

To The Brokenhearted was written for anyone suffering from heartbreak. It provides words of understanding, sound emotional psychology, and practical advice that will help those in the throes of heartache.

**To The Brokenhearted: Words of Understanding,
Comfort, and Healing in the Midst of a Breakup**
By Kevin Unruh

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KEVIN UNRUH

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To The Brokenhearted

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Chapter 2

The Pain

There is no pain like being permanently separated from someone you love deeply and romantically. You feel sorrowful, weary, depressed, grief-stricken, lonely, profoundly sad, empty, and hopeless. And depending on the circumstances, you might also feel like a failure, as if you were abandoned, betrayed, and rejected, as well as foolish, wretched, mistreated, worthless, and even used. You may cry 30 times a day, and you may cry for 30 days straight. You may stay in bed in order to force time to pass without being conscious, or you may stay up all night, failing to sleep because the adrenaline is so powerful that sleeping isn't even a consideration. You may fear the distinctive pain of *never* seeing them again or the alternative fear of bumping into them again, unintentionally – *or both*. Sometimes the pain is so bad that it feels like you have been abandoned by everyone and everything, and when you wake up, you feel only pain – and the pain is so intense that it doesn't even feel like what pain used to feel like. Instead, it feels like being dead while you are still alive. It feels as though you have fallen into an abyss that, instead of being black seems brightly lit and you can see everything around you but there is no sound – not even the sound of falling. And that's because you are no longer falling. You are merely suspended in what feels like nothingness because you feel that you have lost everything – your chosen person *and* yourself. And the deeper you have loved, the greater the pain. Still for others, the experience of heartbreak

is nothing but endless monochrome. With just enough light to see gray. Everywhere, gray...

Nothing hurts like heartbreak. *Nothing*. So for those in the midst of heartache, you have my greatest sympathy and my utmost compassion. I can only hope your terrible pain will ease as soon as the healing clock allows.

*Ever has it been that love knows not its own depth
until the hour of separation.*⁴

– Khalil Gibran

*The shattering of the heart when being broken
is the loudest quiet ever.*⁵

– Carroll Bryant

*I don't know why they call it heartbreak. It feels like every
other part of my body is broken too.*⁶

– Terri Guillemets

Chapter 12

Taking Another Chance

Relationships of the romantic sort are such a central part of the human experience. Thousands of books have been written on the topic because it *is* so central to who we are as humans. But, for purposes of this chapter, I would like to discuss just one aspect of relationships: an aspect that can easily be argued to be the most critical aspect of all – that of *choosing* the person we want to be in a romantic relationship with.

As discussed in Chapter 3, the two central themes I always focus on when discussing the topic of dating with clients (and everyone else, frankly) are chemistry and *compatibility*. These two concepts are not new to anyone, and I seriously doubt I will be turning over any new ground on the subject here. However, I am confident in saying that these two concepts are almost everything one needs to consider when choosing a potential partner (other than *timing*, as previously discussed). Anything outside of these two is rarely integral to the decision, in my estimation. But, before I proceed further in this discussion, it is important, as always, to define terms.

Chemistry, to me, is innate physical attraction, *plus*. It is physical attraction that goes, almost literally, to the molecular level. Chemistry is attraction that causes a person to be “in love” with just about everything the other person transmits to the five senses. Just having an intense physical attraction for someone is not real chemistry, at least not as I choose to define it. Chemistry is, well... *chemistry*. It’s how the taste of apple

pie melds so well with the taste of ice cream, or how a certain perfume smells pretty good on one woman but *perfect* on another. It's how beige and brown complement each other and how red and yellow really don't. Chemistry in humans is almost visible. In fact, I would argue that it *is* visible in that many of us would claim to be able to "see" when two people are truly meant for each other.

On the other side of things is compatibility. As with chemistry, I apply a very stringent definition – a higher standard for the definition of compatibility than is perhaps employed by others. I see compatibility as how well-matched two people are in relation to how they interact with the world, how they navigate *in* the world, and *not*, for instance, in whether both people like the same sports team or the same types of food. I measure compatibility by the important things: ethics, morals, standards of behavior, philosophical beliefs – you know, the *big* stuff. Many times, however, we are told by friends and loved ones that liking the same music, the same teams, the same places to vacation, the same TV shows, and the like, are important and that the big stuff can be worked out later. I could not disagree more.

TV shows are not who we are – *beliefs* are. The beach or the mountains do not define us, but our ethics do. It's always nice to enjoy watching the same show together, but if the other person doesn't want to watch re-runs of *Seinfeld* with me, I understand that and do not then perceive this lack of desire as an aspect of incompatibility (although it does make me wonder why someone wouldn't want to watch *Seinfeld*). What I *do* find incompatible, though, is trying to form a relationship with someone that, for example, doesn't feel compelled to give to the less fortunate or who isn't polite to the waiter/waitress, if

the other person *does* feel compelled to do these things. These things are far more defining of a person in that they define *attributes* (in this example, *charity* and *kindness*). Sure, both liking to go to a sports bar may make for a fun date, but the majority of lasting relationships do not sustain themselves on this superficial level of compatibility. Think of it this way: Are you going to be able to have love, affection, and respect for someone that is dismissive of or disinterested in animals, if you are a person who feels led to keep and nurture them? Are you going to be okay with someone who lives check-to-check when you are someone who believes in always having a savings account *and* a solid cushion in your checking? Do you really think that the person you want to commit to, with whom you have many hobbies and interests in common, isn't going to lose their charm once you realize that they believe that "*life sort of just happens the way it happens*," while you are a staunch believer in planning and personal responsibility? These *big things* are the types of compatibility that matter. The other stuff just doesn't – not ultimately. Like-mindedness is not about low-level preferences. It is about direction and meaning in living life, not ice cream toppings, and favorite colors.

"*But don't opposites attract?*" I am routinely asked. Well, yes, sometimes. "Opposites" tends to imply, for example, introverted vs. extroverted, easy-going vs. frenetic, or vigilant vs. care-free. Sometimes, they are a disastrous combination and sometimes they are an excellent one. Now, guess what tends to make the difference in which of these occurs? That is correct: *Chemistry*. Which leads perfectly to my next point and the answer to the question you may not have known you had: "*So, which is more important, chemistry or compatibility?*"

Never, ever should a person feel compelled for any reason to choose one of these over the other. *Both* are extremely important. Both are *crucial*. But, answering this question for the sake of pure curiosity actually helps me make my point about the importance of *chemistry*, which, to answer the question, *is the slightly more important of the two*.

Chemistry, which manifests itself mostly in physical (and “essence”) attraction, has the mysterious ability to enhance understanding, heighten cooperation, preempt and mitigate disagreements, to incite forgiveness, and to kindle synergy. If you absolutely have to put one slightly higher than the other, *go with chemistry*.

In the many years I have been discussing the topic of relationships with people, I have found that beyond the mistake of their not looking for people with whom they have chemistry *and* compatibility, they also tend to make this other major mistake when beginning a relationship: *They compromise their standards*.

In talking to a co-worker, a close friend, or even just an acquaintance about this very common topic of conversation, I will advise them, in the context of a new relationship, to make a list of attributes they are looking for in an S.O. I ask them to include in this list only those *must-haves* and *will-not-accepts*. Ninety-nine percent of the time, the list they provide is perfectly reasonable and even well-considered. But, in *revisiting* the list with them after a few weeks or months of their having dated the potential candidate, I very frequently find that the list-maker has scratched off one or more items in each of the two categories in order to accommodate those things the significant-other candidate is lacking. I would

estimate this happens at least eight out of ten times I conduct this exercise. When I ask why the person decided to scrap a *must-have* or *will-not-accept*, the person almost always says they think thought they were being too critical (even though in the initial formation of the list the person was quite confident in their itemized requirements). When I say to the person that I do not think any of the original items were too critical (or I would have stated so initially), I also tell them that I think they have altered their standards based on one or more factors, and then I present to them a list of factors I think might have influenced their changes. Forthcoming people will eventually tell me that they did, in fact, revise their standards for one or more of the items below as reasons for their compromise:

- Financial concerns (that would be decreased with a partner)
- Boredom/loneliness
- Companionship/sex
- Social expiration (worry about aging out of the “market”)
- Fear of being lonely later in life

There are several others, but these are the most common reasons people revise their standards downward.

Not too long ago, I was speaking to a female friend of mine about this very subject. She commented that the guy she had just gone out with was very kind, smart, etc., and that he “*checked some boxes, but didn’t really ring any bells.*” I asked her why then was she considering another date with him, and she said because she wasn’t sure that she really had “any other

options,” (implying that whatever guy has asked her out at the time was her only option). I told her that while I understood how she felt and sincerely sympathized, I was concerned about her perspective given that I don’t believe that anyone should “settle” (compromise one’s standards and concede to something less than is hoped for).

Let me say here that I understand that women reading this might say to themselves, “*Well, that’s easy for you to say – you’re a man.*” I really do understand this reaction. But, because I cared about this person, my duty as a caring friend was to provide the best wisdom possible, and wisdom tells me that no matter how many “reasons” there may be for wanting to settle, settling is never a wise choice.

I have met and know many people that have settled. *Many*. And, while some of these people are *relatively* content, the great majority are not. I often say to people that the only thing worse than being unhappy and alone is being unhappy and living in the same house with someone you do not love. Loneliness is bad, but loneliness when you are not actually alone is even worse.

Settling will sometimes solve the initial dilemmas (financial concerns, boredom, loneliness, etc.), but as with so many other examples of short-term solutions, the *long-term* effects of settling are many and dire. Those that settle tend to be resentful, aggravated, angry, a poor S.O., dreadful, sad, depressed, and just generally unhappy. And don’t forget that when a person settles, they also effectively take themselves out of the dating pool, taking away the best option for finding love, *which is finding a better match*.

“*But what about love itself,*” you ask?

Many of you might have noticed, and are scratching your head even now, perhaps, that I did not discuss “love,” *per se*, very much at all in this chapter, even though it is a chapter on romance and loving relationships (in fact, I have used the word “love” only five times in this chapter prior to this sentence). These are my reasons: Love is intuitive to most everyone. I couldn’t imagine that any of you would find value in listening to me wax on about what *I* think it is. In my mind, a discussion of love is implied in a discussion of “romantic relationships,” so I tried to spare you the parts that felt obvious. Secondly, love is different things to different people, and I did not want to presume to say that what it is to me is what it is or should be to others. Third, a discussion of love could take up thousands of pages and *has* taken up tens of thousands of pages already elsewhere. I did not think I could do justice to the topic, and it was just not part of my objective to include it.

I know many people believe in this next cliché, but I am not aware of any credible information or belief system that compels *me* to believe that there is *one* “*right person*” for *everyone*. I have always believed that a person could fall in love with any number of people, if everything fell into place just right. In fact, I believe that there could easily be 10 or even 20 people that one *could* encounter in a lifetime that may meet all of one’s requirements for chemistry and compatibility. If I am right, settling doesn’t seem like a very prudent (or necessary) thing to do. I have no examples of someone I know who settled *and* was happy, but I have *many* examples of clients, acquaintances, and others who settled who are *not*.

*Choose your life's mate carefully. From this one decision will come 90% of all your happiness or misery.*²⁴

– H. Jackson Brown

For those of you about to enter into a new relationship, take the time to make your list (*must-haves/will-not-accepts*). Be fair and reasonable and list all those things that you require in an S.O. in order to feel both chemistry and compatibility, as well as all those things that are deal-breakers. Then, all you have to do is stay true to your list. Miss or Mister Right sometimes falls into our lap, but it doesn't happen very often, so you have to work a little. Make yourself available, let your friends know you are available; make *them* aware of your list, and tell them not to send anyone your way that isn't fully up to specs. Think about it: How many story-book endings have you heard that start with “*Well, you see, it all started when I settled...* ”?

Chapter 16

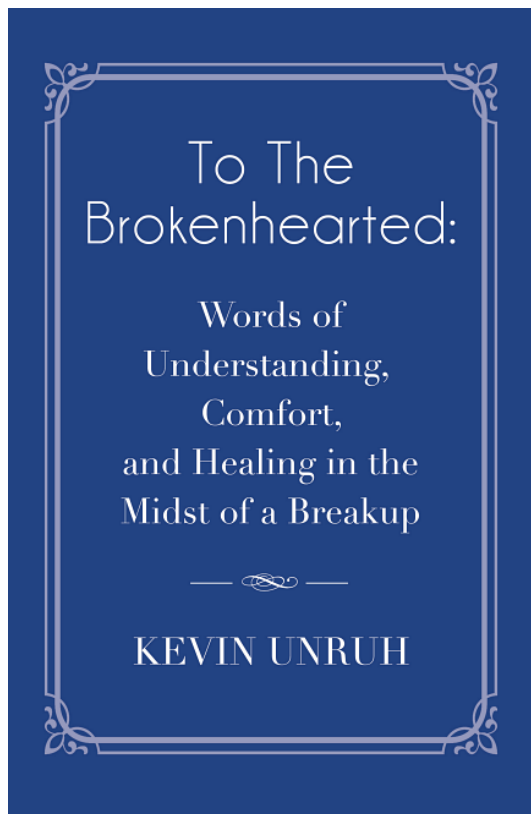
Hope

I am not adding a chapter on hope because it's the "right" or obvious thing to do. Encouraging hope without the inclusion of practicality and wisdom is not good for anyone, and it is just not something I do. I'm including this very important chapter because hope is powerful, and it is *real*. Yes, hope makes us feel better, but sometimes life's circumstances don't allow for a realistic sense of hope. But in matters of the heart, there is *always* hope. I'm not talking about the kind of hope that wins back the person you lost. I'm talking about the hope of feeling better, of looking to the future with gladness and optimism, and believing that this feeling of devastation will ease over time. *Because it will.*

Although it feels like it to most people, the end of a relationship is not the end of life, and it is not the end of *you*. It is nothing more than an end to something you started but were not allowed to finish. No matter how painful or life-altering, it is not a self-defining event. You may be dramatically impacted by it, and it may affect you for a very long time, but it does not make you who you are or who you are going to be. There is always hope after a breakup. *Always.*

*Cry. Forgive. Learn. Move on. Let your tears water the seeds of future happiness.*³²

— Steve Maraboli



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