

GETTING OVER A BROKEN HEART

Steps to Heal, Cope and Love Again

THE **HOPE** LINE

TheHopeLine.com





A broken heart.

It's something no one ever wishes for, but likely something everyone will experience at least once.

If you have the capacity to love, then you also have the capacity to be hurt. In fact, anytime you open yourself up to love, you risk getting a broken heart.

What should you do when your heart gets broken?

How do you recover and move on?

This Guide focuses on that very specific kind of heartbreak that happens when you end a relationship with a romantic partner.

We'll give you suggestions for how to get over a broken heart, what to avoid after a breakup, how to be proactive and save yourself from a broken heart (for next time), and how to help a friend get through heartbreak. You can also listen to others share about their heartbreak and watch a video where Lacey Sturm gives her perspective on recovering from a broken heart.



what can cause a broken heart?

Lots of things can go wrong in a relationship that may end in you feeling brokenhearted. It could be something like:

Finding out your boyfriend/girlfriend is cheating on you.

Fighting with your boyfriend/girlfriend, especially if those fights are becoming more frequent or more destructive.

The lightning bolt shock that takes your breath away when the person you love tells you they don't love you anymore.

The humiliating feeling that washes over you when you hear the one you love say, "Let's just be friends."

What make break-ups so famously painful?

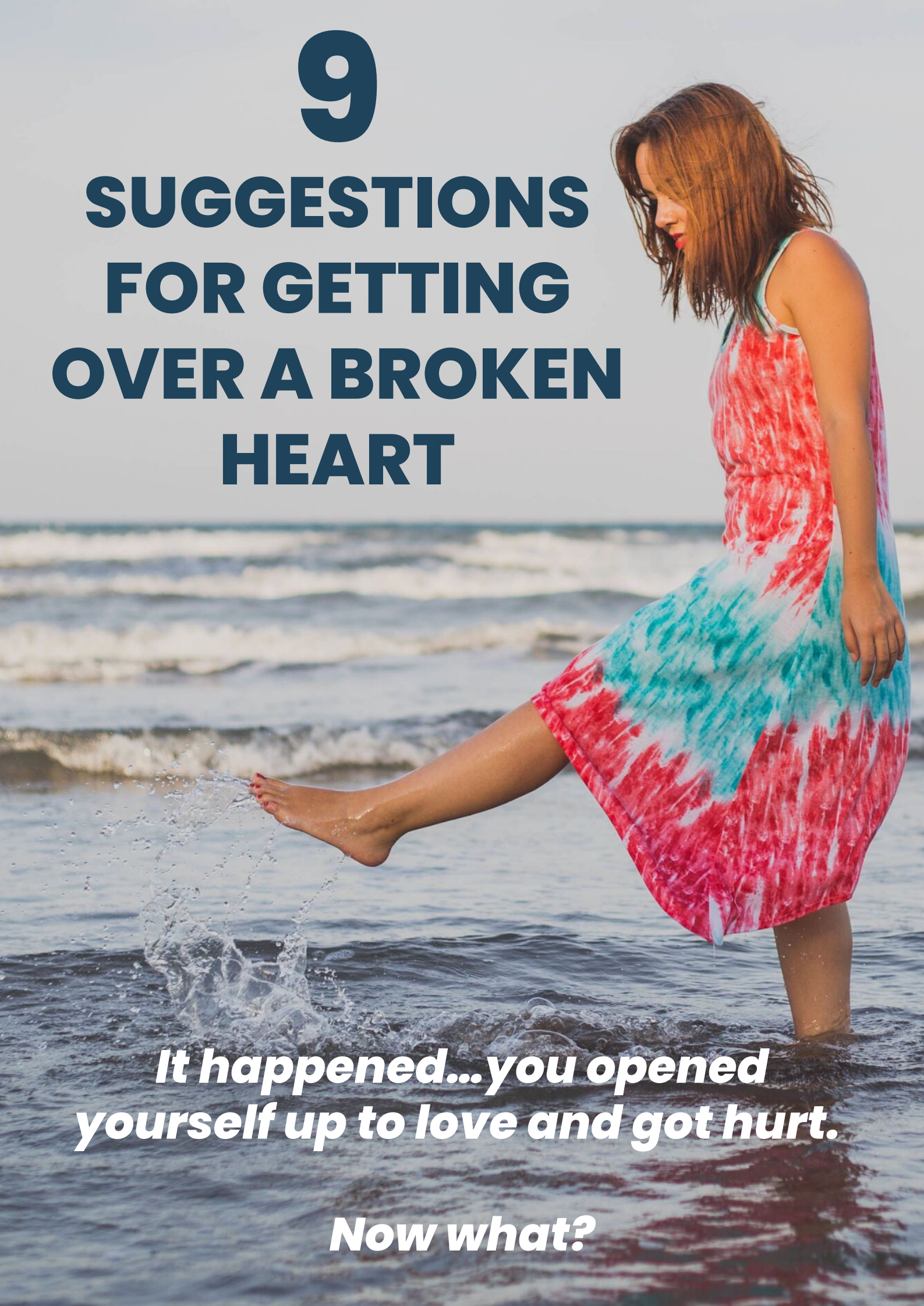
You've experienced the loss of someone dear to you, and any change like that, even if it's for the best, hurts. It rocks your world and makes you feel like you'll never be the same again.

You could lose your appetite. You could lose your desire to do much of anything but lay in bed and ache. It feels like your heart might literally burst.

If any of this sounds familiar, you too have experienced the pain of a broken heart. The question is: how do you put your heart back together?

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SUGGESTIONS FOR GETTING OVER A BROKEN HEART

A woman with long brown hair, wearing a sleeveless dress with a vibrant red, white, and teal abstract pattern, is standing in shallow ocean water. She is barefoot and has just kicked her right leg forward, creating a large splash of water. The background shows gentle waves and a clear sky.

***It happened...you opened
yourself up to love and got hurt.***

Now what?

1

Allow yourself to be human and feel the pain.

Feeling emotional pain is one of the things that makes us human. Going through a break-up can bring up some deep, raw emotions that may scare you or feel too painful to survive, but it is extremely important that you let those raw emotions out. Find a safe place where you are comfortable and let the tears flow. It is one of our bodies' ways of ridding itself of the sadness or anger you may feel. If you try to run away from or cover up the feelings, that pain *will* reappear somewhere else, usually in an unhealthy way.

2

Give yourself time to heal.

If your heart has been broken, it will take time for you to completely heal. You probably won't wake up tomorrow completely "over it." Some people heal faster than others. Some people's emotions go deeper than others. The deeper your emotions, the longer it will take to heal. Be patient with yourself. *You will get through this.* It may help to think about the tens of millions who have gone through what you're experiencing. There are so many songs about heartbreak for a reason... everyone's been there. People overcome broken hearts, and so will you. Take heart and hold on.

3

Talk to someone who cares.

It's amazing how much better you feel when there's someone you can talk to. The wisest man in the Bible, King Solomon, said "Two people are better off than one, for they can help each other succeed. If one person falls, the other can reach out and help. But someone who falls alone is in real trouble." So, find a friend or family member, someone you can trust, and talk it out. You'll be glad you did. You can also [*reach out to our HopeCoaches anytime!*](#)

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Learn lessons from the experience.

Things happen in life. Some of those things are really hard and unpleasant. It's not a question of *if* difficult things will happen to us, but rather how we handle it *when* they happen. Ask yourself:

What can I learn from this experience?

How can I handle this breakup with grace and dignity?

Once I get through this, should I do anything differently next time?

Let go of mementos.

If you've been with someone a while, you no doubt have collected items that remind you of them. When you were still with that person, these mementos probably made you smile. But now, these same mementos only remind you of the heartache. These could include items like pictures, rings, pillows, music, clothes, etc. Hanging on to reminders of the relationship *will* get in the way of moving on because anytime you walk past, wear, or touch these items, it reopens the wound you're trying to heal. If you can't bring yourself to completely get rid of some pieces, store them away in a place you don't see every day, like under your bed or in the attic, but do your best to donate or throw away as much of them as you're able. It's hard to do because there is something very final about removing these reminders from your life. It's like saying to yourself, "It's over. It's truly over." This is an important step to take.

Keep yourself busy by giving to others.

When you were together, you spent hours and hours with your special someone. Now you have all this time on your hands. Find ways to fill that time with something positive. For example, you might want to reconnect with friends. Or, you can get involved in helping organizations like Big Brothers/Big Sisters. Filling your time with positive activities will both help distract you and help you feel good again.

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Take care of yourself physically.

It is very difficult to overcome a broken heart when you don't feel good physically. Not feeling well only adds to your depression and/or loneliness. It's common for the brokenhearted to quit eating or begin overeating in search of comfort, stop sleeping or begin sleeping all the time to numb the pain, or even try to self-medicate through drugs or alcohol. None of this works and usually makes matters far worse, since they're all attempts to mask the emotions you feel. Be careful to eat well and exercise to give your mood and energy a boost.

8

Move on.

Eventually, that moment comes. Sometimes it creeps up on you. Other times, it's like a lightbulb goes on in your heart, and you say to yourself, "It's time for me to move on. I'm an overcomer, and I feel myself learning to live without the other person. In fact, I can go a whole day without thinking of them." When that happens, it's an awesome thing. There's nothing quite like the realization that your heart has healed itself, thanks to the hard work you've done.

9

Other Things to Remember When You're Heartbroken

Take extra time to think before you act.

When someone you love rejects you, it's easy to get caught up in your emotions and make rash decisions. The pain and confusion from a breakup can cause you to do just about anything to get them back or perhaps even to get revenge on your ex by causing them pain. So, be sure to think twice before:

Posting to social media. Once it's out there, you can't take it back, even if you delete it later. A day later you might wonder, "What was I thinking?" The fact is you weren't thinking. You were *reacting*.

Behaving obsessively, such as driving by your ex's house repeatedly, calling your them over and over again, or leaving them voicemails, notes, or letters. Later, it's likely you'll look back on actions like these and regret them or feel embarrassed, which can take a toll on your self-esteem. Hold your head high and focus on healing.

Staying in contact with your ex. While it's tempting to "stay friends" with them so that you don't lose them completely, it will slow your healing process, keep the heartbreak wound open, and force you to watch them move on. Focus on *your* journey for now, not theirs.

There's no real way to "avoid" future heartbreak.

It happens to everyone at some point, and living your life in fear of another broken heart will, in the end, break your heart again. Give yourself time to heal, but then let yourself love again.

Don't overanalyze.

Some people (and this maybe you) are big time dwellers. They spend hours analyzing every last detail about the relationship. They dwell on the situation, constantly replaying it in their minds, analyzing what happened, when it happened, why it happened, and what could have been done to keep it from happening. Continued overanalysis of a broken relationship steals valuable time away from your actual healing and leads to confusion and depression. Once you've thought through what went wrong with the relationship and what was good about it, let it go.



You have weathered the storm, made steps to be strong, learned a lot of lessons, avoided a lot of pitfalls, and know there's a big world out there waiting for you.

You are an overcomer!



Protect Yourself from a Broken Heart



BE CAREFUL...DON'T DATE DESTRUCTIVE PEOPLE.

Some people want to experience love so badly they end up getting involved with the wrong people. They get into relationships with people who are known to cheat or manipulate, but they are willing to put up with it all in exchange for that feeling of "love." But some relationships are simply not worth the drama and the pain. Getting involved in a relationship that you already know isn't right sets you up for heartache and a messy break-up. Ask yourself these questions with regularity:

- Am I being respected in this relationship?
- Do they see value in me beyond the physical?
- Is my opinion appreciated and considered?
- Are my feelings considered?
- Is this a relationship that I would like to be in for the rest of my life?

If you answer "no" to any of these questions, it's time to do one of two things. Either address the concern with your significant other and resolve it to your satisfaction, or strongly consider moving on. If the answers to these questions are not "yes," then they will most likely continue to remain "no." You *are* valuable. You *are* important. You deserve to be treated respectfully and considerately.

Don't settle for less.

SHARING MORALS OR SPIRITUAL BELIEFS IS IMPORTANT.

Know what you believe, and know what your significant other believes. Talk about your values often so you can make sure your relationship aligns with who you are. There are no deeper thoughts or values than those that come from our spiritual being. What we believe spiritually will tell us a lot about our values, how we look at our world, and what we want out of life. Make sure you are on the same page about faith and values before you get too deep into your relationship. Trying to build a life with someone who does not share any of your values will eventually make your relationship feel like Sisyphus eternally pushing a boulder uphill—a punishment instead of a joy.



DON'T IGNORE BAD BEHAVIORS.

If there are some red flags at the beginning of a relationship, pay attention. Don't turn a blind eye. A disrespectful person will most likely stay disrespectful. An addict will often stay an addict. A cheater will often stay a cheater until **THEY** decide to change. You can encourage someone to make better choices, support them and pray for them, but don't naively think your love alone will change them. Certainly, be their friend, but don't give your heart away until their behavior becomes acceptable.

HAVING SEX MAKES A BREAKUP EVEN HARDER.

Sex is a big deal. It is not just a physical act. It is deeply emotional and creates a bond with another human unlike anything else. Rushing into sex clouds your judgment of the other person and can lead to a relationship built on nothing more than lust. If, however, you form that very special bond with your partner, only for the relationship to end, be prepared for the heartache to be that much more powerful.



Helping a friend get over a broken heart.



Listen to them. Talking about the breakup will help them heal, but do not let them overanalyze the relationship.

Be their voice of reason. Guide them when they want to retaliate, seek revenge, or do stupid things.

Distract them. Invite them to hang out and do activities together that will remind them that life is still fun.

Be positive and encouraging. Their self-esteem may be suffering from the breakup.

Share this Guide. If your friend is struggling, share this Guide with them to start a conversation or just to let them know you care.

Let them know about TheHopeLine. Our Hope Coaches are here to listen, guide you through issues, and give encouragement. Sometimes it helps to talk to someone outside of the situation. Let your friend know they can [chat at with a Hope Coach anytime.](#)

A Spiritual Perspective

The Bible says, "We love because he first loved us." (1 John 4:19) That means God *designed* us to love by loving us first, for He is love Himself, and we are made in His image.

In fact, God's greatest instruction to us is to love: "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: Love your neighbor as yourself." (Matthew 22:37-39).

God knows how much we all need to love and to be loved.

The Bible does *not* promise love will go perfectly, but God *does* promise He will never leave us or forsake us when we face heartbreak. To the contrary: "The LORD is close to the brokenhearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit." (Psalm 34:18)

If you are hurting, there is a solution to your suffering.



God says, "I have loved you with an *everlasting* love. With *unfailing* love I have drawn you to myself." (Jeremiah 31:3) When you know you are loved no matter what, you *can* find the strength to face the rejection or heartache of losing a relationship. So go ahead. Tell God everything you feel about your broken heart. He will listen, and you are not alone.

If you want to know more about having a relationship with God or have questions about getting over a broken heart, [chat online with a Hope Coach now.](#)