessed with her and then one day she leaves you for someone else. Or perhaps you started out as friends and before you knew it he became the one person you could pour your heart out to.

The one person who understood you completely, the one person who accepted you completely in a way that no one else did before. And then one day he leaves for another town and breaks up with you. Now you see his profile on Facebook, you see his pictures, you see him with someone else – and you cannot understand how you can ever be happy again.

Whatever your situation, this book can help you not just to get over heartbreak but also to benefit from the experience. A great suffering such as heartbreak is an opportunity for you to learn to look within, and to discover your own greatness, strength, peace and happiness.

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This book, I hope, will give you insights that can help you become happier, stronger and more complete and in the future help you to love again and have a better relationship.

How to Use This Book

This book is short but it is packed with information. It first looks at what happens to your body and your mind (chapter 2) when you suffer from this trauma. Then it asks the most important question of all, why does it hurt so much (chapter 3) and finally I take you on the path to healing (chapters 4 and 5). At the end of the book, in the appendix, I have also given advice on diet, meditation and exercise and put in an FAQ which addresses the most common questions I get asked.

Through the book I have included exercises that are designed to help you heal and grow from the experience of heartbreak. Take your time to read and reflect, and to answer the questions completely.

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Take This Questionnaire to Find Out How Much Heartbreak Has Hurt You

Consider each of these statements, and mark how strongly you agree or disagree with these statements (compare how you feel currently with how you used to feel before the break-up). Answer the questions honestly and without thinking too much about it.

Strongly disagree:	0
Disagree:	1
Neither agree nor disagree:	2
Agree:	3
Strongly agree:	4

1. I am angrier than I used to be
2. I feel more tired than usual
3. Life does not seem interesting any more
4. Life is boring
5. I feel lonely
6. I feel bad about how I look
7. I feel bad about who I am

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8. I cannot stop thinking about my loved one
9. I find myself having thoughts about violence against her/him
10. I want to die
11. I don't see any reason to live
12. I can't sleep well
13. I don't feel like eating
14. I don't feel like meeting anyone
15. I believe that love is for fools
16. I regret falling in love with her/him
17. I hope we will get back together if I wait long enough
18. I am sad
19. I don't think I can love again
20. I have lost/gained a lot of weight
21. I believe that nobody else will love me like she/he did
22. I believe that nobody else will understand me the way he/she did
23. I am incomplete without her/him
24. I miss how she/he looks/smells/feels

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Your Heartbreak Meter

Score

75 to 96: Severe heartbreak

50 to 75: Significant heartbreak

25 to 50: Moderate heartbreak

8 to 25: Minimal heartbreak

If you have any thoughts of suicide, you are suffering from severe heartbreak, even if there are no other symptoms. Do not do anything to hurt yourself. Seek professional help asap. Call a suicide helpline now. Please do not wait or hesitate. For a list of therapists in your area, please see <http://thelivelovelaughfoundation.org>. Remember, you will feel love again.

1

What's Happening to Your
Body and Mind?

Your Body

'I can't sleep at night, I lie awake thinking of him, I don't want to eat, I don't want to meet anyone. Life is so grey and empty without him. My body is in pain. My heart literally aches for him.'

'When she broke up with me, I felt as if someone had kicked me in the stomach. I was angry. I hated all women, I think I hated everyone. I was drinking every night, at least half a bottle of whisky, smoking more than two packs a day. Looking back, I was in so much pain, I wanted to die.'

Heartbreak is an emotionally devastating experience, and most people who experience it

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have never felt such pain before. People often describe their feelings to me as if they were feeling sensations in their body. The pain is real, they tell me. And they are right.

No Difference Between Physical and Romantic Pain

The same part of the brain that is activated in physical pain is activated when you are suffering from heartbreak. In other words, as far as your brain is concerned, the end of romantic love is equivalent to your body being traumatized, as if a part of it has been brutally amputated.

It's Like Having Withdrawal Symptoms

The part of the brain – the caudate nucleus – that is connected to drug addiction is activated in heartbreak, causing obsession and craving. You feel bad just like the heroin addict who has not got the drug, and I am not speaking metaphorically.

What's Happening to Your Body and Mind?

Research shows that the pain of heartbreak decreases when people are given morphine (I am not telling you to take morphine or any such drug; in fact, the risk of drug addiction during heartbreak is high since the body is craving release from the pain).

Dr Helen Fisher, a psychologist who conducted path-breaking research in heartbreak, studied the brains of people who had been recently rejected by their partner but were still in love. Dr Fisher scanned these people's brains while they looked at the photograph of their loved one and then again as they looked at a photo of an acquaintance and compared the respective brain activity.

The results were shocking: heartbreak seemed to cause the same brain changes seen in a drug addict who is withdrawing from powerful drugs such as cocaine. Both cocaine and being in love cause the release of a chemical called dopamine and stimulate a part of the brain called the mesolimbic system, the reward centre of the brain, causing an intense feeling of pleasure, ecstasy and euphoria.

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When love (or the drug) is taken away, the mesolimbic dopaminergic system of the brain slows down – the person comes crashing down from the high of love (or the drug), the brain starts to crave the jolt of dopamine and this is felt as intense pain, withdrawal and craving. Normal life in contrast now seems dull and colourless, and the cocaine addict and the heartbroken person will now intensely crave and seek the source of reward and pleasure.

Your Hormones Are Affected Too

Other studies showed that heartbreak also depletes chemicals in the brain called endorphins – these chemicals are natural painkillers and the depletion of endorphins causes real physical and emotional pain.

Heartbreak increases levels of the hormone called cortisol, which is secreted by the adrenal glands. This can cause weight gain, fatigue, body aches and pains and a weakened immune system,

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which can make you more susceptible to cold and infections.

Heartbreak Can Literally Break Your Heart

Although very rare, a condition called takotsubo cardiomyopathy can occur during times of extreme emotional stress such as heartbreak: when the mind and emotional heart are threatened and hurt, the body releases huge amounts of stress hormones such as adrenaline, which in large doses are toxic to the heart. In severe cases, these chemicals weaken and damage the heart muscle – the walls of the heart become thin and the heart swells like a balloon, unable to pump blood adequately, causing shortness of breath, chest pain and, on rare occasions, death.

Your Mind

The researcher and doctor Elisabeth Kübler-Ross studied the emotional reactions of people who had

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lost a loved one to an illness, and this research was later extended to people undergoing heartbreak. According to this research, when you undergo heartbreak, you will experience the following emotions:

- **Denial**
- **Anger**
- **Bargaining**
- **Depression**
- **Acceptance**

These emotions are not necessarily experienced in this order, and a person undergoing heartbreak will often feel a roller coaster of emotions, passing from one stage to another or sometimes experiencing all at the same time. To this range of emotions, I would like to add a few more: fear, guilt, regret and shame. If you suppress these feelings, you can experience a lingering numbness.

What's Happening to Your Body and Mind?

Fear

'I woke up in the middle of the night and my heart was beating so fast I thought I was getting a heart attack. I couldn't breathe, I couldn't think, I was so scared, and I didn't know what I was really scared of.'

'I don't know if I will ever meet anyone again. I am so afraid that I will be alone forever. I can't focus at work because I am thinking of her all the time. I am so tense and have become so impatient that I shout for small things and then I feel bad.'

Your brain, like that of all animal species, is designed to protect you, and it does this by alerting you to any potential threat. Fear is a signal that comes from the almond-shaped amygdala – this fear centre of the brain signals threat even before the conscious brain can process the reasons for the fear.

The loss of a significant relationship is a threat to your emotional self and to your identity, and so the amygdala becomes hyperactive during heartbreak, signalling excessive threat and fear.

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The body also releases stress hormones such as adrenaline and norepinephrine. These chemical changes trigger the fight, flight or freeze mode. Your muscles become tight, your breath becomes rapid, your stomach clenches, your heart rate increases. Emotionally you may feel scared or anxious, nervous or hyperactive. You may feel more irritable and angrier than usual. Your appetite decreases or you may experience cravings for unhealthy food. If stress persists – and it often does with heartbreak – then hormones such as cortisol are elevated, causing a cascade of physical problems such as fatigue, impaired immunity and impairment of brain function, including worsening memory and elevated risk of depression.

Events that evoke intense emotions are emblazoned in the brain – this is true for positive as well as negative emotions.

You never forget the first time you fell in love. You never forget the first time your heart was broken.

Your mind, now under threat, will start to see more

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negatives than positives, seeing danger when none exists or feeling more insecure in other areas of your life. Your self-esteem may take a beating, as your body and mind experience sadness, anxiety and turmoil and as you lose the source of self-affirmation.

But why does the brain feel threat? After all, the end of a relationship is not an attack on your physical self. So why then does the brain react in this manner?

The brain cannot differentiate between the physical self and the psychological self, or identity. When you lose an important relationship, psychologically speaking, you lose a part of yourself. This threat to the emotional self is perceived as a threat to the physical self and the brain reacts to heartbreak as if your very life was threatened.

Fear is normal – the only people who do not feel fear are those with a serious brain disorder. The problem is that in modern living, these ancient, powerful, primal protective mechanisms