

THE SPLIT

FROM BREAKUP
TO
BREAKTHROUGH
IN 30 DAYS OR LESS

AS
SEEN ON
TV



SARADAVISON

The Split

"If you're brave enough to say goodbye,
life will reward you with a new hello."

- Paulo Coehlo

"Never love anybody that
treats you like you're ordinary"

- Oscar Wilde

"Bless those who walk away from you;
they are making room for those who won't."

- Unknown

"In the process of letting go, you will lose many
things from the past, but you will find yourself."

- Deepak Chopra

"Remember that sometimes not getting
what you want is a wonderful stroke of luck."

- Dalai Lam

"Pain is inevitable. Suffering is optional."

- M. Kathleen Casey

“Sara is the real deal. I have found not only comfort and wisdom in her words, but I have often shared her words with others.”

- David

“The book *The Split* had answers I didn’t even know I was searching for.”

- Kate

“I’ve been bankrupt—even lost loved ones—but nothing was harder than divorce...and nothing helped more than this book.”

- Jenifer

“This book is better than medication.”

-Allie

“The only thing better than this book is working with Sara one on one; but if you can’t do that, take advantage of every word on every page. It’s a lifesaver.”

- Tanya

The Split

The Split

From Breakup to Breakthrough in 30 Days or Less

Sara Davison

Speaker House Publishing

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Dedication

For my parents,
who are my inspiration every day that true love exists
and for my gorgeous boy,
who I love so much for being him, just the way he is,
always and forever.

Special Thanks

I would like to say a special thank you to the people that have been a constant source of support for me over the years. I believe that the quality of your life is directly determined by the quality of people you surround yourself with. And I am so grateful to have all these people in my life.

My parents who are my rock and are always there for me and my son. I'm so grateful for everything they do.

Santi for making me smile and laugh every day and for reminding me what is most important in life. And for inspiring me in so many ways to do the work that I do.

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Charlotte, my best friend since I was 10 years old, and a very special person in my life.

Sue for adding lots of sparkle to my life and being the sister I never had. And for all the weekends my son and I have spent with her beautiful family, it's our home away from home.

Lucy who has been such a wonderful friend to me and her son
Max who is a great friend to Santi.

Simon who is an amazing friend and always there for me.

Beverley, Aaron and Cameron who are great fun and who my
son and I love spending time with.

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appearing in her PJ's at 2am

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up my day.

Graeme, my osteopath, who has no idea how much his support
and advice has meant to me over the last few years.

Chrissie who has been such an incredible support in my recent
journey. And for being an inspiration for me in so many ways.

All my clients for trusting in me and for being such a wonderful
group of people. And for making my work so enjoyable and
rewarding.

The whole team at The Dash Charity for all the amazing work
they do for vulnerable women, children and men suffering from
domestic abuse. And for the honor of inviting me to be their
Patron.

I am so lucky to have you all in my life. Thank you!

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Introduction

When I opened the drawer that fateful morning and saw the contact-lens box staring up at me, I could just about feel my marriage, my family, everything I had built in my life, come crashing down around me.

Neither my husband nor I wore contacts, but there it was—a contact-lens box and the fake eyelash sitting on top of it, winking up at me in cruel mockery of my marriage. They were definitely not mine.

I couldn't avoid it any longer. Was my husband having an affair?

Sure, there had been warning signs and red flags before that morning, but like so many of us, I rationalized and reasoned my way around them; because there was no way—*no way*—that this was happening to me. From the outside I had a picture-perfect marriage and it just wasn't possible that my husband was secretly cheating.

But with that little contact-lens box and fake eyelash, everything changed.

Over the next months and years, I went through the pain and trauma of divorce. I was shocked by how utterly devastating the experience was—and there's a good chance you know exactly what I'm talking about.

The breakup of a relationship has been described as the second most traumatic life experience, only behind the death of a close loved one, and that was true for me. I was shocked that, even with my years of experience in coaching and personal

The Split

development, and with therapists and loving friends and family on my team, I felt so shattered and lost.

I felt like something was missing.

I was longing for strategies to deal with the specific trauma of breakup, longing for a guide for this torturous new path I was walking; something that would show me the way to go, someone that would speak to me with both practical advice and compassionate understanding; something beyond empty platitudes like, “You’ll get over this eventually!” or “You’ll be happy again!” I wanted more concrete strategies and guidance, but I couldn’t find any.

So, I decided to create it. And that’s the book you’re holding in your hands right now.

I’ve been a coach now for two decades, and for the last six years I’ve specialized as a divorce coach, dedicating myself to guiding others through breakup and divorce. I’ve helped thousands of clients work their way through the rocky terrain of breakup, empowering them to navigate the road from breakup to breakthrough.

Let’s be clear here; this book isn’t just for people going through divorce. Everything in these pages—all the tools, techniques, and strategies I’ll give you apply to any kind of split. Maybe you’re just into your twenties and grieving over the loss of your first love. Maybe you’re facing the end of a decades-long marriage. Maybe you’re tired of a pattern of broken relationships and ready for reinvention. Whatever your own situation might be, this book is for you.

This book is also for people from all walks of life. Women and men, TV stars and stay-at-home parents, young and old—all of us experience the heartbreak of a split at some point in our lives. The tools in this book to turn breakup into breakthrough will work for anyone.

Introducti

That's the journey here: not just healing from a split, but turning that into life-changing breakthroughs.

If there's one thing I've learned through my years of work and my own experiences, it's that no matter how devastating a breakup can feel in the moment, it can also be a moment of life-changing transformation.

A split is a golden opportunity; it can lead you to a more fabulous and fulfilling life than you ever imagined possible.

I know that if you're holding this book in your hands right now, that might sound ludicrous. If you've picked up this book, odds are you're somewhere in the journey of a breakup. Maybe the split hasn't happened yet, maybe it has, but either way, the odds are that you're experiencing the pain and trauma of a relationship pulling apart.

That trauma can feel like a raging fire, consuming the life you had, the relationship you've been in for months, years, or even decades. I know how that fire can feel irreversibly destructive, and it's ok if you feel that way now.

I promise you, though; from the ashes of those flames, your new life will take flight, like a phoenix reborn; and when you dive into that transformative potential, your new life will be even more wonderful than you've dreamed possible. That might seem impossible to you right now—and that's ok because this book is your guide on that path, and I'll walk with you on that journey step by step. In these pages, we'll walk through my 30-day plan together to transform breakup into breakthrough.

For each day of this journey, I'll share with you the insights I've gained over years of work in this field, giving you strategies you need to move forward into a transformed future; and you won't just be reading about it; at every step, I'll be giving you tools and techniques to put this into practice right now.

There is no magic wand to take away all the pain of a split. I'm not going to promise you that 30 days from now you'll be

completely over things, or that there won't be any more pain. If I could magically take the pain away, trust me, I would, but life just doesn't work that way.

Even though there isn't a magic wand, there *is* a remote control—the remote control to your mind; that's a tool I can give you, and I'll show you how to use it to start dialing down your pain. If your pain is at a 10 now, I'll show you how to dial that down to, say, a 7 or a 6, which can mean the difference between spending all day in bed, or pulling yourself up and starting to live your life again. Day by day, you'll learn new strategies to put yourself in the driver's seat of your emotions and steer yourself in the direction of happiness, passion, and excitement for an amazing future.

I can't promise you that everything will be perfect overnight, but what I can promise you is that if you join me on this journey and commit yourself fully, you'll be astonished 30 days from now at how far you've come. Where you feel helpless now, you'll feel empowered. Where you see only failure now, you'll see a world of rich possibilities. Where you're consumed by pain and despair now, you'll feel optimistic excitement—yes, genuine excitement—for what's ahead.

The next 30 days will be full of insights about yourself, inner transformation, and breakthrough. I'll guide you through taking stock of the big picture, healing the pain of your breakup, getting your life back on track, and moving into a fabulous new future of your design.

When I first saw that contact-lens box and fake eyelash staring at me, I could only see a crumbling marriage and despair. But looking back on it now, I see that moment as a pivotal step towards the wonderful, fulfilling life I'm living now. My life today isn't wonderful *despite* my divorce; it's wonderful *because of* the breakthroughs and transformation that my divorce opened up.

Introducti

That's what's possible for you too. That's the beautiful, empowered life you deserve.

So, let's take our next step together and dive in.

Day 1:

Committing to Play Full-Out

Imagine that you have a goal of losing a few pounds and building your strength, so you decide to go out and join that gym down the street.

You really want to fit into that great summer outfit sitting in your closet, so every morning you wake up a couple hours early to go to the gym before work. You jump out of bed at the first alarm, grab your gym bag, and head out the door.

Every morning at the gym, you take a nice leisurely stroll through the various machines, but never actually use one. You walk by the treadmills, read all the instructions, and play with the controls so you know exactly how the machine works. You could be a certified expert in how to use it, but you never actually hop on and start running.

Are you going to lose those pounds?

Of course not!

When it comes to training and developing your physical body, you could have all the memberships to the best gyms and yoga studios, and all the best nutritional information, but if you don't dive in and do the work, you won't see the results you want. The very same is true when it comes to your inner transformation.

Remember, there is no magic wand that can instantly take away all your pain, and I can't do the work for you, but I am going to give you that remote control for your mind. I am going

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to fill your toolkit with strategies and techniques for dialing down the pain of heartbreak and dialing up the passion and excitement for the fabulous life ahead of you.

Even with all the best tools in your toolkit, though, it's your commitment to *putting them in action* that is going to make the difference, so right now, you're at a choice point.

I'm not just inviting you to the gym; I'm inviting you to hop up on the treadmills with me and start running!

Right here, you get to make the choice to commit. You're committing to play full out 100%; committing to put the work in to create the healing and breakthrough that you deserve.

Part of playing full out is doing the work even when you might not want to, in those moments when all you want to do is grab a huge bag of chips and bury yourself in bed all day. Maybe it'll be after you drop your child off with your ex and his new 22-year old girlfriend, or maybe after you're hit with a memory of the good times and it feels like your heart is breaking all over again.

Those moments—the really tough moments—are precisely when you get to pull out your new tools and put them to use. It's just like being at the gym. When you're on a weight machine, it's that last repetition—when your muscles are burning and you feel like you can't but you push through anyway—that builds the most strength.

So, when the going gets tough, and all you want to do is lie in bed and eat chips forever, that's when the real work gets going.

Does that mean that you need to get things perfectly right all the time, every time? No, of course not; this is a journey, and it's all about building experience and learning step by step how to better use that remote control for your mind. This is about committing to dive in and do your best.

Playing 100% also means trust—not just trusting that the tools I'm going to share with you will work—the results when you

Committing to Play

use them will be proof enough of that; you need to trust that things will get better *for you*.

When you're right in the stormy turmoil of a split, it can sometimes feel like it's impossible for things to ever get better. The sun will never shine like it used to, and passion, fun, and head-over-heels love are gone for good; trust me, I know how that feels, but it's vital that you trust that things *will* turn around for you, and that the life ahead of you will be even more fabulous than you could imagine. It's ok if you can't yet see the path that will lead you there. I'll be right here with you, guiding you through the next 30 days of breakthrough. At this point, all I'm asking is that you trust that the journey will work for *you*.

Are you ready to play this all-in game of breakthrough?

Ready to join me on this journey, heal the pain you might be feeling now, and write the next outrageously amazing chapter of your life?

Let's start putting it into action.

Make the commitment to yourself here and now, and sign below to commit to play full out and do what it takes to break through.

I, _____, am fully committed to diving in, playing full out, and making the most of the next 30 days of breakthrough.

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Day 2:

Your Breakthrough Journal

As we begin this journey together, you're going to start one of the most essential tools to use throughout this book: your breakthrough journal.

Your breakthrough journal is going to be your training field; your first playground to put all the strategies and techniques here into practice. Like so many of the tools you're going to discover throughout these next few weeks, the breakthrough journal is a simple one.

All you'll need is to get a blank journal to use throughout the book. It could be a composition notebook—one of those black-and-white marbled notebooks we all remember from school, a spiral notebook, a small moleskin that can fit in your pocket—whatever works best for you.

Like so many of the other simple tools you're going to discover throughout these pages, a breakthrough journal is absolutely essential.

Now, some of you might be thinking, “Well, getting a notebook probably means I'm going to actually have to *do* some of these exercises, which seems like a lot of work. Maybe I'll just read through the book first and do things on my own, and then perhaps get a journal later.”

But remember what you committed to just yesterday!

You gave your word—to yourself, most importantly—that you were going to play full out throughout this journey.

Your Breakthrough

Creating a breakthrough journal is an essential step in playing 100% full out.

Imagine if this were a book all about physical fitness, filled with golden strategies and breakthrough techniques for you to get stronger, lose weight, and build muscle tone. If you just read the book, maybe even read the book *really closely*, but never actually stepped into the gym and *did* the exercises and techniques that the book put forward, do you think you'd lose weight? If all you did was read it, do you think you'd build muscle and tone your body?

Of course not.

The same truth applies here, as together you and I transform the pain of a breakup into the life-changing power of breakthrough. For everything here to work, you get to put it to work *for you!*

Your breakthrough journal is that first playground where you'll start practicing.

Throughout the rest of this book, each day you'll find exercises and techniques for dialing down your pain, dialing up your passion and excitement and optimism, and creating breakthrough in your life. In almost every chapter, those exercises will first entail you to put things down on paper by practicing them in your breakthrough journal.

The ideal breakthrough journal for you will be one that you can keep on you or close to you all day. That might mean something that can fit in your pocket or purse, or it might be one that you'll keep in your backpack or briefcase. Physically keeping your journal near you will help you to stay connected to the work we're doing here and also make it easier for you to start putting these tools into practice in your everyday life.

As we move into later weeks and start focusing on goal-setting and creating the compelling future that rockets you forward, your breakthrough journal will also be the place where you track your

The

progress towards individual goals, creating accountability, and ensuring you hit your targets.

As you train your breakthrough muscles and put these strategies into action day after day, your breakthrough journal will also be a tool to see for yourself how far you've come. At various points over the next few weeks, part of your journey will be to record how you're feeling and where your life is at that moment.

We'll use your breakthrough journal to gauge your progress, so it's important that whenever you work in it, you write down the date!

At the end of these 30 days, your breakthrough journal will be the tangible testament to your own progress. You'll be able to flip back through the pages to see how far you've come in such a short time; how much you've been able to dial down your pain and heartache; and how far you've dialed up your joy and passion and excitement. This view of your progress will cement the power of these tools and strategies, giving you the motivation to keep practicing throughout and beyond these 30 days.

Plus, that progress will be something to celebrate, and a huge part of turning a breakup into breakthrough is celebrating each step forward!

So, your assignment today is a simple one: get yourself a breakthrough journal. With that journal in hand, get ready to put the rubber to the road and rocket forward into your breakthrough life!

Day 3:

Laying the Groundwork for Breakthrough

At this point, you know I don't want you to just survive your breakup—I want to help you use it as a launch pad to take off into your new, transformed life. This book isn't about surviving; it's about thriving.

This is what really sets this book—the strategies, techniques, and tools I'm giving you—apart from other books about breakup or divorce. It's everything I wish I'd had access to during my own difficult breakup. I've tried and tested all these tools myself; I know they work because they worked for me.

Many books out there will give you some flowery talk about getting through things without actually giving you tangible tools to use. Others will give you a few really surface-level tools, but no momentum to move forward. If this is all you have, you're not going to create anything other than short-lived, surface-level results.

That's not what this book is about.

Over the course of these 30 days, we're going to dive deep together. The insights and self-awareness I'll guide you into and the techniques and strategies I'll be teaching you are ones that will go right to the core of who you are, how you live life, and how you relate to the people around you.

The

When we turn breakup into breakthrough, those breakthroughs aren't just about relationships.

Will they show up in how you approach dating and romance, and the sorts of relationships you build? Yes, of course! But they're also going to show up everywhere else in your life.

I know that might sound odd at first. How would working through a split have any impact on, say, your career? But let's look a little closer.

Maybe through the course of these 30 days, you'll uncover some issues with your personal confidence, seeing how a lack of confidence causes breakdowns in your romantic relationships. If that's the case, you'll start using the tools I give you to build and develop that confidence.

Now, imagine—if you start living life with a whole new level of confidence and belief in yourself, is it possible that's going to affect how you show up to your coworkers, or how you perform in your career? Absolutely!

Or to take another example, perhaps we'll uncover some issues you have with self-sabotage. If you're unconsciously sabotaging your romantic relationships, do you think it's possible you're also doing that with, say, your health and physical wellness? If you break that cycle of self-sabotage when it comes to romantic relationships, do you think you might also start breaking that cycle elsewhere? You bet.

Everyone has his or her own journey ahead, so you'll uncover your own personal insights and create your own unique breakthroughs, but I can guarantee that whatever insights and breakthroughs you do unleash, they're going to transform every area of your life.

A huge part of what makes this deep breakthrough possible is how we're going to illuminate something that drives your life without you even realizing it—your map of the world.

Your Map of the World

Everyone lives life with their own unique map of the world.

That map outlines how we think the world works, how interacting with other people should look, how we think about ourselves, and so on.

How should you handle an argument with a romantic partner? Letting all the emotions out in a loud shouting match? Or stepping away to cool off, until you can talk things over calmly? Your map of the world tells you what to do.

What does it look like to really show someone love? Words of affection and encouragement? Little gifts that show you care? Spending quality time together? Physical touch? Again, your map of the world tells you how important and meaningful each of those is.

Are people fundamentally trustworthy or does someone have to prove he or she can be trusted before you open up? Your map of the world tells you.

Are you worthy of a happy relationship, or are you destined for conflict and heartache? Again, your map of the world.

This map is what creates all the patterns you run unconsciously. For better and for worse, it's these patterns that create the results we have in life—both the good ones and the not-so-good ones.

Part of what makes relationships such a fraught adventure is that no two people have the exact same map of the world. We all interpret the world and filter our experiences differently.

Our individual maps are shaped by the people who most influenced us as young children. For the majority of us, those are our parents—either one or both of them. It might also be shaped by siblings, other relatives, or anyone else who had a profound impact on us as young children. These are the people who teach us how to see the world and who give us the patterns we run.

The

Our map of the world is also shaped by the politics we encounter, religions we're exposed to, monumental events, and experiences in our lives; all these teach us unconscious strategies and assumptions about the world and how to live in it.

Usually, all this is operating on an unconscious level. Just like a fish that never realizes it's in water because that's all it's ever known, we tend to use our own map of the world without ever realizing it. It's just the way things are.

My job is to help you become conscious of the patterns you're running. Together, you and I are going to bring the unconscious up into your conscious awareness. With that awareness, you'll be able to see what works and what doesn't work, empowering you to make new choices where you want to. When it's still buried in your unconscious, your map of the world shapes your life without you ever realizing it, but when you've become aware of it and you have the right tools, you can change it however you want; this, in turn, transforms your life.

We'll break this down deeper in later sections of this book, but for now, as we move into dealing with the immediate effects of your breakup, it's vital that you keep this big-picture concept in mind. For now, what I want you to think about is who you think you learned your map of the world from. Who or what had the most profound impact on you growing up?

Pull out your breakthrough journal and write a few pages about what has shaped your map of the world. Don't worry about getting all the perfect answers; for today, I want you to focus on just starting to think about your life in this way. You can just free-write about it and see what comes up.

Answering those questions will start to shine a light on your own unconscious patterns, and as we move into dealing with the immediate turmoil of your split, that light is going to start illuminating your way forward.

Day 4:

How Would You Describe Your Split Now?

To get started, we need to understand where you are right now in your breakup.

When I say *where you are*, I'm referring to your internal experience—what emotions you're experiencing and how intensely you're experiencing them. Every split is different, and everyone experiences their own split uniquely, so it's vital to understand clearly what it is that you're feeling right now.

I know that you might feel hesitant about looking closely at where you are in your split. It's often not so pleasant to look at, and it's natural to want to just avoid it, but clarity gives you power—we're going to talk more about that concept tomorrow—and my job is to give you your power back. Even if you don't like what you discover here—and it's ok if you don't—this process is going to empower you to turn your life around.

Oftentimes, the emotional chaos of a split can have us just feel overwhelmed with painful feelings.

When I ask clients to start describing how they're feeling, sometimes they'll go straight to descriptions like 'awful,' or 'terrible,' or 'like I just can't deal with this.' All of that is understandable, but to move forward we need to start discerning what is behind that, and what specifically is going on for you.

When you go to a doctor, you might start by saying, “I don’t feel well.” That’s a starting point, but if you want to get well, you and your doctor will dig deeper into more specifics. Your doctor will work with you, asking questions to uncover what exactly is going on, so that you can start a plan to get well again.

That’s the same sort of process we’re going to take on here.

You might say that you’re feeling awful about your split. Does feeling awful mean you’re feeling betrayed and enraged, or scared and panicky? It’s these kinds of specifics we want to start describing.

Right now, I want you to pull out your breakthrough journal.

In a moment, you’re going to write down all the words that describe how you’re feeling now about your breakup. When I do this exercise with clients, I often hear words like angry, hurt, betrayed, depressed, scared, overwhelmed, and so on.

Take a few minutes now to write down all these kinds of words that describe how *you* are feeling about your breakup.

Now that you have a collection of words describing your experience, I want you to look over that list and think about which ones feel most prominent and powerful for you right now; circle them.

Where You Are on Your Scale of Emotion?

The list of words that you just wrote is a big start to getting clear on where you are in your breakup. Now we’re going to dive deeper and start to look at how intensely you’re feeling particular emotions.

In a moment, I’m going to have you record how intensely you’re feeling various emotions, on a scale of one to 10. This will help you get even clearer on your experience right now, but it’s also going to be useful as a measurement of your progress as we move forward.

How Would You Describe Your Split Now?

Maybe you'll gauge your sadness today at a nine out of 10. You're not going to instantly be at a one-level sadness tomorrow, but I am going to show you how to start dialing that nine down to an eight or a seven. Each day, you'll practice dialing down the emotions you don't want, and dialing up the emotions you do want—this is you putting to work the remote control to your mind.

These incremental steps will make a big difference. A level-nine sadness might mean you can't even get out of bed or make yourself a meal. A level-seven sadness might mean that you still feel pretty depressed, but you can get up, get dressed, and go to work. You still feel sad, sure, but that's already a huge improvement. Throughout these next weeks, you're going to learn how to cope better and more effectively to create lasting transformation.

In your breakthrough journal, take a moment to copy down the gauges below.

Anger

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Sadness

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Panic

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Fear

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Happiness

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

The

Optimism

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Excitement

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Also look back at the previous page, at the emotions you circled. If you circled any that aren't listed here, write those down also, with a scale of one to 10. Remember, everyone is different, and we want to create a benchmark of *your* unique experience.

In your breakthrough journal, record how intensely you're feeling them, on a scale between one (least intense) and 10 (most intense). Circle the appropriate number for each emotion.

You may have noticed that a few of the ones I've given you seemed a bit out of place. How could you possibly be feeling optimistic or excited about your breakup, right?

These measurements are also going to be how we look at your progress at the end of these 30 days. We'll take inventory of your emotions again at the end of this book, so that you can see how far you've come. However unlikely it might seem now, I know that you're going to see some jumps in happiness, optimism, and excitement.

Day 5

The Four Keys to Surviving and Thriving

Today, we're looking at the four keys I've developed to surviving and thriving your split. These four key ideas will underpin everything we'll cover throughout these 30 days, and they'll be your guiding beacons as we move forward.

Key One: Take Responsibility

When you're in a relationship, it's natural for you to develop a codependency on and with your partner. The two of you make decisions together, create plans for your future together, handle the day-to-day aspects of life together, and so on. Some of us have a tendency to create a stronger codependency than others, but all of us do it to some degree; it's just part of being in a relationship.

When you break up, it can be difficult to let go of that codependency. Suddenly your partner is gone, and you're left feeling like part of your capacity to do this thing called life is gone too.

At the end of the day, though it may be hard to hear, the only one responsible for your life is *you*. This first key is all about taking responsibility for your life.

I had a client for whom this key was a particularly big factor.

This client was an older gentleman in his sixties. Before his split, he had been approaching his retirement. He and his wife had plans to travel the world when he retired, and he would constantly be talking about how excited he was for the trip of his lifetime, but soon after he retired, his wife left him, and all his plans for the future shattered.

He didn't go traveling. Instead, he just stayed home and complained to anyone who would listen about how his wife had ruined everything when she left, particularly how she ruined his trip of a lifetime.

He wasn't taking responsibility for his life or actions; he was still letting his ex be responsible for his life—and because she had left, his ability to move forward had left with her.

If we're constantly putting the blame and responsibility for our lives on someone else, it becomes difficult or impossible for us to move forward. This first key is all about shifting that and once again seeing ourselves as the sole author of our lives.

Key Two: Get Clarity

Clarity gives you power.

What do I mean by that?

Clarity is what gives you the ability to create and execute a plan for your future. Without clarity you can't have a plan, and without a plan it's almost impossible to move forward into the life that you want.

One of the most common fears I hear clients talk about is financial fear. Especially after a divorce, your financial future can be filled with uncertainty. I remember one client in particular who had always let her husband take care of the finances; he was the one who made money, handled money, and did everything else with money.

When this client found herself alone, she was in a panic. She had no idea what her current financial situation was like, let alone

what her financial future would be. She had no clarity and no plan.

It was a scary step but an absolutely vital step for her to grit her teeth and start looking at her finances. She didn't even want to glance at a bank statement at first. I coached her along the way, building a clear understanding of her financial situation. It wasn't pleasant to do, but with that clarity she was able to develop a plan for her financial future, and with that clear plan, she was able to start taking action, and start creating a financial future she could be comfortable and happy in.

This holds true also for issues like what it is going to look like to be a single parent or co-parent, or how and when you're going to find a new place to live, or even just what it's going to look like for you to be single again. When you create clarity, you have the power to create the future you want. Even if you don't like what you see, you can create a plan to improve it. The simple act of creating clarity will dial down your overwhelm—there's nothing scarier than the unknown, and when you know your situation and have a plan to address it, it puts you back in the driver's seat.

Key Three: Take Back Your Control

Taking back your control is all about living through *your* choice, rather than living in reaction to your ex. As long as you're saying that you're feeling something or doing something because your ex did this or said that, your ex has all the power—because in your mind, you're giving them that power. It's like they're controlling you like a puppet on strings, even when they're not around.

Taking back your control is all about cutting those strings and climbing back in the driver's seat.

Remember that client whose post-retirement travel plans had been shattered? When he gave up his plans to travel the world because his ex had left, he had given her all the control. At one

point in our sessions, I asked him a simple question: “Why don’t you still go on the trip of your lifetime?”

He was shocked. He hadn’t even considered that he could travel the world without his wife! But he decided to take back his control, and he made new plans for his trip—and here’s the kicker—while he was traveling, he met someone, fell in love, and came back home in a new, thriving relationship. Talk about a happy ending!

Key Four: Focus on Moving Forward Positively

I had a client recently walk in my door sobbing hysterically. She was crying so hard she could barely speak, so I handed her a box of tissues and she kicked off her shoes and curled up on the couch.

It turned out that she had never been to the area where my clinic was, but she knew a friend who lived nearby, so she arranged to meet up with her friend before our session. The whole time that she was with her friend, she was telling the story of her breakup, in all its grisly detail.

For those hours with her friend, she was focusing entirely on the past.

When we focus on the past so intensely, it’s nearly impossible for us to move forward. Imagine trying to drive to a destination but only staring in your rearview mirror; you’re probably not going to get where you want to go, and you’ll be lucky not to crash!

The same is true in your life.

The reason it’s so upsetting to focus on the past is that you’re quite literally reliving the experience. When it comes to emotions and feelings, the human brain can’t really tell the difference between *imagining* a situation and actually *living* that situation. When you’re repeating your sad breakup story for the hundredth time, you’re putting yourself right back in the experience, bringing

up all those feelings and hurt all over again, just as if it were literally happening again.

Luckily, however, this also holds true when we wrench ourselves around to focus on the future.

When you focus your mental energy on the future that you want to create, your brain puts you there, with all the emotions and feelings that bright future entails. When you focus on the future, you begin to actually *experience* that future—and next thing you know, you’re living it.

How Well Are You Implementing These Keys Now?

Before we move forward, I want you to take stock of where you are now, with respect to these four keys for surviving and thriving.

Take out your breakthrough journal and write on a scale of one to 10 how well you’re putting each key into practice. Also, write a few sentences for each about where you are or aren’t putting that key into practice right now; maybe about how you’re avoiding clarity about finances, or focusing your attention on the painful past, etc.

Just as in the previous chapter, this both helps you get clear on where you get to focus, and will also give us a gauge of your progress further on.

Day 6

What to Expect

When You Go Through a Split

As I've mentioned earlier, studies show that breaking up is often the second-most traumatic experience a person can go through—second only behind the death of a loved one.

It's not surprising, then, that the emotional journey of a split mirrors the emotional journey of grief.

You've probably heard of the five stages of grief. The idea first originated with psychiatrist Elisabeth Kübler-Ross in the 1960s. She was working with terminally ill patients and pinpointed five emotional stages that almost all patients and their loved ones would go through in the face of death.

After a split, you're facing a death of your own: the death of your relationship.

Just like someone grieving the physical death of a loved one, you too will face these five emotional stages, as you process through the end of your relationship.

The Loss Cycle

Before we look at each stage individually, it's important to note: the five stages are not a neat, linear order that everyone experiences the same way. In working through your split, I call these stages the loss cycle precisely because you don't experience and pass through them one at a time; instead, you'll probably find

What to Expect When You Go

yourself cycling back and forth from one to another as you gradually move forward and through your loss.

With that in mind, let's look at each stage of the loss cycle.

Denial

Denial is the stage that most of us will encounter first.

In the denial stage, we simply refuse to believe or accept that the split—or the need for a split—is real. We'll rationalize away any problems, convince ourselves that things aren't as bad as they seem, and if a breakup *has* already taken place, we'll tell ourselves "It isn't *really* the end, we're just going through a tough spot."

When I first found that contact lens and eyelash in my personal drawer, I launched right into denial.

At first, I refused to believe that the evidence before my eyes could mean what I feared. Certainly, there wasn't infidelity in my marriage; I must be mistaken.

In the face of a cheating partner, denial is often the first response. We don't look because we don't want to see what's there. We assume we're just jealous and paranoid because it's too painful to consider reality.

Denial is a shock response; our bodies and minds literally go into a this-is-not-really-happening mode. If your partner left you, or if they sat you down for the breakup talk, you might remember your first response as being, "This can't really be happening."

Denial is a barrier to the emotional pain that's coming. It's your body's way of protecting you until you can deal with it.

Anger

In the anger stage, emotional energy rockets up.

The pain of the situation starts to bubble up, and anger is one of our first evolutionary responses to pain.

In the anger stage, our blood is boiling. How could this person, who I love and who I thought loved me, *do* this to me? How dare he or she?!

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Our mind starts to race with fury, full of all the reasons this pain is *their* fault; how our ex has ruined everything. Anger is not a very introspective emotional state; all we can see is the blinding fury for everything that our ex has done or is doing wrong.

Anger is a stage that many people get stuck in—sometimes for months, or years, or even decades. Anger has a nasty tendency to self-perpetuate itself. We feel angry, so we lash out in some way—maybe through a bitter text, maybe through screaming in our ex’s face, maybe through tossing his or her clothes and belongings out the window.

If we let it, anger can drive us to act in ways we’d have never thought ourselves capable of.

The problem is, when we act in these ways, we push our exes to respond in kind. We act out in anger towards them; they respond by acting in anger towards us, which only makes us *more* angry. The rage cycles and builds.

Anger in itself is not something to demonize or beat yourself up for. It’s a natural part of the loss cycle; however, it can keep you stuck in a negative cycle. I remember one client of mine, Val. Val had split with her ex over a year prior, but had just let her anger fester on and on. She was still so angry when we started meeting that she’d taken to stalking her ex, parking outside the new home he shared with his girlfriend. She would sit there for hours on end, late into the night. She refused to sign the divorce papers, so the divorce was dragging on, costing her a fortune in legal fees. Her out-of-control anger was affecting her life, affecting her kids’ lives, and she was just letting it spiral.

Anger is a natural part of the loss cycle, but not one to get stuck in. What’s important is to know that it’s coming, recognize it for what it is, and not get lost in an endless loop of anger. There are simple things you can do to dial down your anger and you will learn the techniques I shared with Val as we move through the chapters together.

What to Expect When You Go

Bargaining

Bargaining is the stage that often follows anger—as energy levels cool, we still haven’t fully accepted the reality of the split, and we find ourselves willing to do *anything* to keep the relationship alive.

In the bargaining stage, the outward focus of anger starts to turn inward. You might notice thoughts like, “It’s all my fault,” or “Of course this is happening, because I ____.”

We also start reasoning with ourselves here that we can save the relationship; that if we bend ourselves, twist ourselves, or change ourselves, we can salvage the relationship that we so desperately don’t want to lose.

Maybe, if I just lose some weight, he’ll find me attractive again and things will work. Or maybe, if I just start being more fun—go dancing, laugh more, smile more—she’ll love me again. Or maybe, or maybe, or maybe...

If someone has ever broken up with you, that probably sounds familiar.

Bargaining is also a stage you’ll go through if you’re the one initiating a split, or if the breakup is mutual. You might find yourself reasoning that whatever it is you’re dealing with *isn’t* reason enough to break up. *Maybe*, you might tell yourself, *it shouldn’t bother you so much that your partner is emotionally unavailable—even though you know it does. Maybe his or her cheating on you shouldn’t be a deal-breaker—even if, if you’re being honest to your values, it is.*

The bargaining stage brings along feelings of guilt and shame. As our blame turns inward, we’ll often start beating ourselves up for all the ways we think we’re not good enough or need to change.

This stage also brings with it a danger of sacrificing your integrity and inner truth. So often in this stage, we find ourselves

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suddenly willing to betray our own values and self-worth—*anything* to salvage the relationship.

Depression

In the depression stage, energy levels are at their lowest.

Here, we're not trying to change anything anymore; we're not lashing out in anger, we're not bending ourselves to try to make things work.

In depression, all we see is despair.

This is when we find ourselves struggling to even get out of bed. We might be sleeping all the time or not at all. Apathy takes hold; it's impossible to do *anything*. *Because*, you might ask yourself, *what's the point?*

Depression is a stage filled with hopelessness. We don't expect the relationship we had to come back, and we don't see any hope for a new relationship in the future. It doesn't seem possible to ever be happy again, or to ever feel whole again. We feel broken.

With energy at its lowest, depression is the dark night of the loss cycle, the stage where it feels like the sun will never rise again; however, just like the darkest part of the night, it's also the stage that most often comes before the dawn.

Acceptance

In the acceptance stage, despite all the pain that came before, we find the sun does indeed rise again. Energy levels start to rise again, but where the high-energy rage of the anger stage points out towards our ex, the energy of acceptance fuels our own life.

In acceptance, pain starts to fade. That doesn't mean it disappears completely—that still often takes time—but that pain starts to decrease, and we begin moving forward.

In this stage, you'll find your thoughts focus more on the future. Hope and even excitement start to pop back into your life. Maybe you start thinking about dating again, and how much fun

that will be, or maybe you start imagining what sort of adventures you can embark on now that you're single and calling all the shots.

Acceptance is the high-energy starting point that launches you into your bright new future.

Understanding Your Own Cycle and Where You Are

Remember, the loss cycle isn't a simple, linear progression; you might find yourself starting in the middle, or swinging back and forth between depression and bargaining for a while, or jumping between anger and denial.

Even the final stage—acceptance— isn't always a one-and-done finish line; you might well discover that you move back and forth through acceptance for a while before you finally move forward and out.

Everyone experiences each stage of the loss cycle differently, and everyone moves through that cycle differently. We also all progress through the cycle over different lengths of time. There's no right or wrong—just what's true for you.

What matters here is that you understand what to expect, recognize these stages in yourself, and are equipped to handle each.

In your breakthrough journal, write out a description of your own experience with each of these five different stages. If you've experienced a stage in your current breakup process, describe that. If you haven't yet been in a given stage with this particular journey, describe how you've experienced it in a past breakup.



Next, describe where you've struggled the most. Is anger the stage that hits you hardest, and you tend to spend the most time in? Or is that denial, bargaining, depression, or acceptance?

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Whatever is true for you, describe where you tend to struggle the most and what that struggle looks like.

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Finally, bring your attention to your current situation. In which stage of the loss cycle are you right now? Where are you among these five stages? In your breakthrough journal, record where you are right now and describe what that looks like for you.

Day 7

Building Your Breakup Support Team

Your next step to creating a breakup plan that maximizes your breakthroughs is all about the people around you—your breakup support team.

When you're going through a split, how you process things is determined by more than just your own intentions and actions. It's also shaped by the people around you; the people you reach out to for solace, support, and guidance. Creating a breakup support team is about being intentional with who you reach out to; the people with which you surround yourself.

Now, let's be clear; there might well be people around you already who are part of your breakup process. Maybe you're already talking about things with your family, or a circle of friends—and that's great! But your breakup support team is about finding key individuals who will fill necessary roles; people who are there for you in very particular ways. Some of these people might already be in your life, but others you'll probably have to seek out.

For others of you, you might cringe at the thought of a breakup support team, precisely because right now you're isolating yourself in your breakup. I've worked with clients who, months after the split, had still not told a single person about his

or her relationship ending; he or she had too much shame built up about it and were terrified at the thought of what people would think. If you're in this boat, I understand the fear, but to best process through your split, it's vital that you start bringing others on board.

Whatever your situation, this support team is going to be what lifts you up and acts as your foundation through this journey, so let's start building *your* support team, shall we?

Friends and Family

The first role to fill here is for friends and family. When it comes to your breakup support team, we're looking for one or two people from your friends and family whom you can count on to always have your long-term best interests in mind; people who can give you the advice and feedback you need to hear—with love and compassion.

And let's be honest—not every friend or family member fits that bill.

Imagine you just saw your ex post pictures on Facebook with his or her hot new partner, out partying and having a great time in a brand-new sports car. You're angry—really, really pissed. Right now, all you want to do is speed over to your ex's house, scratch up that brand-new car, and maybe toss a rock or two through a window.

You pick up your phone to reach out to a friend in this moment of crisis. Which of these two imaginary friends do you think belongs on your breakup support team? Friend A answers your call, listens to your story, and tells you that a keyed-up car is exactly what that scumbag deserves, and she'll be over to pick you up in 10 minutes; she'll even bring a pocketknife so you can slash those brand-new tires too. Friend B answers your call, listens to your story, and tells you that she completely understands why you would be upset. She then encourages you to take a few deep

breaths and practice one of the exercises you learned from this book.

Which would you choose for your support team?

Exactly—Friend B, of course!

We probably all know some version of Friend A; someone who will enthusiastically jump on to whatever you're feeling and egg you on to something that might seem great in the moment, but doesn't exactly have your long-term interests in mind.

When it comes to your breakup support team, however, we're looking for someone like Friend B, who will listen compassionately but give you the support you *really* need for your long-term best interests. As tempting as it might be at times, keying up your ex's new car is never in your long-term interest.

Think over the loved ones in your life and decide which one or two people will best fill this role on your support team. In your breakthrough journal, write down the names of who you will reach out to.

Exercise Buddy

When you're going through emotional turmoil, it can sometimes be easy to lose sight of care for your physical body. Sometimes all you want to do all day is curl up in bed, grab a bag of chips, and stream Netflix until you pass out again.

Trust me, I get it; I've been there too, but pulling yourself out of bed and getting your body moving is going to make a huge impact on your mental and emotional states. Countless studies have shown the positive effects of exercise on mental and emotional health; you get your blood pumping, and those feel-good endorphins start to flow. Exercise is a great tool for alleviating your painful feelings and increasing the joyful feelings you want, both in the immediate moment, and over time with regular exercise, but again, sometimes exercise is the last thing on your mind.

That's where your exercise buddy comes in.

With your exercise buddy, you have someone who's going to keep you accountable to getting up and getting moving. It could be someone you'll go on walks or jogs with, someone you'll meet at the gym, or someone you'll play tennis with; whatever type of exercise suits you, your exercise buddy is right there with you.

An exercise buddy not only helps you keep up with your exercise, but also makes things more fun and keeps you motivated, and since you two will be an exercise team, you'll also be giving these same benefits to your exercise buddy—a true win-win.

Coach or Therapist

Connecting with a trained professional is going to exponentially increase your ability to process through your split and transform this crisis point into personal breakthroughs. Coaches and therapists are two distinct fields, both with their own strengths.

A coach will work with you in a future-oriented way, identifying goals and roadblocks, and supporting you in creating action plans to bust through those blocks to achieve your goals.

A therapist will work with you to look into your past to identify underlying issues that affect you, helping you to uncover and heal old wounds so that you're able to move forward.

There's no right or wrong answer when it comes to choosing to work with a coach or therapist. You probably have a gut sense of which would be most valuable for you, given your current situation and your own personal path. Some people choose to work with both a coach *and* a therapist, to tackle things from both sides, so to speak.

What matters here is that you find a trained professional to work with who will be with you on your journey. If you haven't yet ever worked with a coach or therapist, there's no time like the

present; this is a vital role for your breakup support team and will prove invaluable in creating breakthroughs.

Financial Advisor

This role is not one that everyone will need on their own team. If your relationship at all entailed shared finances—joint accounts or one of you financially supporting the other—then you’ll want a financial advisor. If your relationship did not at all entail shared finances, you can skip this one.

For those of you who *did* share finances in some way, a financial advisor is vital to moving forward. Whether you were simply sharing rent for a year or had joint finances through a 40-year marriage, your split means big changes in your financial life.

A financial advisor will work with you to create clarity on where you stand now and will help develop a plan for moving forward. The more intertwined your finances with your ex were, the more necessary it is for you to bring a trained financial professional onto your team.

Don’t be anxious, as even if you don’t like what you find you will be able to work with your financial advisor to put a plan in place to help you move forward.

Legal Advisor

Again, this role might not be one that you need to fill in processing your own split. If your breakup is a divorce, you absolutely need a legal advisor on your team. If you have any other legal connection to your ex—a shared lease or mortgage, children together, joint bank accounts, etc.—you’ll want a legal advisor, whether you were married or not. A legal advisor is going to make sure you’re on firm ground for the future, and that you’re legally protected.

Whatever the tone of your breakup now, a legal advisor will make sure you know what you are legally entitled to, no matter

what the future brings. Things might feel amicable and rosy now, so you might be tempted to think, “Oh, I don’t need a lawyer; we can just figure things out between the two of us,” but that’s just setting yourself up for danger in the future. You never know when things might turn sour—and if that happens, the friendly agreements that seem good enough now might put you in legal jeopardy down the line.

You’ve probably heard the saying that an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure. Well, a lawyer today can prevent a legal nightmare tomorrow.

Assembling Your Team

At this point, you have, depending on your situation, three to five roles to fill for your breakup support team.

For the professionals you’ll be working with, you want to be sure that you’re bringing on someone that matches your own personal intentions and needs. Some lawyers, for example, are cut-throat bulldogs that will fight like fire; others have a more cooperative approach and will focus on building agreement and compromise between you and your ex. There’s no right or wrong there, but you want to make sure you find the professional that suits your situation.

For your friends, family, and exercise buddy, you’ll want to contact them and let them know you’re bringing them onto your all-star team. With your exercise buddy, create a game-plan for how and when you’ll work out together. Remember, clarity is key.

For your friends and family, let the one or two people you’ve chosen know that you see them as trusted sources of good advice, and that you’d like their support as you navigate your split.

In your breakthrough journal, you’ve already written down the names of the friends and family you’ll bring onto your team. Also write down the names of a few people you might ask about being your exercise buddy. If you can’t think of anyone, where could

Building Your Breakup

you look for one? People are often looking for work-out buddies; you might find them at your local gym, a yoga class, or networking sites, etc.

Also write in your breakthrough journal your plan to begin working with a coach or therapist. Are you working with one already? Do you know of any you could work with? Do you know of any friends or family who have worked with a coach or therapist who you think might be a good fit for you? If not, where will you start looking for one?

Finally, if they apply to you, write out the same plan for finding and beginning to work with a financial and/or legal advisor.

With your new team assembling around you, you're ready to kick your transformation into high gear.

Day 8

The Antidote to Negative Emotions

As you travel through the journey of your breakup, it's natural for you to experience a wide range of emotions.

Even in the most amicable split, there will be dark times of hurt and sorrow; painful breakups can bring negative emotions in waves that feel overwhelming.

Remember, there's no magic wand to making those negative emotions suddenly disappear, or jumping from a level-10 sadness to a level-10 joy. When you know how to use the remote control to your mind, you can dial your emotions up and down, bit by bit.

Over the next few days, you're going to learn and start practicing these tools to dial your emotions, but before we get into our first technique, a word of caution about some coping strategies you *won't* find in this book. These destructive patterns include:

- Throwing yourself into work, 24/7
- Drinking more than you normally would
- Drugs
- Over-eating
- Excessive partying

All these are popular ways to deal with negative emotions. The only problem?

The Antidote to Negative

They don't actually deal with the emotions at all; they only offer a temporary avoidance, and on top of that, they tend to only make the pain worse in the long run. They get in the way of genuine recovery, and things like lack of sleep, alcohol, and poor nutrition will heighten the severity of negative emotions.

What sets the tools you're going to learn here apart from those self-destructive patterns is that we aren't going to avoid the emotions; we're going to face them head on and transform them.

Some of these tools might feel uncomfortable at times, but this head-on approach is what will assuage your negative emotions in a sustainable way, allowing you to truly take back control of your emotions and move forward.

Think of those negative emotions like a roller coaster that you're strapped into—and terrified of. You're climbing that first huge hill—heart racing, wishing you could just magically be back on solid ground; you'd give anything to take back this awful decision and just teleport away. But then you crest the hill, fly through the coaster, and coast back to the station laughing your head off.

The next time you get on a roller coaster, you might still get butterflies in your stomach at the start, but each time it gets a little easier, until you find yourself enjoying the whole process.

It's the exact same pattern here.

When you start using these tools to face your negative emotions, you'll find the process isn't quite as awful as you expect, and you'll experience the relief of dialing down those negative emotions. Then every time you practice it, it becomes just a little bit easier, until you find yourself dialing down and dialing up with ease. That's the goal here, and that's what is going to create breakthroughs and transformation in every area of your life.

Let's turn now to our first technique, the antidote to negative emotions: *Gratitude*.

Gratitude is one of the most powerful mindsets human beings can step into. When we begin to focus on gratitude, the intensity of negative emotions cools down.

In a moment, you're going to pull out your breakthrough journal and simply start writing as much as you can think of that you're grateful for.

When you're deep into a negative emotional experience, this can feel difficult at first, and that's ok. The things you list can either be big or small. Maybe you're grateful for your best friend, who you know will be there for you. Maybe you're grateful for the really cozy pair of socks that you're wearing. The point here is to shift your focus towards gratitude, inch by inch.

Keep adding to your list for at least a few minutes, until you've got a solid collection written down and can't think of any more. Write your gratitude list now.

Once you've completed this exercise, reflect on the experience: how have you noticed a decreased shift in your negative emotions? At what level were those emotions before the exercise and what are they now?

You'll want to keep this list with you. When you start to feel those negative emotions building up, pull out your gratitude list and read through it, focusing on each item and your feelings about them. Doing so will turn the dial on those painful emotions, de-intensifying them. You can also repeat this exercise and write a new gratitude list, to the same effect.

This attitude of gratitude is an antidote that you can pull out at any time—and the more you do, the more effective and effortless the technique becomes.

The Antidote to Negative