

COLLECTION

The Essentials of Applied Psychology

The Relationship Ended. My Life Didn't.

A breakup recovery guide to grief, longing, and rebuilding your daily life



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From Heartbreak to Renewal — Neuroscience, Attachment, and Recovery Exercises

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Crisis resources

If you are going through a crisis and suicidal ideation comes to you, please do not face it alone.

- 988 — 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline. Call or text, 24/7, free and confidential (US and Canada).
- 741741 — Crisis Text Line. Text HOME to 741741 to reach a trained crisis counselor.
- 116 123 — Samaritans, free, 24/7 (UK and Ireland).
- 911 — in case of immediate danger (US and Canada).

These numbers apply to the United States, Canada, the United Kingdom and Ireland. Wherever you are, findahelpline.com lists helplines country by country.

To all those weathering the storm of a romantic breakup. You are not alone, and there is light at the end of the tunnel.

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INTRODUCTION — When Love Walks Away

There are forms of pain that are taught nowhere. Not in school, not at university, not in the most advanced professional training programs. The pain of a romantic breakup is one of them. It strikes without warning, or sometimes after months of signals we refused to see. It leaves you standing, yet empty. Functioning on the outside, but devastated within.

If you are holding this book in your hands, it is probably because you are going through this ordeal, or because you are supporting someone who is. In either case, know one essential thing from the outset: what you are feeling is normal. The pain you are experiencing is not a sign of weakness, pathological dependency, or psychological dysfunction. It is proof that you loved, that you invested in a relationship that mattered, and that your brain, your body, and your psyche must now go through a grieving process of an intensity that few people suspect.

The numbers speak for themselves. In France alone, there are approximately 130,000 divorces per year, in addition to hundreds of thousands of separations among unmarried couples. Over a lifetime, the probability of experiencing at least one significant romantic breakup is roughly 85%, making this a near-universal experience of the human condition.

And yet, despite this frequency, we are remarkably unprepared to cope with it. Our culture celebrates romantic love, glorifies the beginnings of relationships, but remains strangely silent about endings. People will tell you to "move on," to "turn the page," to "keep yourself busy." As if a deep wound could be treated with a Band-Aid. As if time alone were enough to heal what has been broken.

This book was born from a simple observation, forged through years of clinical practice in cognitive-behavioral therapy: a romantic breakup is one of the most painful ordeals in life, yet it is also one of the least well supported. The individuals who come to see me after a separation often arrive in a state of profound distress, compounded by their loved ones' lack of understanding and by well-meaning but counterproductive advice. They do not understand why they are suffering so intensely, why they cannot seem to "move forward," why their body seems to betray them as much as their heart.