

Breakups fucking suck. A founding story.

1/2 - The Relationship

Part 1 - Two Strangers:

I was 20 when I met her on Tinder. She being a few months younger. We did not have a perfect relationship, but that was a result of many different variables. Here are a few: we fell very attached quick, after just a few months I practically lived at her place.

Let's call her Maria from now.

At the time, it felt like this is what it's supposed to be. It felt so right, so true, so pure. I thought that this is what I want and need. I wasn't wrong. Discovering sex with someone you actually like is totally another thing compared to a random hookup. We really loved to have sex. Doing quickies before hopping on a bus, before heading out, after dinner. It was great.

But that's also where the first wall came in. Two actually. Her friend was having a party, and we were invited. At the party, there was a funny guy from the Caribbean. He was gay. Well, fast forward a few hours at the party and after enough alcohol, they kissed. As a "joke".. It didn't come out until after someone had taken a picture and shared them around. We were together when viewing the pictures of the party and when the one came that had kissing I was honestly shocked, I wasn't sure what to do. She kept telling me "that it didn't mean anything" (remember that part) and that she was drunk.

Okay, I understand that you were drunk, didn't think it through, but telling me "it didn't mean anything" was what hurt me like hell. It made me feel stupid and worthless. When you say "it didn't mean anything" then why do it? Why hurt me over.. well nothing. After that we went on a small break for about 3 days, while I was calculating and processing things. Of course, I was crying in the corner of my bed. And listening to Joji, gimme love, 777 and like you do. Still getting goosebumps when hearing those play somewhere.

Part 2 - Forgiveness:

I thought that she really seemed sorry and could change. That she had learned from the mistake and that while being in a relationship, kissing others is not okay. Fair enough, we never did talk about the boundaries. That was my bad of taking it as a norm. I went to her place, and we made out. Talked things through and made sure that this never happens again.

Now that second thing about sex, she was insecure about her body. These two things (insecurity and trust issues) actually started to affect our relationship a lot down the line, but no worries, things are supposed to cool down after some time. Around 6 month mark, I was sick of living with my parents and wanted to move out. She was also looking for something better than a goblin room at a shared apartment.

We did find the one suitable for us. It was another goblin room, but it was ours. About 16 square meters. Yeah, I know... kinda little for two people to share, but it was pretty. Then there were extra external stressors like me not having a job right away and her still working crazy hours as a service worker, but that went better after I found a job that provided me with an actual income. After the work situation got handled, things unfortunately were going downhill in the bedroom, as less intimacy was shared.

That was partly my fault for being rather conservative with my thoughts and feelings. Unfortunately, that's all I knew coming from a throw it under the rug and be a good kid kinda family.

Part 3 - The Festival:

We hit one year and 1-2 month mark when we were both working on the same relationship festival. Me as a job and she as a voluntary. By that time, things were not improving with the intimacy part and our relationship was collapsing slowly from the mental and physical lack of warmth. She not getting the mental side and me physical.

The live day of the festival comes and I meet an amazing photographer. She was smart, attractive, and showed interest in me. Riis and I got talking through

little snippets of the day and I was astonished, like wow. I had forgotten about this feeling of having a great conversation and being listened to.

Of course, Maria took notice and at the end of the festival expressed her disgust at seeing that. Soon after, we had a talk about that. She promised to try to also be there for me, while I promised to share more about what I feel and think. I still continued talking with Riis from the festival.

We both enjoyed it. Her boyfriend was in the military and also needed someone to talk to. Great, a beneficial friendship. Well, that was a mistake as there are not many girl types I like, but she was the one that I had dreamed of. That made me not focus on sharing things with my girlfriend but rather her, as I felt better understood and supported.

This was the easier thing for me to do as I lost trust in my partner after that first kiss. It was still hurting me, and there was nothing to do as the bond was broken. There are things that are almost impossible to undo, and this was one of them. I still remained hopeful that this feeling would go away, but it did not. I was split on if we should break up or not.. But threw it under the rug...

Part 4 - The Delusions:

Another month comes and we are going to a DNB festival. We agreed on just having a good time so that we can both meet others. (I think we both knew what was going on and just threw it under the rug) it was a silly way of building trust that we can have fun, just no kissing and physical business.

I was having a good time while getting a healthy amount of attention from other girls, but it felt so wrong, like cheating, however now i had gotten another glimpse of what it feels like to be desired again. Maria was also hanging around with a guy for a while. He got her a drink, which I deemed acceptable as per our agreement.

The guy seemed chill and I think nothing else happened there. We continued partying together and headed home after it was over. The next morning she is telling me that she while we were heading out she thinks someone kissed her or grabbed her by the pussy. I was really not sure on how to handle that. Just was in disbelief. I felt kinda disgusting, guilty and angry at the same time. Cheated and angry because i was right there holding her hand and didn't notice. And the thought of some stranger touching my girl like that wanted me

to punch someone if it was true. But as she was still kinda tipsy, she couldn't tell me for certain. Just feeling small, as this was totally out of my control.

Part 5 - Old Flame :

Winter comes and another 4 months go by. Meanwhile I stopped talking to the photographer from the festival. I made myself responsible for the relationship I have in front of me. It seemed like things were going to improve slowly. Until she texted me.

Riis apparently saw Maria playing at a concert (she was indeed) I could not resist and started talking to her. As the weather went warmer, we also hung out a couple of times. Going for a photo walk and disc golf. I explained my relationship situation to her. Left out the part of me having a kinda crush on Riis still. Riis told me she understands and that opening up can be hard. But to tell my partner what I told her and hopefully she would understand and act accordingly.

While we were talking, I felt those butterflies in the stomach and couldn't give a damn about my current relationship anymore. Riis's blue eyes, full of energy, passion to do things in life that matter. I just felt alive being around her. I felt everything that I was missing in my current relationship. I realize that saying this seems mean and evil towards the one I had, but the feelings were real. I could not ignore them anymore. Listening to Blue Bucket of gold - Sufjan Stevens while writing currently and it does feel bitter.

Anyway, later that night when my partner came through the apartment door I instantly felt resistance and shutdown. I'm sure she felt the same. We didn't know what to do about it and just proceeded to go on about our doings. Eventually, a slight hit of courage hit me and I expressed that we need to talk. We came to the same conclusion as after the relationship festival. That we will try better... I wanted to believe her, and I wanted to believe me.

Part 6 - The Beginning of and End:

Three months went by, and on this day, a few of my buddies visited us. We played some games, drank some alcohol, not too much and in the end we headed outside for a smoke break. There was a guy from France behind the

bike storage (next to the smoking area) who got into an argument with Maria over some silly stuff, which I don't remember, as I was busy talking with my buddies. After about 15-20 minutes outside, we decided to call it a night as the sun began to rise. As our friends called a taxi, we went to sleep.

In the morning, when waking up, Maria told me that they had kissed with the French guy while arguing. She had a hazy memory of it as she was drunk... I couldn't believe it. Why would you do that? Did you want me to feel disgusted by you? I thought to myself. And once again, the cycle of hell started over. I left the room. I just couldn't take it anymore. Fool me once, shame on you; fool me twice, shame on me. That was actually the third time I had felt this inescapable feeling of helplessness. But no, it wasn't the last. I had to feel it one more time just to be sure, as you will soon know.

The cycle started again, and we told each other that we should break up as it clearly wasn't working. Or we could choose the comfort of what was familiar. We chose the latter and had sex just as a tradition.

Part 7 - The End:

Our little fights and feelings of resistance have started to become more frequent. In the end, we were both working at the same company, which had recently shut down. I was finally starting my own business in the film industry, and she was thinking of going back to school. We were short on money, and feelings of uncertainty were setting in.

It didn't help that I had to take part in military training for a few weeks away at the other end of the country. We agreed to use the time to reassess our relationship. During that time, communication was lacking due to little service and scarce power sources to charge anything. I came back home, and a week later, I get a mail that our housing price had increased.

I immediately gave notice and slowly started to pack things to move back home. During that last month, she hoped to find a spot alone in the city, but eventually resorted to moving back home as well. After a few days, she came to visit me.

The previous night, I hung out with a friend and overslept, missing the chance to meet her at the bus stop. She came to me quite upset and disappointed, saying that if I cared, I would have come to walk beside her to my place. Being

just woken up a bit hungover, I replied that “if you come here starting a fight, you might as well go back home.” And she did proceed to head back. Mind you, that’s almost 4h one way from my place to hers.

I was honestly surprised as I had become so accustomed to words meaning nothing anymore. The “let’s break up” cycle being a good reminder. I stopped her, saying I was sorry. We didn’t talk much for the rest of the time. That evening, I was outside in the garden preparing grilled meat when she came to me and said, “if you are not going to talk to me, then let’s break up.” I just replied, “yes.” Writing this and Hans Zimmer - S.T.A.Y comes on. The irony.

We calmed down a bit, and I convinced her to stay at my place until she finishes her driving test and heads back home. She agreed. We sat down that night, talked, and actually had a good time. I felt the tension lowering.

It was a day before her driving test, and we had talked about everything, or well, almost everything. She then asked me to text Riis. I left her a voice message saying basically that I’m really into you. That was true. I was still very much into her. After a day she sent me a voice back saying “oh, well I thank you for the compliment, but I don’t feel the same.” I listened to it with Maria... that was humiliating as fuck. At least I got to say it. I was being honest.

Maria headed to her driving test. And went home after that. We went no contact. While talking we figured, that’s what I and her need. Also that I would contact her as I needed the space.

Part 8 - One Last Stab:

It took me 3 days before I would text her. During this time, I took a big dive into what’s up. What is it that I need? Where does it come from and what’s got my family to do with it? I learned a lot during that time. Made plans for when I would shut down, how to talk with her, how to return the mental conversation that we both needed. I just didn’t think that was important during the relationship at the time. I do now. I would have changed everything, and I did mean it all. Looking back, it was all the new knowledge I had + I was afraid to lose her. That she would go. That she would have sex with someone else as well. I mention it all, because that’s what I really cared about at the time.

Maria let me know that she appreciates my message. That she would be willing to try one more time since I seemed to really have taken the look inside

me. We agree on still spending the Midsummer day apart (longest day here in Europe)

The day comes, I'm with a friend of mine and she's with her friends. In the evening, I get a sketchy feeling and just feel like something bad is happening. I text Maria to ask how she's doing while slowly becoming overwhelmed with the feeling. My buddy calms me down and just says it's probably fine. We finish drinking and head to sleep as we were tired. I try not to think too hard about it. I first got the feeling around 22-23:00. I headed to sleep at 01:20 or so and then wake up at 3:40 with a really unsettling feeling in my stomach. Anxiety goes through the roof and now I'm certain something is wrong. I check the phone and she hasn't answered.

I woke up in the morning and received a text saying sorry, her battery died. The text was delivered, but okay... we talked about how we spent the time, and when she mentioned they were "fooling" around with a bunch of people, I was like okay, yeah, that's it. No more. That's the end. (Before the break I was secretly hoping for it to happen, but I did not expect it to turn out like this.) I burst into tears and pushed her to tell me what happened three times before she finally caved and let me know she did indeed share a bed with someone. Apparently, there was nowhere else for the other guy to go, and she liked the closure of someone else. Convenient. As I was completely shattered, she promised to support me. Dafuck??..

We still had a date set to talk. And to discuss the details, we did a FaceTime. While we initially set a time by the time of her bus, she now wanted to push it for later. She wanted to stay there for another night. With the same guy. I said no way you are. If you care about this, you will come at the time we set. The "I think I have to find myself" story started and went on for an hour before it came to an end.

The next day we met at the bus station, walked for a while, and sat down in a park. It was an absolutely beautiful day. The wind had a soft, gentle breeze to it. In the park, while talking, I had the first of a few panic attacks. Not with my mind this time, but with my body. My mouth muscles stiffened up, fingers froze and tingling all over my body. While lying on the bench, my head was on her legs while my body was being held by her. I just looked at the leaves, sky and birds going on about. The realization that this was the end had come to me. The panic attacks did not settle until after the recovery period, but that's the second half.

After spending almost the whole day together talking, we did a final kiss. I felt nothing, just numb. Walked her back to the bus and hugged. That was the last I had officially seen her.

TLDR: It's the most toxic relationships that will shatter you in the worst imaginable way possible. They will tear you down bit by bit until there's nothing left. And as an extra you still get booted for a good measure. They fucking suck.

2/2: The recovery -

Part 1 - Numb and Lost:

Driving home that night after saying our goodbyes, I went numb. It felt like a dream, a hazy memory. Arriving home, it was late. I tried to go to sleep, but could not. It took me a good 3-4 hours of struggle until I finally stayed asleep. Waking up very early the next morning, I went for a run. I had picked it up a few weeks ago. After completing the run, washing and starting to eat my breakfast, I suddenly couldn't. I just started to gag. And so I didn't. I proceeded to rather just work on my business and later game. The next day was the same. Did a run and tried to eat anything? Could not. Got a few scoops in, but that was all.

This evening I called Maria. Just to ask what had happened. Did we break up? It all felt hazy to me. Didn't feel real. She told me that yes indeed; we had broken up. That this is what we need. But that she is here to support me.

We ended the call, and I realized that I need to keep from contacting her. Oh, man, I was struggling so badly the next evening. I wanted to call her so fucking bad. The day time was fine, I could handle. But in the evening I was more sensitive. Struggling to go to sleep and waking up early was still hammering down on me hard. Not eating well and being back home was tough. The only thing where I felt something remotely compared to okay was when running in the morning.

It was the morning where I headed to work in my parents' place that I did a speed run. I have never cried too much, that it was almost keeping me from running, I couldn't see or breathe. Good thing was that I wouldn't immediately gag when eating lunch. At almost half a bowl this time.

Day 5 came and when arriving from work, I knew a plan had to be made. I would not survive it without it. I started screening the forums and continued the search to find anything that would help me direct the pain. I found a few breakup books. Started reading and doing a few exercises on them. It made me feel better.

The next day it was evening again when I started to set some goals. I had given myself the biggest one yet. Run a half-marathon. That was huge. I knew I could have a take on it, whatever I set my mind to I fucking can. I will prove that to myself.

Part 2 - Setting a schedule:

A bit over a week had gone by and I had a schedule in place, morning I run, daytime I work on my business or find something else. During evenings, I set aside time to work on myself, feelings and struggles. Also to find a bit more about the psychology of a heartbreak as that helped me make sense of the haze. Why I was feeling a certain way and what is an answer to push back on feeling like a fool?

I felt slight improvements with my body as well. I slowly started to eat again and had a purpose set during day and evenings. One of the biggest improvements during that time was having a plan, especially in the evenings as those were without question the worst. But I had found a comfort YouTube channel for me, when it was especially difficult. Watching videos about the timeline of a dumper and dumpee. Again, I felt that the psychological knowledge of the why helped me fill the holes of what had happened. I could, under no circumstance, contact her. This was a mistake I avoided like plaque. No more.

As the days passed, I would still check the phone for her message. The “I’m sorry for hurting you, I’m sorry for making you feel like this, for making you doubt yourself like that. For the kisses with strangers.”

Waking up every morning just to be reminded of it all was uncontrollable for me. No matter what, the first thought I had was “you lost her, you have nobody now”

One evening I remember reading about a section that your ex had their reasons, that they also have traumas, that they are also a human. That

honestly helped. Like yes. You are a human. You are not perfect, nor am I. I can see that now. It's still shitty, but I'm also not quilt free and for that I apologize.

Part 3 - Social media:

Three weeks going strong. I even managed to ignore her breadcrumb of a message a week ago. Maria was muted on every social media platform I had. That way, I would help myself control the dopamine levels I received when she had texted me. I told my brain not to expect it no more. Of course your brain does not just stop expecting that, but i felt more in control.

It was evening again and for whatever reason I get a notification from Instagram that "HEY, YOUR EX JUST POSTED!" oh my fucking god, i tried to not cave, but I couldn't. The first pictures were just of trees and nature, her friend. The lost one, however, was of her. Smiling, having a great time. I decided that I will put my learnings into use. I'm in pain and I will help myself relief that. Not throw it under the rug.

I took a bike and biked a bit out of my small village. I screamed so fucking bad. Crying again, covered in tears and feeling like I'm back to square one. How, why, why!?

It was doing so good until I saw her face, smiling. "Does she not feel the pain? What the fuck? And you are happy as well?" Were the only thoughts I had at a time. For those 90 minutes, I had totally fallen.

Going back home, I decided to journal it out as it's these painful moments where you have to teach yourself on how to handle it. (Also Unsainted - Slipknot was my favorite song to scream with pain. To let the feelings out when nobody was around. The part before chorus, oh man, that hit hard) You're essentially rewiring your brain. During disastrous relationships, you start to rely more on the other person and that in turns makes you also more susceptible of what they are feeling on the time. This was my chance to take back what's mine.

While it totally brought me down at the moment, I was that notification and post I'm happy and thankful of the systems I was having at the time. I built my own safety net. Not perfect by any means, but i could not have imagined what i would have done had i not have that.

Part 4 - The Systems:

Four weeks gone by and I was using the pain for the great fuel of helping myself back up. I did not have a great support network and that meant having to do it essentially all myself. It was a rare thing when I could as a male let the pain pour for a moment and feel the weight fell off my shoulders.

It was during this time when I also discovered and added meditating to my routine. On multiple occasions, I would fall asleep when doing so. It was a true blessing for my physical and mental health.

I was still having rather random panic attacks. One time being at work at my friend's place as we were completing a project. I just headed to toilets and was there for almost an hour. I could not speak, I literally could not speak. There wasn't anything for me to do than to just tell myself that this is okay, to accept it. That seemed to help, as resisting the feelings just postponed the time it takes for my muscles and mouth to move again on my will.

At this time, the breakup had taught me that it's important to be prepared for the worst moments, as these will eventually tell how you will handle the breakup. To give myself the time to think and to process everything. To learn and understand why things are happening the way they are happening. A great example being closure. During the whole relationship and after that I never got a sorry from her. No accountability was taken. I was very bitter about this as I just wanted her to acknowledge her faults and that she realizes that. It's funny how much can just saying "I'm sorry I hurt you. I understand I caused you pain with my actions." Can change.

But that was a great exercise to give it to myself, bit by bit. That's all you can do now. As you can't expect that anymore from your ex. You have to learn how to see what is it you want out of that apology and seek it in yourself.

Breakup does also happen in waves. At first it was hard to understand that as everything was just pure pain and torture, but eventually when you get a hold of that rope you will see that there also are more gentle and beautiful days. As the time goes on the waves seem to happen more steadily. The pain is more manageable and you'll stay a float, better days can also last longer without the dark side trying to drown you.

I am very thankful for having had that experience of a heartbreak. While that being my most painful experience in life by a mile, it showed me what I needed to see. A breakup is a perfect starting point to have a mirror in front of you. To figure out what you need to do. The pain is a significant source of energy to power you through this. And when you have mostly recovered, I found that the work does not need to stop. It's in your own self interest to reflect inward from time to time and find what's holding you back.

Part 5 - Something Else Takes the Place:

As almost 7 months had gone past the breakup, I was feeling down after seeing my ex at a party. She was different. Her hair was now orange, and the vibe had changed. That was difficult for me to see.

It was actually not the first time I had seen her after the breakup. That was 4 months after the breakup. We both were at the DNB event where we went the last year. (Part 4 on the previous post) At first I couldn't believe my eyes. Could that really be her? I asked my buddies if I should go there. They told me hell no. I went anyway. I was in the emotional part of the alcohol cycle and do not regret it. She seemed really happy to see me. She introduced me as her ex boyfriend. That seemed really stranger for my ears, but yes. She was not wrong. She mentioned that how she was actually expecting to see me here and noticed I seemed to be doing well. Got into an exclusive school and business was good. I asked how was she was doing and got told that she's not sure if we should talk about that. I just replied goodbye and left.

I went to get a drink and later passed out in the bathroom. I think that this is a great spot to mention that while hurting, alcohol is not a solution. You already knew this, but this is a reinforcement. If you think about just drinking your pain away, then accept that it will add up and hit you harder every time. Also, feeling bad about yourself is not gonna help. I know as that what I did during the moment.

She messaged me a few hours later that she wanted to talk. I didn't notice while being almost passed out and I'm happy I didn't. Exes and being sensitive will tear you down even more. A few days later I told her no thanks, I'm doing great and wish you the same. There is no right or wrong in this aspect. Just do what your gut tells you. But be mindful of what impact it could have you.

Back to seeing my ex for the last time. 7 Months after the breakup. This was the time I still felt impacted strongly just by seeing her. I decided that there's more work to do. I did want to feel this way anymore.

Part 6 - A safety net:

As I was writing down everything I had learned from the breakup, it soon become something much much bigger. It became a collection of powerful tools and systems. A whole 300 pages of worth. As of now, it's been over two years since my breakup. And I can proudly say that my next one won't get me so bad as I have this workbook that had been 17 months into the making. It includes a guided journey from breakup day 1 until 90. I, like many others, have found that to be the most critical time of the breakup. This is the window where the wound is fresh and you have a good chance to clean and heal it with a light scar or let it rot and have it infest on you until it's split wide open again.

This workbook is the result of a breakup that changed me for good. It will include everything I had learned, what the professionals have to say, and a space for you to feel supported. Let my story be a proof that while the breakup being shittiest thing you can imagine, you still have a chance to turn it around and let something beautiful rise from it.

Coming from a toxic relationship, you can make sure you won't let the new one turn into poison as well. As almost no relationship starts out this way.

Whether you're feeling stuck, down, or just lost, I feel that this has something for anyone. It's also worth mentioning that this is not the work of just me, but also my friends and partner. We wanted to make it a high quality and thought out experience for anyone struggling with a breakup. This goes without saying, but it is not and will be a replacement for seeing an actual therapist. This is for anyone that needs a friend to help them get through this. A friend that teaches helps you explore and offers a safe space to feel out your feelings.