3 Small Steps to Fix Your Broken Heart

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Questions the book answers:

1. Why does a breakup make you feel physically sick?
2. How can you control the unwanted negative thoughts that keep popping into your head?
3. What is the best method to rebuild your self-worth?
4. How do you get over an addiction to your ex and gain back your power?
The Fork in the Road
Choices and Decisions

"I have always known I would take this road, but yesterday I did not know it would be today." Narihara

It's time to begin your journey towards mending your broken heart. Will this be easy? No way! Will you fall down? You bet. But you'll get right back up again and through it all we're going to be here guiding you step by step. So, get your hiking boots on because here we go!
We know that you are feeling overwhelmed, deeply hurt, and rejected. Alone, any one of these emotions can be devastating to your self-image, but combine them and it's as if you are experiencing an internal meltdown.

You may also feel that you have no energy to go on. But, you do! You have an abundance of it, just look at how much you are allocating to these hurt feelings. They are intense; your thoughts seem to fly with a life of their own. That takes a lot of energy, which may explain excessive sleepiness.
Imagine the difference between a forest fire raging out of control and a fireplace in the wintertime, giving off a soft glow while warming up the room. The contained fireplace is using the same type of energy but producing very different results. We can do this with our own lives; either burn out of control or learn to stoke our internal fires of passion for life through self-worth. At this moment, it's hard to want to get a grasp on this concept, but this is what we are going to take small steps towards building.
The negative feelings you're experiencing now can be your catalyst. Use them. All of the energy you are producing because you are distraught must be harnessed towards making happy moments in your life. By no means are we saying that your sorrow is a waste of energy; you need to allow yourself to grieve because it’s an important part of the recovery process. Just don't let it consume you for too long.

Unfortunately, there is no magic number for how long one will grieve. We can, however, promise that as time passes, the hurt will soften and become manageable. You may have rolled your eyes after reading that last sentence, but
please take our word for it. Think of it this way: time passes as we do things and as we do things our mind is occupied. It is this aspect that distances you from the pain. With every heartbeat and each breath you take, we are asking you to focus on the first step: focusing on a new direction in your life.

Let's now focus on the first small step you are going to take:

**Committing to take a new direction with your life.** This is quite possibly the most important step to healing your broken heart; making the **choice** to do so.
On a sheet of paper, write your new commitment. Read it to yourself, then write it a couple more times to let the words sink in. When you want to achieve a goal you’ve set, the most crucial part is to decide you want it. It doesn’t matter if you feel it’s outside your control, nor does it matter if you can’t yet see how you’ll achieve it.
Tweaking
The hormonal factor

“That which happens in life is not as important as how you accept it.”

The next step is to recognize that this feeling of heartbreak is actually your body reacting to addiction. Surprised by that word? An addiction is how your mind and body continually react to a stressful situation; whether it be a physical or mental stressor. In the case of heartbreak, the culprit is a lethal combination of abandonment, rejection, and loss of self-worth.
You’re tired, physically achy, and you may feel emotionally and mentally unstable…almost like you’re going crazy. Rest assured, you’re not!

This is simply your body trying to help you cope with this stressful situation by releasing hormones—epinephrine, cortisol, and aldosterone. Epinephrine is a steroid that raises your metabolism which causes anxiety. Cortisol slows down your digestive system which causes stomach aches and other digestive problems. Aldosterone raises your blood pressure which, in the long-term, could lead to heart disease, stroke, hypertension, and more.
Holding on to hate, anger or hurt causes physical symptoms like, headaches, stomach problems, skin conditions and more. Refusing to go forward and by thinking that you are justified in staying here, worsens the situation.

Every time you have a stress episode a hormonal chain of events occurs. Picture this, something upsets you: your heart races, your blood pressure goes up, your digestion process slows down, and glucose is released from the liver. If you stay in this condition for weeks, months, or years, you are actually making yourself sick, but you can put a stop to it.
In order to move forward, you must take action to counter-act the negative hormones that have been released. The simplest and quickest way to do this is through exercise. You’ve heard this before, haven’t you? Well, that’s because it’s true. You must exercise to release the positive hormones (endorphins, serotonin, and dopamine) throughout your body. Endorphins give you energy. Seratonin helps you relax and sleep. And dopamine promotes pleasurable feelings.

Another way to keep these positive hormones active in your body is through mental conditioning. Much, if not all, of your anxiety is caused by your perceptions and negative thoughts.
First let's talk about extending the time between these unwelcome thoughts. The easiest way to do this is to live in the moment. Simply put, keep your focus on whatever you are doing. When you're driving, concentrate on the road or listen to the radio. If you are reading, fixate on the characters and storyline. Get the idea?

Okay, focusing on our present moment will work for a while, but you're going to find yourself in quiet moments when there is nothing else occupying your mind and time; this is when the unwanted thoughts or visions may creep in...here's what you can do:
Our favorite method is called "Picture, Pop, Replace"

This one you have to work out before the thoughts occur so that you can implement it when they come barging through the door.

First, think of the thought or vision you don't want and place it in a balloon.

Next, imagine holding a pin and popping the balloon.

Lastly, put a replacement thought of something that makes you happy in a new balloon.
Example:

I think of a scenario involving my ex.

I put the scene in a balloon and imagine a very large pin popping it.

Then I immediately make myself think of a funny situation involving someone else; such as the time my friend accidentally slammed a door into my head. It makes me laugh because the whole incident was crazy...my reactions, her reactions...
There are a couple of reasons this method works: It makes you purposely stop yourself from spiraling further into thoughts you don't want, and by bringing in a new thought, you're forced to re-live that moment and, on a good day, that thought will lead you to another funny thought, and so on. Each time you do this will reinforce positive feedback and before you know it, a moment will turn into a minute, a minute will turn into an hour, then, an hour to a day, a day to a week, a week into a month...you're feeling better just thinking about it, aren't you?
On a piece of paper, write down 3 -5 events that you can readily use when you need to use the picture, pop, replace, technique. It’s a great idea to fill your idea bank now, so that when the time comes, you won’t have to think twice about an event to choose.
Focus Pocus
Boundaries and Perceptions

“We must be will to get rid of the life we have planned, so as to have the life that awaits.”
Joseph Campbell

Let's stop focusing on how you were treated in the relationship, and instead, look at why you accepted it. Your addictive behavior towards your ex stems not from your need to have him/her, per se, but from having low self-esteem/ self-worth and a fear of being alone.
The first phase to getting over this addiction is to build your self-esteem.

1. Make a list of things about yourself that you appreciate.
   (I'm a good writer, I can fix almost anything...)

2. Make another list of things that you offer to a loving relationship.
   (I'm loyal, attentive...)

3. Now focus on your passions, make time to do things that you enjoy.
   (write, build something...)
The second phase is done at the same time as the first:

1. Each time you're tempted to reach out to him/her, stop yourself. Over time, this will build your self-esteem because you have made the choice to not call, thereby giving yourself power over the situation.

2. Whenever you find yourself about to rehash the relationship with a friend, stop yourself before the words come out and bring up a completely different topic.
Get out of your house. Meet up with a friend. Go to the library. Take a walk. Play in the garden. Work out at the gym. Do something, anything...and at night, when you're falling asleep, you will be able to think about what you did that day and smile.

Big hugs to you!