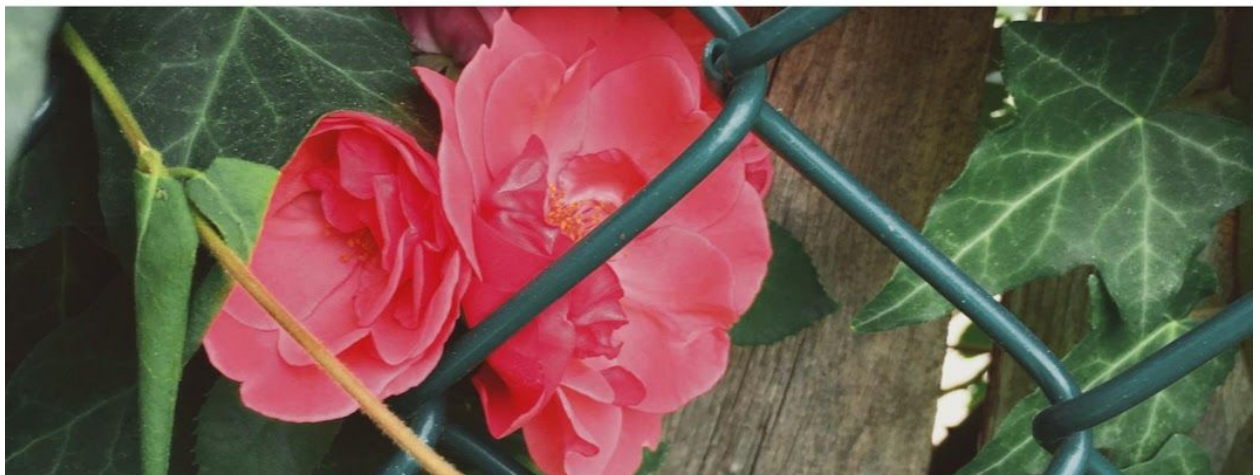




# Blossoming Heart

*Jasmine Singh*



## **The Blossoming Heart**

for you, I soften with desire

I am a tender child

a virgin of love

careless to the bittersweet taste

of a broken heart

I am an echo of Eve

enthralled by the thorns

of passion

I allure love

with my silky voice

and supple lips

I dance to the rhythms

of foolish hunger

wanting so badly

for our hearts

to melt

like the eternal hues

of sunset

this is an ode

to young love

## Puppy Love

“The girl who keeps her eyes open”

The first relationship is always filled with an immense amount of excitement. This will be the first time someone will shower you with an endless amount of affection and attention. You'll be caught in a whirlwind of emotions ranging from infatuation to confusion. Although your first relationship lights up your heart like a wild fire, it's important not to get too caught up in the flame. Take caution and understand that this is the first time you're bravely surrendering your heart to your significant other. With your first relationship also comes the first fight, the first kiss, and even the first breakup. Go into your first relationship with both your feet on the ground. Trust the experience and trust yourself.

I ached with feverish affection. It was the first time someone had my name pressed onto their lips. I fell for his quirky humor and relaxed presence. He held my heart in his silky hands, and showered me with desire. I was young and I wore the cloth of foolishness proudly over my head. His dark brown eyes scrunched together when he smiled, exposing his crooked teeth and his passionate heart. His soul echoed to the rhythms of his feet — he was always moving, always creating art with the evolution of his body. He overflowed with childish love and I gave in. It began as a sweet love song, his body could match the rhythm of our relationship, however, it wouldn't be long till we starved in each other's presence. Distance stretched between us, and he could no longer keep up. We were plagued with youth. My arms could no longer hug the loose

fragments of my past — moving away meant moving on. He said he loved me, but can love blossom in the fountain of foolish youth? He said I was his first love, but could he love me when I hadn't even begun to love myself? I was the one who ended our romance, and he was the one who bathed in tears. It wouldn't be years later until we reconciled and realized that moving away indeed meant moving on.

### **Peer Pressure & Familial Pressure**

Often times we find ourselves pressured to get into relationships. We are starstruck by the idea of being in love and having someone that loves us. It is important to understand that love happens on its own time. When we force ourselves to find love, we are also destroying the patience of finding the right love at the right time. We are all pushed by the idea that being in a relationship will make us happy. However, happiness cannot be found if you are attached to the idea that you need someone to fulfill your happiness- love takes time.

On the other hand, we may find that even when we are in fulfilling and happy relationships we are pushed by the pressure of our peers and our family. We may not realize it right away but our peers and our family have great influence over us and our romantic relationships. We go to our peers and family members for advice, comfort, and reassurance. The topic of our relationship comes up quite often whether that be talking about a recent argument with our significant other or gushing over the grand gesture our significant other has done for us. We are likely to listen to the judgments of others, so we can better navigate ourselves through our relationships. Consequently, some of these indulging conversations can lead to terrible decisions. Our peers and family members may give sound advice in certain situations, but it is

our choice to listen and act upon their advice. We cannot blindly trust and follow the advice of others. Although our peers and family members may have our best interest, they do not experience our relationship first-hand. We must learn to trust ourselves and our instincts first and foremost within a relationship.

Listening to the judgments of others may just be our greatest weakness. We desire recognition and acceptance from the people around us and it's difficult to be in a relationship driven by pressure and constant judgment. For instance, if you and your significant other are in the middle of a heated argument it is better to heal your wounds together first than to rush to the arms of those who barely understand the situation. People will only give you advice based upon their own experiences, judgment and perspective — making it difficult to differentiate between good and bad advice that would actually benefit you. When taking advice from someone else, it is important to take it from those who truly understand your situation. It is also important to note that the advice you do listen to and follow should be the advice from those that you want to emulate and become.

In my first relationship, I followed the judgment and opinions of others. I allowed them to control my relationship, and I was easily swayed into many directions. However, I came to realize that the people whose advice I was listening to were those who had no relationship experience themselves. If I wanted to create a successful and stable relationship it would have made more sense to also take the advice from those who were also in successful and stable relationships. Not listening to myself and taking the advice of inexperienced people hurt my relationships and my significant other. At the end of the day, you and your significant other are in charge of maintaining and strengthening your relationship. You must trust your relationship

enough to build a foundation between you and your partner. A foundation built upon the objective views of your peers and of your family members is a recipe for disaster. Anyone outside of your relationship will have an opinion, but it is ultimately your choice to act upon their opinions.

### **The First Kiss**

The first kiss is an experience that has no definite border. Some may relish in the memories of their first kiss, whereas some may recall their first kiss as sloppy and terrifying. Two lips meeting for the first time is an unforgettable moment regardless of whether it was magical or horrific. The first kiss creates a wave of intimacy between you and your partner. Having your first kiss can have many meanings for many people. Some may despise the idea of having a first kiss. Others may be eager to take part in that experience. It is important to have a first kiss that aligns with your morals. There is no right or wrong way to experience a first kiss.

There is also no need to be afraid. Everyone has their own preferences and if you find yourself in a situation where you are not comfortable then by no means should you do something you aren't ready for. Have enough confidence in yourself to know when the right time is for you. Love is a journey and there is no need to rush. Your first kiss will symbolize what you want it to mean to you.

My first kiss was not a momentous experience. It was a hurried and awkward peck at the park that was mostly pressured by my friends. Looking back I realize that I was rushing myself to grow up. I was immature and I didn't know myself, let alone know what I wanted in a partner. You are in control of your actions, and nobody knows you better than you know yourself. Do what feels right for you because it will be a decision and moment you'll have to live with.

Your first kiss will be a memory you'll never forget. Share that moment with someone you trust, and allow yourself to fall when that moment does happen. You won't be afraid to fall because you'll know when you're ready.

### **What Nobody Tells You About Your First Relationship**

Your first relationship sets the tone for how you perceive love and intimacy in your later relationships. Some experience their first relationship at twenty-three, whereas others may experience it at ten years old. There is no definite time that predicts and guarantees a perfect relationship. Your first relationship will introduce you to yourself and it'll open you up to new experiences and new emotions that you never thought you could feel. It can be tricky at times to navigate. Being in your first relationship is like learning how to ride a bike for the first time. You're "pushed" into this new journey where you can barely reach the pedals. You may find yourself with scraped knees from all the unexpected arguments and conflicts. Sometimes you may even find yourself steering with ease. Just like learning how to ride a bike, it takes time to develop the skill of learning how to love and how to be in a relationship.

In your first relationship, you'll be faced with the first argument — a crucial component that you must handle with care. How you argue with your significant other for the first time sets the tone for future arguments. The first argument can be very tricky to handle. Especially when it is your first time having to argue with someone you love and adore. It is important to handle your arguments with care. It is not what you argue about, rather it is how you argue with one another. Arguments are draining, and they take a huge toll on your mental and emotional health. Always do the best that you can in understanding your partner. If, however, you find yourself

having a difficult time coming to a conclusion, know that it is okay to take a step back and breathe. Do not say something out of anger. It's hard to control ourselves when we are high in emotions, so it is better to empty our minds and gain clarity in our emotions, so we come to a smooth and clean compromise. Tread carefully when it comes to arguing in your first relationship. After all, a relationship consists of multiple perspectives, ideas, and personalities- nobody said it would be easy. Make sure you are emotionally and mentally prepared for such things to happen.

In many cases, our first relationship isn't our last. It's beautiful to find love with the first person that stole your heart, but for many of us, including me, love takes time and that means falling again and again. Indulge in the experiences of your first relationship. Enjoy the precious moment of having your first relationship because that's time you'll never get back. Your first relationship will teach you so much about who you are. You will learn how to deal with someone other than yourself and you'll learn intensely about another human being that isn't you. Being in your first relationship means giving your heart, time and energy to someone for the first time- don't forget that.

During my first relationship, I didn't know how to think of someone other than myself. I didn't know how to resolve arguments, nor did I know how to deal with my partner- it took time. Although my first relationship suffered from a lot of tension, I gave it my all and I loved unconditionally. I enjoyed being with him and getting to know him and allowing myself to be a part of his life. My first relationship propelled me into the beautiful emotion of love and that's something I am truly grateful for.



## **How to Recover From Your First Breakup**

Many factors contribute to a breakup. Just like how it takes two people to create a relationship, it takes two to break one. Whether you are the one breaking up with your significant other or vice versa, it is important to recognize that a breakup is a gradual process. Relationships aren't easy and every relationship has a different amount of tolerance for conflict. Your significant other may show signs of potential separation through distance, miscommunication, and lack of attention. Whatever may be the cause, tread carefully after your first breakup. Your heart was vulnerable to someone you truly cared for, and it is completely normal to feel like it's the end of the world. You had given your relationship all of your time, effort and love- to see all that diminish is heartbreaking. Breakups don't have to be painful though. You are in control of your emotions. We may not be able to control the situation, but we can control our reactions to the situation.

After a breakup, our initial reaction is to cry out in tears and completely extinguish any trace of our, broken relationship. However, acting on anger or sadness will prove fatal to our efforts of getting over a breakup. Acting upon these temporary spikes of emotion can lead to regret. Allow yourself to feel the emotions that you are. Accept the emotion, but recognize that you are not that emotion. When you distinguish between who you are and what you are feeling you realize that emotions are temporary. Of course, pain is inevitable, but how you act on that pain is crucial. Instead of wallowing in loss, realize that you are a limitless human being that was lucky enough to experience love and admiration. It's painful to let go of someone. Just make sure

that when you are dealing with your breakup that you do not let go of yourself. You were you even before you had gotten into a relationship.

Allow yourself to heal. You were brave enough to give your heart away, and just like a rose, it will take time for you to grow out of your feelings and out of your relationship. It is important to treat yourself with the greatest amount of affection. You are harboring a broken heart, and you must be gentle on yourself. Understand that it is okay to feel what you are feeling. Practice compassion, empathy, and love within yourself. Complete yourself by becoming the person that you are looking for. If you are looking for healing, you must become the healer yourself. Nurture your body, spirit, and mind by doing the things that nourish you and make you feel alive. Don't allow a breakup to consume the greatest parts of you and your heart.

The first breakup is the hardest because this is the first time your heart is breaking apart. Nobody can prepare you for this feeling. It is something you learn to heal as you go along your journey in life. The feeling of losing your first love stays with you. The pain will fade, and you will come out a much stronger version of yourself. You will transform from your wounds.

I am an emotional person, and going through my first breakup left my heart feeling tender and torn. I felt my heart shattering inside of my chest and I'd cry endlessly, begging to the universe to stop the pain. The hardest thing is losing someone you spent so much time around. You gave them your heart and soul, and to see that go away really traumatizes your heart and your perspective on relationships. When I had my first breakup I did everything I could to heal my wounds without harming my mind, body or soul. I spent time writing in journals, painting flowers and going for long walks. I had cut off contact with my ex, and that is something I highly recommend that you do. It is a harsh transition to go from speaking every day to not speaking at

all, but I must confess that cutting off the strings of your past allow you to roam freely and take care of yourself in the present. Nothing will be holding you back from becoming the greatest version of yourself. You may even come to the realization that the relationship wasn't fulfilling you or your life. In that case, you dodged having to be with someone you weren't sure about. All in all going through your first breakup should be an experience that allows you to take care of yourself and grow as an individual. You are never alone. Trust that this experience will transform you into a greater version of yourself. Trust that it will lead you to be in a greater place in your life.

### **What You Should Take Away From Your First Relationship**

After your first relationship you will take away the following:

#### **1. The Dynamics of Relationship**

Being in a relationship requires you to be selfless. You must understand your partner and their personalities just as much as you want them to understand yours. Working together as a team allows you both to do your best to keep each other feeling happy and fulfilled. You support them unconditionally and are a part of something greater than yourself, which is ultimately growing with your partner and understanding what it takes to be in a healthy relationship with someone.

#### **2. What You Look for in a Partner**

After being in your first relationship you begin to understand your preferences a little more in detail. You recognize what you look for in a partner, whether that be their lifestyle,

personality or even core beliefs. This is a great lesson to learn after being in your first relationship. You begin to understand who you are and who you want to attract into your life and start a fulfilling relationship with.

### **3. Your First Relationship May Not Be Your Last**

Your first relationship can be a trial for your future relationships. You may have genuinely loved and cared for your partner, but it is important to understand the reality that your first love may not be your last. Although there are many success stories of relationships falling back into place and becoming stronger within time, know that there are many people you have the opportunity to blossom with. Trust your heart and trust the process.

#### **Too Young, Too Soon**

Some of us get into our first relationship at a very young age. I was granted my first relationship at the tender age of ten. I was a foolish child who knew nothing about herself, let alone what it took to be in a stable and fulfilling relationship. Being that young and being in a relationship has taught me that you should take your time and get to know yourself first. I was unaware of who I was and what I was doing, and for that, I suffered being in a position I wasn't ready for: a girlfriend. I swooned to the idea of being in a relationship when I was not even mentally or emotionally prepared to be in one. Develop yourself first so that when you do get into a relationship you will be part of two wholes instead of being each other's half. Trust that you will be with the right person at the right time — love isn't forced. You do not have to rush into anything for anyone.

### **One-Sided Love**

“I’ll text you a bit later, I’m busy”

One-sided love is bittersweet. You look for commitment, love, and affection in someone who is less than capable of giving you what you know you deserve. They are busy giving you mixed signals all for their own amusement, and may even go as far as to string along in their selfish games. Being part of a one-sided romance or relationship is devastating. It is a tug of war between love and resentment. You crave their attention and would go to great lengths to get it, however, a part of you just wants to give up — plain and simple. Trust yourself enough to know that it's time to let go of this one-sided love. You are worth far more than being this person's puppet. You are worthy of a love that fulfills you, not a love that drains you.

I felt as if I had met him in a past life. I desired nothing more than to protect him and to show him that he was worthy of a love that was whole. When he looked at me my knees would go weak, and my heart would surrender to adrenaline. I nurtured him from afar and I watched him fall in and out of love with everyone but me. He had my heart in the palm of his careless hands. Tension was brimming between our bodies as we fought like lovers that were never in love. His eyes were empty even though his arms were full of girls who adored him. I always wondered why he never pursued me. Maybe he knew I was too good for him. Maybe he knew that he was broken, and that he couldn't give me what I deserved. He kept me on my toes,

pulling me closer when he needed me and pushing me farther when he had gotten the sympathy he wanted out of me. My words healed his wounds temporarily, and when they opened up again, he'd drag me to him, begging me to be the ear that would hear his cries and the heart that would beat for him. He cared for me only when he needed me. I tore into threads and I could no longer indulge in his presence. I pulled away from him, forcing myself to understand that he would never care for me the way I cared for him. He was incapable of love even though he found so much of it. His eyes were lost in the realms of his bitter reality — a reality I am relieved I was never a part of.

### **The Dangers in Loving Someone You Can't Have**

Loving someone you can't have is like an addiction- even your crush is aware of that. They know they are desired, and they prey upon the emotions of others to satisfy themselves and their agenda. Unrequited love is a normal experience, however, exerting copious amounts of energy to get their attention and affection will only prove disastrous. You are risking your perception of your own self-worth for someone who doesn't recognize it in the first place. Although they may seem like the greatest, most unattainable human beings on the planet, it is important to note that nobody is worth losing yourself over. Your power lies in you. Not in this one-sided lover who misuses your affection and love.

In some instances, this person may even use you for their own advantage. You become a pawn in their little game and they have no problem reminding you of it. They may pull you in only to push you even further. In my own personal experience, I had been enamored by someone who constantly misused my affection and kindness by dropping all of their problems onto me

when nobody was there for them. He felt like they have the power to do this because I had strong feelings for him, and he knew that I would do anything for him. he played upon my emotions to make himself feel better, and I allowed it to happen, to believe that someday he would see my value - he never did.

For that, I suffered a heartache that lasted a handful of years. My self-worth diminished because I felt like he didn't want me. The lesson that I have learned is that your worth shouldn't be placed on anyone else but you, however, I was too young and foolish to recognize that at the time. My good intentions led me to believe that someday he'd see how much I cared for him and loved him, but he was completely oblivious and continued to take me for granted.

When you continuously try to gain the approval and love of someone who doesn't even "see you", it can greatly damages how you see yourself. It can also lead you to believe that love is a cruel thing. Although a one-sided love stings, you must stand your ground and trust yourself enough to recognize that this person is unworthy of you and your love. A one-sided love leads you to become a complete you.

### **Mind Games & How They Affect Your Capacity to Love**

Being in a one-sided relationship or one-sided romance destroys your image of love. It is a misleading representation of what a relationship should be. Do not believe that you are unworthy of love just because someone who doesn't see your value in the first place doesn't give you the relationship you deserve. When you are misled into thinking that love means constantly putting in more effort or being more proactive, understand that this applies to both people who are a part of the relationship- not just you. A loving partner will make you a priority. Your

perception of love shouldn't dwindle because of someone who misused you. Your love wasn't unworthy, they were and when you come to this understanding you find that you are separating yourself from your insecurities, sadness, and anger. When you realize that you were not the problem you're set free from this one-sided relationship and romance because you realize that you are worthy of a love that is far greater and more fulfilling.

After being mistreated constantly by this person, I was afraid of love. Although I had many opportunities to cut this person out of my life, I was stuck on the belief that someday he would see my value. I was misled into thinking that there was something wrong with me. He had never made the effort to be in my life the way I had been in his. He had abused my kindness by keeping me there only when he needed me or when he needed to be reminded of how great of a person he was when he truly was not. He pulled me close when it was convenient for him. His lack of respect and empathy for me devastated my young heart. Being broken, however, made me a much stronger person. It exposed me to the gruesome reality of being misused. A one-sided love teaches you how to respect yourself and your emotions. It transforms you into a stronger person that recognizes when he or she is being mistreated. It is also easier to let go of those who do mistreat you because you are aware of the damage one does when being involved in a one-sided romance. Trust that the pain will fade and that you will come out a warrior ready to take on a love worthy of your attention.



## **The Infamous “Player”**

Here are the signs of someone categorized as a serial player:

### **1. Do Not Make an Effort to Be a Part of Your Life**

The serial player will not put any effort into being in your life. They come in and out of your life when convenient to them. They will resist your attempts to reach out by creating false hope and then letting you down. Their attention is short-lived and they are never truthful about their schedules. They will rarely initiate conversation. You deserve someone who will make you just as much of a priority as you make them.

### **2. Have Multiple Love Interests That They Pay Attention to Besides You**

The serial player will have many love interests vying for their affection and attention. They enjoy being desired, and they play upon the emotions of others to validate their own self-worth. They treat people like toys, having no problem investing deep emotions into multiple people at a time. They are known to move from one relationship to the next very quickly, and they lack stability.

### **3. They Brag About Themselves and Their “Conquests”**

The serial player may flat out brag about how many people they have been with. They are constantly talking about relationships and seem to have no substance outside of their “conquests”. They are proud of how much they are desired, and they have no shame in telling the

world how many people want them. They openly discuss their many love interests while knowing you love them. They freely discuss their past sexual encounters without hesitation knowing that you still love them. They expect you to comfort them and are stunned when you dismiss them with brutal honesty.

#### **4. Only Come to You When They Need You**

The serial player knows they are your weakness. They know that whenever they need someone they can go to you as a “backup” plan to make themselves feel better. Although they’re charming in conversation, it seems that they only communicate with you when it is convenient for them. They do not make the first move to connect with you otherwise. They are only interested in themselves, and they absorb the life and energy out of you for their own benefit — whether that be through constant emotional or physical gratification.

#### **5. They Play Tug of War with Your Emotions**

The serial player is keen on trying to keep all of their love interests. After all, they boost their self-esteem and their self-worth. The serial player will constantly confuse you in order to try to keep you dangling inside of their little “game”. One moment they may show interest and affection, while another they may be flat out ignoring you and your pursuits. They know how to manipulate you and your emotions for their own personal interest. They constantly contradict themselves in order to keep their many love interests at round them at all times. They know they are desired, and they continue to feed off that desire to make themselves feel better about themselves.

## **How to Recover From a One-Sided Relationship**

Completely letting go of a one-sided romance or relationship requires a lot of strength. You are, for once, abstaining from your obsession and strong feelings for this person. It is almost like withdrawal. When you let go of a one-sided romance or relationship, you find yourself feeling misused and you come to the realization of what this person was doing to you. All the dots connect. From the deep late night conversations to seeing them in the arms of someone else the next day, it all begins to make sense. You withdraw from this person, and for once you are choosing yourself over them. It is very liberating to let go of a one-sided relationship or romance. When you are stuck inside your own heart, you fail to see the mistreatment and what this person's agenda truly was for you. However, when you take a step back and watch this person outside of your emotions, you gain clarity. This person never truly cared for you, they only cared for themselves.

It is important to completely cut this person out of your life. The sad truth is that they will never truly understand or realize your value. They are too caught up in themselves to wholeheartedly realize that you are an affectionate being who genuinely feels love towards them. In my personal experience, I had been so devoted to the idea of being with someone to the point I wasn't aware that my kindness and love were being misused. Flash forward to six years later and this person still treats me as if I am invisible. They only came to me when they needed me because they knew I had a genuine heart. It took a lot of strength for me to finally let go of this person and say "enough is enough". I had come to my senses and realized that this person only kept me in their life for their own benefit. They had drained me emotionally and there was even a

point where I could not face them. I feared them, and I feared to be close to them. Even to this day, this person has never tried being in my life the way I tried being in his. If someone doesn't try being part of your journey, it's safe to say that you also have a right to withdraw from theirs. You are worthy of a love that lights up your heart like a wildfire. Emphasis on light, because a love that sets you on fire will only leave you burnt. A one-sided romance is bittersweet. You experience the deep waves of love, but you experience it with the wrong person. You are worthy of a love that makes you whole. Trust that you must let go of someone who does not value you or your love. Trust that you will find love with someone who loves you too.

## **The Tender Heart**

I tasted your lips

you whispered

sweet ballads

into my tender soul

I loved you

I savored your body and

drenched myself

in your eyes

heavenly was our affection

the gods envied

the immortal food

I found in

your beating heart

when you eat

I am full

there is no place

I rather be than in the deep heartache

of our love

### **Tasteful Love**

“I don’t know...it happens to everyone”

Tasteful love is exactly what it sounds like — comfortable, loving and fulfilling. It's the kind of love that heals you and makes you forget what feeling broken means. You're with this amazing person who seamlessly wove themselves into your life, and you don't know how you got here but you're thankful that you did. Tasteful love may satisfy your hunger, but it's important to remember that this kind of love is the stepping stone to a love filled with copious amounts of passion, intimacy, and commitment. Relish in the feelings of this childish and carefree love. Unlike your first love, this one will be an introduction to the cozy atmosphere of a relationship. Trust the experience.

I fell for the mystery buried deep within his dark eyes. His smile spoke to my heart and I had to know him. Destiny was sewn into my reality when I got the chance to hear his laugh for the first time. I poured my heart into his hands, and he held onto me with affection. I wore into our romance like a comfy pair of jeans. We shared everything together. He fed from the hands of my mother and I fed on his love. He wrapped me up in his promises and love letters, but there was something missing. Looking into his eyes, I began to see a reflection that was no longer mine. The sparks began to crumble and his laughter became my biggest insecurity. He knew how to hold me, but he did not know how to love me — he knew that too. We slowly left each other's

lives, and he closed the door more quietly than I did. His footsteps softly walked all over my heart. I shed a few tears, but it wasn't anything that I couldn't wipe off.

### **Meeting Your Significant Other's Parents**

Meeting your significant other's parents can stimulate a range of emotions ranging from excitement to fear. This bold gesture is a symbol of affection from your partner. They feel so deeply for you and your relationship to the point that they are eager for you to crawl into their world. If you are to commit yourself to your partner it makes sense to test out the waters and see how you bond with your partner's parents. Ultimately when you commit yourself, you are also committing yourself to an entire bloodline of people. You are opening doors to new traditions, cultures and even ideas. They are getting to know you so that they could see how you fit into the framework of the family. They are also on the lookout to see you and your partner's dynamic within the relationship.

It is important to be yourself when you meet your significant other's, parents. They are getting to know you for who you are. Uncomfortable conversation is inevitable, but trust that you'll get through it and create bridges between you and them. They are trying to connect with you, not antagonize you. Allow your qualities to shine through — after all, your partner chose you to meet their parents for a reason. Be confident in yourself, and show them exactly why you are worthy of pursuing this relationship in the first place. When I had met my significant other's parents for the first time I was completely in awe at how friendly and welcoming they were. I allowed my personality to shine through, and ultimately showed them what made me stand out — I made their son happy. At the end of the day, it's about connecting and building bridges to

not only show how much you support your partner, but also how open you are to becoming part of a new family.

There is a possibility of complications, however. Your partner's parents may not be fond of you even though you've radiated in the glow of your best and authentic self. They may dislike you and flat out demonstrate their distaste for you. When you come across such situations, it is important to keep your cool. Try to understand exactly what causes friction between you and them. Also, is aware that relationships and frictions can change over time- they may dislike you today, but they may grow to love you tomorrow. If it becomes too much of a complication, ask yourself if you are willing to be part of such a family dynamic. Parent's can be picky when it comes to judging who their children should date because they only want the best for their son or daughter. Although it may seem like a never-ending tug of war between you and your partner's parents, understand that you are not their enemy- you are on their side. You and your partner's parents both love, adore and care for your partner. Trust that this common thread will ultimately prevail and bond you closer to them, not against them.

### **The Beauty of Being in a Comfortable Relationship**

Comfort is a sweet place. You and your partner have been together for some time now and you're starting to dig your feet into the ground and form roots of love. You've both reached a point in your relationship where you have gotten to know each other's flaws, habits, and quirks. The beauty of being in a comfortable relationship is the feeling of fulfillment and satisfaction - you feel whole. It truly creates a warm feeling inside of your heart to know that you have someone you can cozy up to and be yourself around. This point within a relationship is simply



true bliss. Indulge in this comfort. Allow yourself to be vulnerable and open your heart to this sweet love.

When I had gotten comfortable with my significant other, it was truly a beautiful experience. Our hearts were tied to one another, and he not only became my love interest but also my best friend. He knew everything about me, and I knew everything about him, whether that be the creases of his face when he'd smile or his favorite kind of food. It was a beautiful time in my life because it was steady. He saw me in my most vulnerable state, and every single day I chose to make an effort to be with him and around him. He made me very happy, and although he and I are not together anymore, he taught me how to smile and lighten up. He brought so much light into my life and I'm always going to be thankful for that.

### **The Dangers of Giving Your Significant Other & Your Relationship Too Much Attention**

When you are on the cusp of comfort it's tempting to indulge all your time in your relationship and in your partner. You're drowning in your love. It is constantly on your mind, and it lingers within each heartbeat and breath. Although it's important to make your relationship a priority, it is also important to keep a healthy amount of distance so that you and your partner can flourish as individuals. When you begin to focus all of your energy on your relationship, you find that you neglect other realms of your life such as friendships, work and even simply taking time out for yourself. It's important to nurture your relationship, however, it is also important to give you and your significant other the right amount of space.

Naturally, when you're in love you want to relish in every moment with that person. You want to experience things with them and spend time with them. They become your biggest

priority because you can't help being so in love and so infatuated. Although paying attention to your partner and relationship is essential to strengthening your relationship, also understand that you need to be your own person. Your identity isn't solely your relationship or your partner - it's you. When you neglect yourself you put your relationship at risk. As the saying goes, your external reality is a reflection of your internal thoughts. When you are constantly lingering behind your partner you forget that you are also your own person. When you strengthen your dreams, your values and your beliefs on your own, you find that you cultivate a stronger relationship. You aren't each other's halves, rather you are whole on your own and with each other. Two wholes are stronger than two halves.

Likewise, you may also find that indulging your relationship too much might cause you to distance from multiple facets of your life. This includes your family, your friends and even your dreams. When you make one person a constant priority you neglect the people who have been there before them - resulting in you losing friends, losing time with your family and also changing your dreams to adjust to your partner. You realize the effects of being so caught up in your relationship after the relationship has ended. All of a sudden you're alone, and you don't understand why. You feel alone because you became your relationship, and the second your relationship left, you did too. It's important to always be there for the people that love you outside of your relationship. Take care of yourself, and your dreams while also growing alongside your partner. A relationship is not a necessity, it is an opportunity that you can live with or without. Retain who you are and balance your life with your relationship - your life doesn't become your relationship.

## **The One Who Disappears Without Notice**

Breakups are one of the most tragic things to go through, especially when you were so in love. The disappearance breakup, however, leaves you feeling restless and stuck inside your head. When someone cuts you out of their life without notice, it can leave you feeling empty and looking for answers. I had personally gone through this. Someone very dear to me had out of nowhere, chose to distance from me and my life. It was excruciatingly painful not knowing the true reason as to why they chose to distance themselves, and to this day I really don't know- I may never know. When someone abruptly leaves your life you don't have time to ask questions. They disconnect from you and you're left confused as to why. You're stuck inside of your head trying to connect the dots and see where you went wrong, but the reality is some things just aren't meant to last. If someone was foolish enough to cut you out, have the courage to respect their decision and move on with your life. If someone truly wanted to be a part of your journey, trust me, they'd show you.

You may be wondering what exactly to do when a situation like this arises, and the best thing I can tell you is to not chase after this person and hound them with questions. I had made the mistake to try to contact this person on multiple occasions, telling them how much I missed them and cared for them. Their response was less than fulfilling and I realized that this person just didn't want me in their life anymore. Sometimes it's as simple as that Cherish the memories you made but have enough dignity to walk away with confidence and elegance. After realizing that this person just wasn't worth my time, I started focusing on me and my life. This breakup is

meant to be a lesson to your life. Learn from your relationships, don't hold them against you and don't harbor resentment towards them. Love can be bittersweet, but that doesn't mean you give up on it. Most importantly do not give up on yourself because someone walked away from your life. Pick yourself up and heal your heart. Do not chase after someone who ran away from you in the first place. Trust that this breakup will lead to greater opportunities in your life. Who knows, maybe someday you'll be able to get back to those questions and actually get the answers you deserve. By then you would've already blossomed and spread your wings — you may never need to ask them at all.

### **Addictive Love**

“Mysterious, lost, centered, but home.”

Addictive love awakens you. You are tangled in the heat of your emotions even though you know they are toxic to you. This person evokes such deep and passionate sensations in your soul. You imagine an eternity with them and you're drawn to the idea of loving them. Although you're madly in love, this sort of relationship creates an enormous amount of chaos. You are constantly battling your heart and your mind — the heart wants what it wants, but your mind can no longer take the pain of being with this person.

My body ached in his love and I pulled myself closer. His darkness fed on my light, and I believed that love was pain. I melted in his palms. He knew how to loosen my spine with his sweet words and lustful stares. I craved his affection and he craved me. He tore me apart to feed himself, and I was left broken. I wanted to go home, but I realized that I tried too hard to build a home inside of a heart that did not have enough space for me. His love grew in my insecurities and my love grew in his insanity. I loved him more than I loved myself. He pulled me with dreams, whispering beautiful visions of swans and stars, but I was breaking. I couldn't breathe when he held me in his arms. I loved him more than I loved myself. I was a child tugging on the corners of his heart, wishing to be seen, wishing to be loved. I buried myself in the idea that I would spend centuries with him. He was an artist, but he was blind — he was never capable of

seeing me.

### **Intimacy and Affection**

Intimacy and affection are important components that allow for you and your partner to feel physically and emotionally closer to one another. There are many forms of intimacy.

Whether that be sexual intimacy or emotional intimacy, it's crucial that you take your time.

Allow yourself to grow into your relationship if this is someone you truly see yourself with long-term.

When you are sexually intimate with someone, it's important that you are first and foremost comfortable with what is going on. You must first trust that this person has your best interest and will nurture your body and your emotions before, during and after the process of what you are about to do. It is also important that you feel confident in your own skin. If you have the slightest bit of doubt or insecurity, stop what you are doing. No person is worth doing something that you'd regret later on. Sexual pleasure can be addictive. Everyone has their own values when it comes to relationships, and it's important that you align yourself with your values and your standards — whether that be having sex as soon as possible or waiting it out until you are comfortable. There is no pressure to do something that you do not want to do.

If your partner, on the other hand, is adamant about being intimate with you physically, prepare to ask yourself one very important question: is this person worth losing my standards for? If you have to loosen up your standards and morals in the first place then this person is not for you. Compromise is a key component that keeps relationships afloat, but when it comes to sexual intimacy, your partner and you must understand that no means no. You cannot

compromise on vulnerability — things like that may stick with you for the rest of your life. You should never ever feel pressured to do something you aren't ready to do, especially from someone who tells you that they love you. If someone truly loves you, they will respect you and your personal boundaries. Do not compromise on your morals or your standards for someone who does not respect them.

On the other hand, emotional intimacy is gradual. As you grow into a relationship you find yourself becoming more and more vulnerable. You begin to indulge in deep conversation and deep thought with your partner, exposing parts of yourself that you normally wouldn't with those you do not trust. When you are completely vulnerable with your partner, the truest and purest forms of who you are shine brightly. You are confident and secure in your relationship, so much so, that you are able to speak your mind freely. You aren't afraid of your partner's judgment because you know that no matter what, they will accept you for who you are. Intimacy allows us to open our deepest selves within our relationship. When we truly feel that we are accepted and loved by our partner, it becomes easier to open ourselves emotionally and physically to them. Trust is an important factor when it comes to intimacy. You become vulnerable to those you trust the most because you are confident that they will accept you and nurture you, rather than look away in disgust and rejection. Trust yourself enough to know when you are ready to be truly intimate with your partner. There is no rush, nor is there any force when it comes to love. Just like how a flower blooms on its own, allow yourself to blossom within your relationship at the right time, knowing that it is the right person for the right reasons.

## **How to Handle Arguments and Conflict**

Everyone has a different approach to handling arguments and conflicts. Some people find safety in pulling away from their partner, while others are fierce and enjoy dealing with conflict eye to eye. Whatever it may be, it is important to recognize you and your partner's way of dealing with conflict. It is easier to navigate through a situation when you are aware with how you and your partner both collectively handle them. Take note of what your partner does when you are on the cusp of a heated argument. Do they pull away and need their own space? Do they enjoy dealing with the conflict right here and right now? Do they seem disinterested in the argument altogether? Are they pulling blames on you from one corner to the next? Or are they simply listening to you because they're tongue-tied? We all have our own set of personalities that dictate how we handle and deal with arguments. If we are able to consciously put in the effort to understand how our partner handles arguments it becomes easier for us to diffuse and properly handle the situation.

Most of us worry so much about getting our point across that we forget there is someone else who is also being affected by the situation. We want to be heard, and we want to be understood, so much so that it may come at the expense of our understanding and empathizing with our partner. The difficulty of conflict is that both parties want to feel understood. They seek validation that their argument and their emotions are being heard. Selfishness does not remedy a situation; if anything it expands the wound. It is not what you fight about, it is how you and your partner fight and deal with conflict.



My previous partner and I would dissolve into arguments on a constant basis. Our habits were set in stone, and instead of trying to understand one another, we constantly blamed one another. We never healed our conflicts because we worried so much about getting our own points across instead of worrying about how we should defuse the situation. He enjoyed dealing with conflict head on, whereas I needed my own space to process the situation and come back. We were complete opposites when it came to handling conflict. We suffered because we failed to understand one another. He would pursue conversation and I would pull away. I believed he was being too forceful because he was pushy, and he thought I did not care because I pulled away. We would talk for hours on end about our situation, but we never came to a peaceful conclusion. How you fight with your partner says a lot about your relationship. Me and him were always on edge with one another, and it proved correct that me and him were ultimately incompatible because we failed to understand one another no matter how hard we tried. We were trapped inside of our relationship — you shouldn't feel trapped in the first place. Love should set you free. Love should let you grow. You and your partner must fight against the problem instead of fighting against each other — you both must behave like a team. At the end of the day, your love for this person should triumph all conflict and pain. You choose to love this person, meaning that you are willing to bear the burden of this conflict with them.

Making the conscious effort to work with one another is one of the greatest realizations that you can come to when establishing a strong relationship. You should not dispose of your partner's feelings, nor should you try to retaliate against them — treat them the way you want to be treated. If either one of you is in pain it will greatly reflect in your relationship and you will suffer having to constantly be at battle with one another. Empathize with your partner, and work

with each other instead of against each other. Trust your relationship enough to give it your conscious effort in trying to understand your partner even in the most difficult of times.

### **Taking Breaks Within a Relationship**

As you blossom into your relationship it is important to understand that change is the only constant. As your time within a relationship increases, you find yourself interpreting internal signals and questions whether this person is truly “the one” for you. This completely normal process can lead to suffering for both you and your partner. You may try to suppress such emotions in fears that your relationship will feel the abrasive stings of doubt and insecurity. However, it is crucial that you tread with caution as you go through these chaotic emotions. In some cases, the best thing you can do is take a “break” from your partner and your relationship. Taking breaks within in a relationship is like trying to grow a red rose in desert soil- you risk starving this beautiful relationship that you carefully grew with both your bare hands. That is why it is important to treat these heavy decisions delicately. You cannot stir conflict by throwing around the taunt of “taking a break” with your partner-be careful what you wish for.

Taking a break from your partner can lead to many uncertain outcomes. Relationships may thrive from this brief separation, allowing both individuals within the relationship to develop themselves and their lives. You and your partner both become stronger and fall back into each other’s arms with grace and solidarity. On the other hand, taking a break may just do the opposite. You may find yourself enjoying this bittersweet distance from your partner- a major signal that you are much happier outside of the relationship than you are in it. This altering reality may make you question your relationship and your intentions of going back to your partner. If you are much happier outside of your relationship than you are in it, it is safe to say

that it is better to be single and content than in a relationship and miserable. The gap between the beginning of a break and the reconciliation between you and your partner is a very soft space. What you pursue and do within that time can make a great impact on your relationship and the foundation you have built.

On the other hand, if you and your partner seem to be going through a rough patch that is making you consider taking a break, then I highly suggest that you and your partner collectively work together to unearth the root of your bad habits. Communication is key in a relationship. However, I am very aware of the acidic cage of a toxic relationship. In some cases, you'll never be able to thoroughly communicate about the issue at hand when you or your partner fail to understand one another. It is a sad reality to work so passionately towards a relationship that is hollow on communication. In this case, I suggest that you weigh your desires: your relationship or your sanity. You are the creator of your life and know that your decisions should never fall short in making you happy.

I recall taking a break from my partner after I realized how traumatized I was by the constant battle between our love and our bad habits. Our bad habits won. It was one of the most dreadful decisions I had ever made because I was still so in love. It was painful and necessary. Being the one to pull the thread between you and your partner can leave you feeling hollow and guilty. I remember feeling so much guilt for making the decision that I did, but I knew that there was no other way out of the chaos we had both caused one another. After time had passed, we had eventually gotten back together. However, we quickly relapsed into our old bad habits. Change is the only constant in life, and the guy that I had once adored with all of my soul had ended up

withering away into a bitter memory. Trust your decisions, and have confidence in your heart- you'd be surprised by how reliable the intuition is.

### **The Dangers of an “On & Off” Relationship**

Going through the waves of an “on & off” relationship can leave you emotionally and mentally drained. The dangers of having an “on & off” relationship are the unhealthy, repetitive cycle of falling back in and out of love. In moments of anger, we may pursue the idea of breaking up with our significant other even though deep down we know we are speaking from emotions rather than desire. We have our partner's best interest, but our tongues get the best of us.

Going through an “on & off” relationship can leave you emotionally scarred. You are in a tug of war between your tongue and your emotions and you must speak from love rather than from anger. We can say a handful of things to our partner during heated arguments, but remember you and your partner are working together against the problem, not against each other. When you or your partner make such hasty decisions, there will undoubtedly be consequences. As you continue to make impulsive decisions within your relationship;, you risk losing trust, intimacy and even the relationship altogether. It is a noble cause to fight for the one you love, but there is a limit when it comes to being tangled in the webs of an “on & off” relationship.

When caught in this web, it is important to take a step back and evaluate yourself and your relationship. Step outside of yourself, and look at your relationship with fresh eyes. Ask yourself and your heart whether being in an “on & off” relationship is truly worth sacrificing your emotional and mental well-being. Being in an “on & off” relationship is severely draining.

You are constantly battling your partner in never-ending arguments and loopholes that lead you nowhere near reconciliation and compromise.

My previous partner and I had been plagued by the sickness of an “on & off” relationship. We suffered for our constant tug of war between breaking up and getting back together. Most of our relationship consisted of stressful arguments and never ending temper tantrums. Being in an “on & off” relationship scarred both of us emotionally. I noticed that after the constant cycle of breaking up and getting back together, our faith and trust in one another diminished- we began acting out of fear instead of love. We feared to lose each other and our fears made us weaker both individually and within our relationship. Our souls began to decay, and eventually, there was nothing but a thread of love holding our relationship together, but even that had been cut loose by the trauma of our actions and the pain we caused on another. Stay away from triggering an “on & off” relationship. Strengthen your relationship by growing your foundation of love. Being in an “on & off” relationship will weaken the bed of roses you and your partner both planted together. Be mindful of your words. Speak from your heart, not impulse.

### **Toxic and Abusive Relationships**

There is no greater devastation than being in a toxic or abusive relationship. A relationship that is toxic is abusive, and a relationship that is abusive is toxic. Nobody deserves to go through the aches of this type of relationship. A toxic and abusive relationship is a relationship that serves no purpose to you or your love. It tears down your heart, your soul, and your mind. You are constantly caught in the threads of manipulation, deceit, and heartache.

There are many forms of abuse, including mental abuse and physical abuse. Physical abuse is the action of insecurity. This type of partner finds validation in the pain they cause you. They believe that they are superior to you and try establishing that superiority through means of violence — they have a large ego and a small mind. In many cases, the abusive partner gets away with this abuse by manipulating the abused through guilt. The abused sees this as a testimony against the love they have for their abuser. As a result, they try to validate their love for their abuser by taking the blame for something they did not do. This leads to an unhealthy cycle of abuse that leaves the abuser in power and the abused at the feet of this power. The same goes for mental abuse. This disgusting cycle can take many forms. You do not deserve to be mistreated. Love is powerful, but being loved shouldn't inspire a mistreatment of that power.

Attachment to someone can also lead the abused to come back and swallow the pain their partner causes them. They may have no choice, as they are now dependent upon their abuser to fulfill them. The truth of the matter is that you should never feel like you have to settle for someone. Your wild dreams of having a loving and fulfilling relationship are at the reach of your palms. Fear of losing your partner should never make you feel like you should settle for this abuse. Your partner is incapable of giving you the love you deserve, and it is wiser to let go of the chains of this abuse than to cling on in hopes that your partner will change or that they will change the way they see you. Their abuse towards you is a reinforcement of their power — a power that they establish through their insecurities.

After being with my partner for quite some time, I recognized how I was conditioned to believe that every single disaster that had happened to us was a result of my incapability to understand him and support him. I had given my heart to this guy. My soul had become a rag to

wipe away his tears. Nothing I could have done would ever make him happy. Making him truly happy would risk me losing myself, and that was a chance I was not willing to take. He constantly reminded me of my weaknesses, claiming that “nobody could ever love me the way he did” and that he knew “ I would always come running back to him”. It was a sickly routine that harmed my self-esteem, my capability to love and my perception of love. I felt hollow, and I felt alone. Nothing could cure my sadness and my sickly attachment to him. People had warned me a handful of times, but the heart wants what it wants and my heart was blind. I felt trapped in the chains of his insecurity. He did not love me; he loved manipulating me because it validated his self-worth and his power. He did not care for my tears, nor did he ever hear my outcries. He thought of himself, and how losing me would diminish this security of power that he thought he had over me. This relationship left me devastated for a long time. I had lost sense of who I was and it took me a long time to look at myself in the mirror. I had allowed this person to manipulate my love. It took me a lot of strength to move on and put my foot down. I am proud to say that I am a survivor of a toxic relationship. I haven't looked back since. The two greatest lessons I have learned from being in a toxic relationship is my capacity to love and my strength in never allowing someone to do that to me ever again. Trust your wounds, you are your greatest healer- the universe is watching.

**The Broken Heart**

my soul was pulled

out of my body

I ached in the fever of your love

forcing myself to swallow

the carcasses of decaying passion

I had lost myself trying to find you

I couldn't digest the loose threads

of my broken heart

I starved in your arms

as you fed

on my dreams and desires

your kisses captured

every drop of strength

I had left

in the hollow curves of my shadow

I had sewn my heart onto my sleeve

and you unseamed me

exposing the tragedy

that a love like yours



would never fulfill me

5

### **Self-Love**

“I am the creator and the creation”

#### **The Art, Power, and Practices of Self-Love**

Love can both heal and destroy the soul. After sacrificing your heart fearlessly, you may find that the place where your heart used to be has become a hollow carcass of painful memories and broken dreams. Your negative experiences in love and in your relationships have made you incapable of loving wholeheartedly and truly. You are afraid of falling in love, and of the damage, love can cause to you and your well-being — especially when you have found yourself in the tender soft spots of being in an unhealthy relationship. The greatest way to soothe the aches of our abandoned heart is to embrace ourselves with open arms. The art, power, and practices of self-love allow you to conquer the roots of love buried within the depths your heart. The art of self-love is a formless masterpiece. There are endless possibilities and ways that you can make your heart sing. Whether you heal your wounds physically, spiritually or mentally, the main goal is to create a flourishing bed of love and comfortably between your heart, your mind and your soul. Self-love is an art form because it takes patience and passion to create. You are licking your own wounds instead of drowning them in the depths of an unfulfilling relationship. You must nurture and honor yourself the same way you would nurture and honor your partner. Your internal attitude greatly affects your external circumstances. If you are constantly putting

salt to your wounds you will never find the roots of your potential. You are a flower waiting to blossom. Your petals are waiting to be stretched in the eternal sunlight of endless love and compassion. Do not starve yourself of self-love.

There is great power in being able to make a home out of your own bones and flesh. It takes a fierce soul to be able to look into the eyes of their doubts, fears, and insecurities. It is a journey not for the faint of heart. You have to dive deeply into your soul, and fearlessly accept yourself. Self-love is powerful. Being comfortable in your soul, skin, and heart emulates a feeling of eternal fulfillment. You are the one living inside of your body. Your feet have dug into your soul. It is important to be comfortable in them than live your whole life living in fear of who you are. Express yourself fearlessly. Accept yourself fearlessly. You carry life in your breath and you carry life in your chest. Do not allow the traumas of the past and of love steal your potential of becoming whole within yourself.

The practice of self-love is a journey dedicated to growing your soul. Naturally, you are supposed to feel good. Whatever may light your soul, it is important to practice self-love and self-healing by doing the things that fulfill you the most. Taking out the time to truly lavish in the realms of your heart and soul is a beautiful gift that you can give yourself. Whether it be through meditation, exercise or even painting, take the time out to revive your heart. Fall back in love with yourself before you throw your heart to someone else. Being confident in who you are allows you to experience the gems of being in a healthy relationship. Constantly battling with yourself will only harm your relationships going forward. When you establish a foundation within yourself, you no longer seek approval or validation from others. You are driven by the essence of who you are rather than the poisons of what the world thinks you are.

After being devastated over and over again, I realized that I had to take a pause and stop looking for myself in other people. Being in relationships and trying to fulfill those around me simply suppressed the potential of who I knew I was. I was caged in a place of insecurity, fear, and doubt. The chains were heavy, and being pinned down by the expectations of others only weighed heavier on my soul. I felt like I couldn't breathe. My body gave in and couldn't handle the wounds I carried — many of those wounds weren't even mine. I tried to carry the world on my shoulders, and I suffered feeling empty in my own body. I didn't recognize my own reflection anymore. I had to heal every thread in my soul. It was a journey I knew I had to take alone. After being helplessly pushed down by those that failed to see my soul, I realized that I had to take my life into my own hands. I had to change my perspective and grow into the woman I knew I would always become -a woman draped in the silk of self-love and confidence.

I healed my soul the same way a flower grows. I showered myself with love, I immersed myself in sunlight, and I planted my roots in the fertile soil of my faith. It takes time to beautifully bloom into yourself. Self-love is a gradual process and it is a journey of indulgence. Indulge in the realms of your soul. Indulge in the hobbies that light your soul on fire. Indulge in strengthening your heart and your body. Indulge in loving yourself. These harsh experiences are meant to shape you into a greater version of yourself. Do not succumb to the devastation of those who fail to see your value. Do not allow anyone to take your fire. Trust that becoming whole within yourself will lead you to a love that is more whole than you could ever imagine.

**True Love**

“Millions of experiences in an ageless mind”

True love never ceases to fulfill and enrich your soul. It soothes your wounds and heals your sorrows. You feel tangled in the warmth of your partner, and for the first time, everything falls into place. Your heart settles into your partner’s soft kisses and comforting gaze. Their soul feels like home. True love takes time and patience. You prosper together instead of struggling against each other. You understand one another. Your words melt into each other's minds and everything flows with ease. Both of your hearts are brimming with respect for one another. True love watches you grow. It heals your petals, feeds your stem and showers you with daylight. Trust that after the storm, true love will follow.

I see myself in him. He holds my heart when it's heavy. I see love in his eyes, and I taste love on his lips. I feel his heartbeat when I'm close to him and his smile awakens sunrises in my soul. My hands were made to hold his. He and I seamlessly fell for one another, and he is my peace- a gentle wave crashing along the shores of my eternity. There is nothing more that I need knowing that he is by my side. He inspires me every single day to be better than the person that I was yesterday. When he looks at me, his deep brown eyes are brimming with adoration. I've never felt a love like this before.

## **Connections**

Relationships prosper through mutual connection and understanding. It is exciting to watch your relationship blossom and unfold during its early stages. You and your partner both bathe in the sunrise of a new beginning — it truly is a beautiful experience. You and your partner are drawn to one another, and it is important to strengthen your bond between you and your partner. There are many forms of connection, and in certain instances, the type of connection you have can determine the longevity of your relationship.

A purely physical connection with your partner can drive you insanely in love. Your body is inspired by sweet lust. You crave your partner and their affection. A physical connection is physically fulfilling, but it starves the connections of the soul and the mind. Lust is a powerful emotion. It is a beautiful emotion that gives birth to vulnerability and intimacy, but it is also a craving that aches. A purely physical connection with your partner will not sustain you. It may draw you to their lips, but it will distance you from their heart.

A connection driven by the mind, however, is a connection that strengthens the understanding between you and your partner. Powerful communication between you and your partner can be the sweetest pleasures. It is truly a glorious feeling to know that you and your partner both mutually feel one another's presence. Being connected to your partner's mind can feel more pleasurable than being connected to your partner's body. The mind is a vast capsule containing the fibers of your beliefs, ideas and deepest desires. When your partner touches your mind, you feel understood. Their warm embrace makes you feel accepted. You find comfort in this connection because you know that everything inside of your mind is loved and accepted in its entirety. This is also where intellectual conversation strikes. You and your partner have

established a connection deeply impacted by intellectual stimulation. People love to feel connected to one another. It's a natural foundation that allows for growth within a relationship. There are also connections stronger than those of the mind — the soul. A soulful connection with your partner is the greatest form of intimacy that goes beyond touching the body and feeling the mind. You are deeply intertwined with your partner on a frequency that only you and your partner can understand. You and your partner simply love one another because of who you are. There are no discrepancies, nor are there any conditions to this type of connection. Simply being yourself is what manifests in a soulful connection between you and your partner. They love you because you're you. It goes beyond your beliefs, your ideas and your body. A soulful connection is a complete and mutual acceptance between you and your partner. You and your partner melt into each other's souls almost perfectly. Your heart sees its reflection in your partner. The most important thing is to maintain balance between all three of these connections. Imbalances between the body, the mind, and the soul can lead to chaos.

### **Learning How to Fall Again**

It can be a tedious to fall in love again. The depths of heartache can echo in your ears for a lifetime, making you vulnerable to love. It is only natural that after being in so many unsuccessful relationships that we begin to fear love. We close off our hearts because we are afraid that our future will only be a reflection of our past. I am here to tell you that it's not love you should be afraid of — it is the lack of love that should make your heart rattle. You cannot turn to the moon for warmth. No matter how far you try to run away, your heart will always ache for the Sun- the Sun being love. Do not deprive yourself of love simply because you are afraid.

Fear is poisonous to our potential. Whether we believe it or not, love is a universal rhythm that beats within all of our hearts. It is okay to fall in love again.

I was in a very toxic relationship. I felt stuck, misunderstood and alone. It took me a great amount of courage to let him go and realize that I deserved a relationship that would fulfill me, not drain me. Soon after, almost by chance, I met a miracle who brought light back into my life. He washed away the darkness of my past by unconditionally choosing to grow with me. He chose to love me with patience. He nurtured my soul back to health and reminded me of my potential. I bathed in his love. He kissed my wounds with his affection. It felt as if fate brought him to me to remind me of what I deserved- this guy felt like home. He made my heart happy, and he put me first. He wasn't afraid to dive into the depths of my soul. It felt surreal to have met someone who made me feel so alive and so comfortable. Although he fulfilled me in many ways, I hesitated. I was afraid to fall in love again and give my heart away. I feared that he would become just like my ex, that all the warmth he gave me would melt away and reveal a loveless face. This fear swelled inside of my heart. It became a tug of war between love and fear, and fear had won many battles.

A part of me, however, wanted to fall. I want to fall in love with him and dive deeply into the roots of our potential. Our souls melted into one another, and I was undeniably drawn to him. I had to wash away my fears of love to finally fall again. I had to recognize that my ex and my future were two separate people who had their own flaws, habits and personalities. When I slowly recoiled from my fears, clarity fell upon my eyes. I knew that deep down, I wanted to take a chance and fall in love again, or at least someday. I realized that there was nothing that I could do to change my past. I cannot change the situation, but I can change my reaction to the

situation. I chose to change my perspective of love. I may not have been in the healthiest relationship with my ex, but I did learn from it and that in itself is a blessing. I learned about my deep capacity to love. I learned how to sacrifice for love and I learned what it truly means to be loved. I took that chance to fall in love again, knowing that me walking into the future meant me letting go of my past. Trust yourself enough to fall — you may find yourself in the arms of true love.

### **The One**

We all emphasize the importance of finding the one — the one being our ultimate partner in life who perfectly fits into the mold of our lives and our hearts. We strive and leap at the idea that finding the one, but truth is, there is no such thing as “the one”. We are constantly changing and evolving as people. Who we were five years ago is completely unparalleled to who we are today. Within a span of time, our personalities, our beliefs and even our preferences change. I believe that every partner and relationship that has come into our lives has come for a purpose, therefore there are many people that we could label as “the one”. The person I was in a relationship with two years ago came into my life for a purpose, and he met me at a different point in my life than the point I am in now. He fell in love with a part of me, but I have evolved and that part of me is no longer there. He came into my life at the perfect time, and he left at the perfect time. He was “the one” for that version of me, but he is no longer “the one” for me today. Indulge in the person that you are today, and understand that life is everlasting change. Many people will light up your heart, but that isn’t to say that someone won’t light up your heart for an



eternity. We all find love at different stages of our lives, and what matters is that we love with all of our hearts instead of chasing after an idea of what love is supposed to look like.

## A Letter to Love

dear love

you breathe down my neck

and into my heart

pulsing with passion and pain

I've felt your hands untie the thick

vines of my spine

you love watching me cry

as i bathe in the sorrows of my vulnerability

I ache to love and to be loved

I've spilled into so many souls

the moment I surrender to the mouth of my lover

you pull me back

into the hollow realm of misery

I've been bitten by cupid's bow

and I fear that I will never find you

you torment me

with your sweet illusions

and kaleidoscopic promises

when will I be able to say

that love finally

set me free?



