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## Letter to my best friend after a breakup

Relationship breakups are tough. They are emotionally exhausting, and can be incapacitating at times. For some who begin to dwell in regret and sadness, breakups can even spiral into depression. Even the breakups that make the most logical sense are still emotionally painful. And in fact, it is the emotional — not logical — part of ourselves that causes us to dwell in these relationships that we may logically know are not healthy for us. While a grieving period is expected after a breakup, as breakups are a form of loss, it can be easy to get caught in an emotionally harmful pattern if we don't actively push ourselves forward in our lives. So how do we emotionally get through a breakup and also move forward in an emotionally healthy manner? Tips for Getting Over a Breakup1. Make plans. Social interaction is one of the keys to moving forward after a breakup. Isolation often leads to being consumed by emotions and thoughts that exacerbate our sadness and upset. Schedule plans in advance to see friends or family at least a few times during the week and weekends, especially if you live alone, and be sure to follow through with them. If you feel you don't want to be around anyone, which can be common after a breakup, this is the time to act opposite of the urge. Push yourself to interact with people and prevent a pattern of loneliness and depression.2. Be aware of the rebound. Breakups often are a time of intense emotional vulnerability. We are seeking stability. When we feel we can't internally create it, it is quite possible to engage in unhealthy new relationships that cover up healthy relationship grieving. While at first the replacement relationship brings a sense of euphoria, the unresolved emotions from the previous relationship often return, creating a more complicated and confusing emotional environment. If you find yourself falling into a new and exciting relationship too soon, you could be experiencing a rebound. 3. Participate in hobbies. Hobbies are a positive way to keep from dwelling in sadness and forming negative patterns. Whether it's doing a puzzle, going to museums, gardening, bowling, reading, or whatever it is you enjoy doing, allow yourself to create time and space for them. Be sure to include social hobbies as well as individual ones.4. Keep up daily self-care routines.It is also important to remember to take care of your daily needs when dealing with a breakup. Go to the gym, jog, swim, walk, cook, etc. Some may feel less motivated to grocery shop, prepare meals, eat, or shower after a breakup. These may require some extra effort at times, but push yourself to continue your daily routines as before.5. Don't overwork. Some might say that throwing yourself into work is a great distraction from a breakup. However, overworking often is an emotionally avoidant behavior. Overworking may allow us to avoid sadness or loneliness because we are busy; however, it creates an imbalance in our lives as well as a negative pattern that can be tough to break. (Decreasing the work to regain more personal time later becomes difficult.) Work as you would normally work, and reserve those other hours in the day for self-care, hobbies, and social plans that you'll hopefully be continuing or increasing into your week.6. Set a daily time limit for grieving.Each person grieves a loss differently. There is no actual time limit for grieving. However, there is a difference between healthy grieving and dwelling in regret and sorrow. Some could spend months consumed by guilt and sadness if we allow ourselves to. As we move forward, it is still important to acknowledge our pain and other emotions we may feel as the result of a significant breakup. Set a time each day that you will allow yourself to reflect, feel, and process your relationship loss. Setting a timer is helpful for this. I would recommend no more than 20-30 minutes a day, and have an activity scheduled to immediately follow this time.7. Seek professional help. Some people feel ashamed and embarrassed that a breakup is consuming or impacting them, especially when the ex-partner is considered "not worth it." But breakups are painful! We put time, effort, hope, emotion, and much more into our relationships. Seeing a therapist to process the residual emotions and thoughts is a healthy way to deal with a breakup, especially if you're feeling guilt, regret or starting to dwell in sadness.Breakups are rarely going to be easy; however, with healthy tools and motivation, we can heal. I think you can probably agree that love is terrible and in no way worth the effort. I mean, sure, in theory you find someone you care about and give some measure of meaning to the mortifying experience of being alive. But in reality, you usually wind up with a few solid Instagram pics and a brief distraction from your own mortality before getting ghosted/cheated on/unceremoniously dumped. Breakups suck. On the bright side, though, breakups are an excellent opportunity to express your feelings through poetry and chocolate consumption. There are so few other life events in which it is appropriate to send a snarky poem through the U.S. postal system (email will also work in a pinch). So if you're looking for the perfect way to express feelings of heartbreak, loss, and rage to your no-longer significant other, here are a few great poems for breakup letters.Of course, every breakup is different. Maybe you need to gently break it to your S.O. that things just aren't working out. Perhaps you want to express regret over something that might have been. Or, quite possibly, you'd like to stick it to that colossal jerk using a few viscous rhymes. Whatever your breakup needs, there's a poem out there for you:'Two Cures for Love' by Wendy Cope'Rent' by Jane Cooper'I don't want your rent, I wanta radiance of attentionlike the candle's flame when we eat.I mean a kind of aweattending the spaces between us—Not a roof but a field of stars.'Click here to read.'Movement Song' by Audre Lorde'I have studied the tight curls on the back of your neck moving away from mebeyond anger or failureyour face in the evening schools of longingthrough mornings of wish and ripeness were always saying goodbyein the blood in the bone over coffeefore dashing for elevators goingin opposite directionswithout goodbyes.'Click here to read.'Our Many Never Endings' by Courtney Queneey'Inside my chest, a mangle,inside yours, a deflating balloon.You took the vacuum cleaner, the ironing board, the dish rackand left me some lint, an iron to scorch shirts, one chipped plate.I would like to say at least we perfectedentrances and exits, like professional stage actors'Click here to read.'Song Of One Of The Girls' by Dorothy Parker'I'm of the glamorous ladiesAt whose beckoning history shook.But you are a man, and see only my pan,So I stay at home with a book.'Click here to read.'Love, I'm Done with You' by Ross Gay'You ever wake up with your footie PJs warmingyour neck like a nose? Ever upchuckafter a home-cooked meal? Or noticehow the blood on the bottoms of your feetjust won't seem to go away? Love, it used to beyou could retire your toothbrush for like two or three days and still'd push my downy face into your neck. Used to beI hung on your every word. (Sing! you'd say; and I was a bird.Freedom! you'd say; and I never really knew what that meant,but liked the way it rang like a rusty bell.) Used to be. But nowI can tell you your breath stinks and you're full of shit.'Click here to read.'A Pity, We Were Such a Good Invention' by Yehuda Amichai'A pity, we were such a goodAnd loving invention.An aeroplane made from a man and wife.Wings and everything.We hovered a little above the earth.We even flew a little.'Click here to read.'Indian Summer' by Dorothy Parker'In youth, it was a way I hadTo do my best to please,And change, with every passing lad.To suit his theories.But now I know the things I know,And do the things I do;And if you do not like me so,To hell, my love, with you!'Click here to read.'Quick And Bitter' by Yehuda Amichai'Slow and sweet were the nights.Now is bitter and grinding as sand—'Let's be sensible' and similar curses.'Click here to read.'Time does not bring relief; you all have lied' by Edna St. Vincent Millay'There are a hundred places where I fear To go,—so with his memory they brim, And entering with relief some quiet place Where never fell his foot or shone his face I say, "There is no memory of him here!" And so stand stricken, so remembering him.'Click here to read.'You Are the Penultimate Love of My Life' by Rebecca Hazelton'I want to spend a lot but not all of my years with you.We'll talk about kids but make plans to travel.I will remember your eyes as green when they were gray.Our dogs will be named For You and Mostly Sex will be good but next door's will sound better.'Click here to read.'No, I wasn't meant to love and be loved' by Mrtiza Asadullah Khan Ghalib'Knowing you are faithless keeps me alive and hungry. Knowing you faithful would kill me with joy. Delicate are you, and your vows are delicate, too, so easily do they break. You are a laconic marksman. You leave me not dead but perpetually dying.'Click here to read.'You jerk you didn't call me up' by Bernadette Mayer'You jerk you didn't call me upI haven't seen you in so longYou probably have a fucking tan& besides that instead of making love tonightYou're drinking your parents to the airportI'm through with you bourgeois boysAll you ever do is go back to ancestral comfortsOnly money can get'Click here to read.'I have to tell you' by Dorothea Grossman'I have to tell you, there are times when the sun strikes me like a gong, and I remember everything, even your ears.'Click here to read.'For Women Who Are 'Difficult' to Love' by Warsan Shire'You can't make homes out of human beingssomeone should have already told you thatand if he wants to leavethen let him leave'Click here to read.'Differences of Opinion' by Wendy Cope'He tells her that the Earth is flat—He knows the facts, and that is that.In altercations fierce and longShe tries her best to prove him wrong.But he has learned to argue well.He calls her arguments unsoundAnd often asks her not to yell.She cannot win. He stands his ground.The planet goes on being round.He tells her that the Earth is flat—He knows the facts, and that is that.In altercations fierce and longShe tries her best to prove him wrong.But he has learned to argue well.He calls her arguments unsoundAnd often asks her not to yell.She cannot win. He stands his ground.The planet goes on being round.'Click here to read.'You Fit Into Me' by Margaret Atwood'It's not always easy to know what to do when a friend is going through a breakup, but especially when they're going through the holidays. They're probably going to feel sad (or lonely, or confused, or all of the above) at any time of year. But heading into a season that focuses so much on relationships can make it all worse. "The holidays are [when] we spend more time with people we care about, and so it can be an especially difficult season for a breakup," Brent Sweitzer, LPC, RPT, a professional counselor, tells Bustle. "[Breaking up during] the holidays can be especially stressful, given the expectation to bring a significant other to social engagements and spending time with family."While it'll be up to your friend to figure out what they want to do as far as attending these events, you can always swoop in to offer support, see if they'd like to hang out, and ask if they need anything. "At a time like this, friendship can be a healing balm to the loss of a relationship," Sweitzer says. Perhaps simplest of all is being down to listen, whether that means responding to texts, answering their calls, or offering to meet up for coffee so they can vent in person, all of which will help them manage how they're feeling. In fact, "one study showed how putting words to your feelings calms the part of the brain (the amygdala) responsible for the fight/flight/freeze stress response," Sweitzer says. "When people feel the safety to talk about how they feel, it literally calms their brain so that they can come up with their own solutions of how to take care of themselves."Depending on how they feel about the breakup, your friend may be able to sort themselves out and come up with a game plan for recovering. But if they're really going through it, that's when you'll want to offer a few distractions. "Sometimes it can be helpful to a friend to initiate activities that take their mind off the pain from the breakup," Sweitzer says. Suggest something that'll easily fit into your busy holiday schedules, like going out to dinner on a Tuesday night, staying home and baking, watch funny TV shows — whatever sounds fun and low-key.While a one time hangout will be a great show of support, continue being as proactive as possible about reaching out, Katie Lear, LPC, a licensed counselor, tells Bustle. "If you have holiday errands to run, ask [them] to come along," she says. "It doesn't need to be anything special or fancy [...] Just being out of the house and around other people can be a welcome distraction, and by offering an activity, you're taking the burden off your friend to reach out."It's all about being there in small ways and big ways, and throwing out options so they know they aren't alone in what they're going through. Even if they don't want to go out, simply knowing you're waiting in the wings can be a comfort. "A breakup signifies the loss of an important relationship and it's normal to go through the stages of grief," Alisha Powell, PhD, LCSW, a therapist and social worker, tells Bustle. "Understand that they need time to process and create a new normal without their former significant other."That might not happen until well after the holidays, so it's OK if your friend wants to put their head down, ignore texts, and simply get through the season without any pressure to go out or feel festive. It will be beneficial, however, for them to get back into a routine as soon as possible. And that's another area where you can offer to help, once the timing is right. "Studies have shown that the more we can get back into our routine of life then the more we can engage in the healing process," Rachel Elder, a licensed mental health counselor, tells Bustle. "If they enjoy working out, join them for a workout [...] If they had a weekly date night [with their ex], join them for a friend date and have quality conversation time together."Making plans, or simply listening to them vent, will help your friend immensely throughout the holidays, but the real recovery isn't likely to happen until the holidays are over and they have time to think without distractions. By showing up and being supportive, you can help them through that process now and into the new year.Study Referenced:Lieberman, M. (2011). Putting feelings into words: The neural basis of unintentional emotion regulation. PsycEXTRA Dataset. doi: 10.1037/e634112013-130Experts:Brent Sweitzer, LPC, RPT, professional counselorKatie Lear, LPC, licensed counselorAlisha Powell, PhD, LCSW, therapist and social workerRachel Elder, licensed mental health counselorPage 2No matter how many breakups you go through in life, it never seems to get easier. And just like going through one yourself, it also never gets easier to watch a friend hurt after parting ways with someone they care about. It's why you'll want to figure out the best things to text a friend after a breakup, in order to offer support.Because again, nothing about breakups is easy. "Relationships are soothing, while breakups are just the opposite," Julie Mellillo, a life and dating coach, tells Bustle. "Your attachment system forms a bond when you fall in love. This person literally becomes a part of you, because this attachment system exists in the brain. To your brain, a relationship feels like someone feeding you delicious chocolate throughout the day. But during a breakup, the attachment system [...] is ripped apart and basically goes haywire."That's why it's not uncommon for a person feel lost, alone, sad, and confused post-relationship. Even if the breakup is ultimately for the best, they'll have to go through a tough adjustment period. With this in mind, it's important to tread carefully when reaching out to a friend via text. Some people may need time to be alone with their thoughts. But there are also plenty of things you can say to help them along the way, until they feel better again. Here are a few ideas.1 "Want to spend a day away from social media with me?"So many people lie in bed and scroll through social media after a breakup. They want to see their ex, check in on what they're doing — and maybe even do a little spying. But absolutely none of that is helpful."If someone is struggling through a breakup and fixated on their ex, staying actively engaged in the relationship through social media will make it harder to move forward and the recovery will take longer," Dr. Cortney Warren, a clinical psychologist, tells Bustle.As their friend, that's where you can swoop in and remind them to step away from their phone, if only for a couple of hours. Offer to take them out — like to a picnic in the park, or on a bike ride around the city — to give them a much-needed break.2"If there's anything you want to do, just tell me and we'll do it!"While you'd like your friend to get out of bed, out of the house, and back into life, that's often way easier said than done. If their breakup just happened, they may not be able to pull themselves off the couch, much less get showered or dressed. And that's OK."You should follow your friend's lead," Aimee Hartstein, LCSW, a relationship therapist, tells Bustle. Let them decide what to do — and also let them know you're down for anything.Say you'll come over and eat pizza and watch Netflix with them, if that's what they need, or that you'd be down to go out. Make it all about what they're feeling up to, in the moment.3>Your feelings are valid."Every loss needs to be grieved, Barbara Neftlich, LCSW, a psychotherapist, tells Bustle, so let this text serve as a much-needed reminder.Also, tell your friend that grief comes in many forms, which is why they might be yelling and angry one moment, Neftlich says, and crying the next. It's all a valid response to the end of a relationship — especially if the relationship was a long one, and it ended unexpectedly.To follow up, you could even text your friend and offer to come over and do all these things with them. It might be cathartic to spend an evening yelling into a pillow together, or watching sad movies.4>You might act out of character right now, but give yourself some grace."You've got this!"Similarly, remind your friend that it's OK if they're acting "out of character" post-breakup, especially if they're expressing concern over their choices."During breakups individuals sometimes find themselves having extreme behavior, such as driving by their ex's house a hundred times or deciding on a one night stand when they normally would not," Julie Fanning, LCSW, a therapist, tells Bustle.It'll help your friend remember they're going through the grieving process, she says — not permanently changing who they are as a person. If they're able to give themselves grace and forgiveness, they'll have an easier time moving on.5"I'll check in on you again tomorrow!"Everyone handles breakups in their own way, and your friend might find that they prefer to spend a lot of time by themself. This text will let them know you understand they need space, but that you're thinking of them — and will follow up soon."Use a check-in time so your friend doesn't feel pressure but knows they aren't alone," Fanning says. "Your follow-up text could be as simple as, "Hope you are hanging in there. Let me know if you need anything!"6"You're getting stronger every minute."Even though they might not be able to see it, your friend is healing little by little, with every day that goes by. And it might be comforting to remind them of that.After all, anyone who's ever gone through a breakup knows that it is not fun, but as time progresses, the pain lessens, "especially as we become attached to other things," Julia Katzman, LMSW, a therapist, tells Bustle. "The void gets filled up over time," she says, though. It is still painful at the beginning.She says this is an empowering way of saying "time heals everything," without being too cliché.7"Want me to text you goodnight every night?"One of the hardest things to adjust to after a breakup is loneliness. Your friend won't be falling asleep next to their partner, or receiving goodnight texts like they're used to. Dr. Rebecca Leslie, PsyD, a licensed psychologist, tells Bustle.This text shows you understand it's tough, Leslie says, and it also offers a solution to this very real problem they'll be experiencing, until they fill the void with new people, hobbies, or experiences.8"I'm proud of you for having that conversation."If your friend's relationship ended after a tough conversation, assure them that they made the right choice in speaking up — even though it resulted in a breakup."The cause of a breakup often comes from stating a need, addressing a concern, or saying something that has been left unsaid," Dr. Jenna DiLossi, a licensed professional counselor, tells Bustle. "Many people stay in relationships because they are not able to confront the struggles! Praising your friend for speaking their needs and advocating for themselves is important."It might just save them from endlessly second-guessing themselves, and/or lying awake at night wondering "what if?"9"How are you feeling in this moment?"Another way to be helpful is by giving your friend space to reflect on how they're currently feeling."This question helps the friend to increase awareness of how the break up has impacted them by slowing down and processing it in relation to their feelings," Sierra Hillsman, M.Ed., APC, NCC, CCTP, a licensed associate professional counselor, tells Bustle. "This question also encourages them to practice relentless honesty, rather than leaning on avoidance and dissociation to cope with the breakup."It might just play a role in helping them to process and move on, but keep in mind not everyone does so quickly or on a predictable timeline. Be prepared to continue supporting your friend six months or more down the line — if you're able to — by making a point of sending more texts, hanging out, etc.Coming through with a little extra love eight months after their breakup, once all their other friends have completely forgotten about it, can mean the world.Even if you aren't sure of the perfect thing to say, remember — it's just about being there for your friend. Making an effort and letting them know they're loved and appreciated, as they go through this breakup, is a great start. Experts:Julie Mellillo, life and dating coachDr. Cortney Warren, clinical psychologistAimee Hartstein, LCSW, relationship therapistBarbara Neftlich, LCSW, psychotherapistJulie Fanning, LCSW, therapistJulia Katzman, LMSW, therapistDr. Jenna DiLossi, licensed professional counselorSierra Hillsman, M.Ed., APC, NCC, CCTP, licensed associate professional counselor

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