



# HOW TO MOVE ON AFTER A BREAKUP



W O R K B O O K



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LESSON 1

# WHY BREAKUPS HURT

## WHY BREAKUPS HURT

Whether you're the one on the receiving end or the one pulling the plug on the relationship, one thing is for certain; breaking up is hard to do and one of the few things in life that doesn't seem to get easier with practice. In this course, we'll provide a practical guide to help you heal your heart and move on after a breakup.

## WHY BREAKUPS HURT

Ever wondered why breaking up hurts? Research has also found that social rejection stimulates the same neural pathways activated when we sense actual physical pain. FMRI studies also show that breaking up triggers the dopamine system the brain associated with addiction and pleasure, making the person on the receiving end of the breakup temporarily obsessed and causing behaviour to spiral obsessively out of control. This chemical cocktail means you can't sleep, eat or think about anything other than the person who dumped you and so the period of Facebook stalking, staring at old photos, eating your own body weight in ice-cream and the cluster calls (a call to their mobile and landline followed by a text) begins.

We may know better, but our hard wiring makes staying away from the person who left very difficult if not impossible (at least for a period of time). Reminiscing over old photos, checking social media updates, calling their phone and going through old messages can stop you from moving on and keep you physiologically and emotionally stuck in the past.





LESSON 2

# STEPPING INTO ACCEPTANCE

## STEPPING INTO ACCEPTANCE

One of the hardest things about a relationship ending (particularly when it wasn't your idea), is believing that it's over and imagining the rest of your life without them in it. You're perfect together and it's only a matter of time before they come to senses, right?

It's tempting to hold onto the fantasy for months even years, of them sweeping back into your life, begging you for forgiveness with their tail between his legs. But unfortunately, in most cases that's just wishful thinking. Breaking up with someone isn't a spare of the moment thing, it's often something that's been on their mind for weeks, months or perhaps even longer, whilst they built up the courage (and tried to find the right way) to break up with you.

If they've broken up with you it's because they saw major flaws in your relationship even if you didn't. They might change their mind but they might not and holding out hope prevents you from healing and moving on with your life and keeps you firmly stuck in the past and playing the 'what if' or 'if only' game. If only I'd been more attentive, given them more sex, hadn't changed, lost those ten kilos...

It's not easy to hear (especially if you were married or have children together) but in order to stay sane (and perhaps get them back) you need to accept that the relationship might be over and take action and get on with your life as soon as you can. You're not going to get over them if you spend every nanosecond dreaming of getting them back, secretly willing the phone to ring, stalking them on Facebook or wearing out the receive button on your email. The sooner you take regain control of your life the sooner you'll heal and the more attractive you'll be (let's face it, neediness is not attractive, they're more likely to want you if they think you don't need them and sees you getting on with your life and having a great time).

It may sound clichéd but it's true, living a great life is the best revenge.





LESSON 3

# WHAT STOPS US FROM MOVING ON?



# WHAT STOPS US FROM MOVING ON?

## THERE ARE NUMEROUS FACTORS THAT CAN MAKE IT HARD TO MOVE ON AFTER A BREAKUP, BUT THE MAIN CULPRITS ARE:

**Playing the what it, if only game:** This keeps you well and truly stuck in the past and from there you cannot move on.

**Believing that they were your soulmate:** Losing someone you love is hard enough, but research shows that convincing yourself that they were the love of your life/soulmate and believing that you'll never find anyone else like them makes it harder for you to move on.

**Not allowing yourself enough space to heal:** Whether it's jumping into a rebound relationship/fling, looking over old photos or obsessively checking out their social media profiles, not allowing yourself time to heal is a recipe for heartbreak. This is a time for you to nurture and nourish yourself surrounded by those who love and accept you and to process your emotions.

**Blaming Yourself:** It's common for people to play the blame game after a relationship. There's something wrong with me, I'm broken, What did I do wrong? The truth is, relationships end and sometimes they just run their course. And whilst it's important for you to take responsibility for your part in the relationship and what went wrong, blaming yourself for everything that went wrong isn't healthy and can negatively impact your self-esteem.

**Not wanting to give up the emotional security and friendship:** Relationships can be hard to let go, particularly when there is a strong emotional attachment or when you're still madly in love and it can be tempting to stay in a quasi-relationship post breakup. Where you're not together, but still very much attached.

## EXERCISE

It's time to take off your rose coloured glasses and reflect back on your relationship. If you're not ready to do this now, that's okay. Come back to it when you're ready.

What were the issues in your relationship?

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Which of your needs weren't fulfilled?

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What areas caused problems for you as a couple?

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What did you give up for your partner?

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LESSON 4

# PRACTICAL TIPS TO HELP YOU MOVE ON



# PRACTICAL TIPS TO HELP YOU MOVE ON

Let's get practical with some tips to help you move on.

**Housekeeping:** It's time to create space both physically and emotionally.

1. Take down the photos of them in your apartment, screensaver and wallet, (keeping your house like a shrine isn't going to help you get over them) and pack away (or give back) anything that belonged to them or any gifts from them. Things hold memories that can keep you firmly attached to that person or take you right back to that time when you felt very much in love.
2. Change your routine. Over time, emotional experiences and memories can embed themselves in our routines. Changing when and how you do things (like going to the gym after work instead of in the morning) will help you to feel in control and start afresh without everything reminding you of them.
3. Go through your diary and cancel any events where you might bump into them.
4. Make a pros and cons list - Listing the cons of being in that relationship (and taking them back) and the pros of being newly single. Be honest
5. Delete their phone number from your phone (if you can). If you need to, give your phone to a friend to stop you from calling at 3am begging to be taken back.
6. Give yourself closure by having a goodbye ritual as a form of closure. Write a letter to them that you then burn or throw away.
7. Make a list of 15 things that make you a great catch and stick them on to your fridge.



LESSON 5

# GETTING OVER A BREAKUP ACCORDING TO SCIENCE

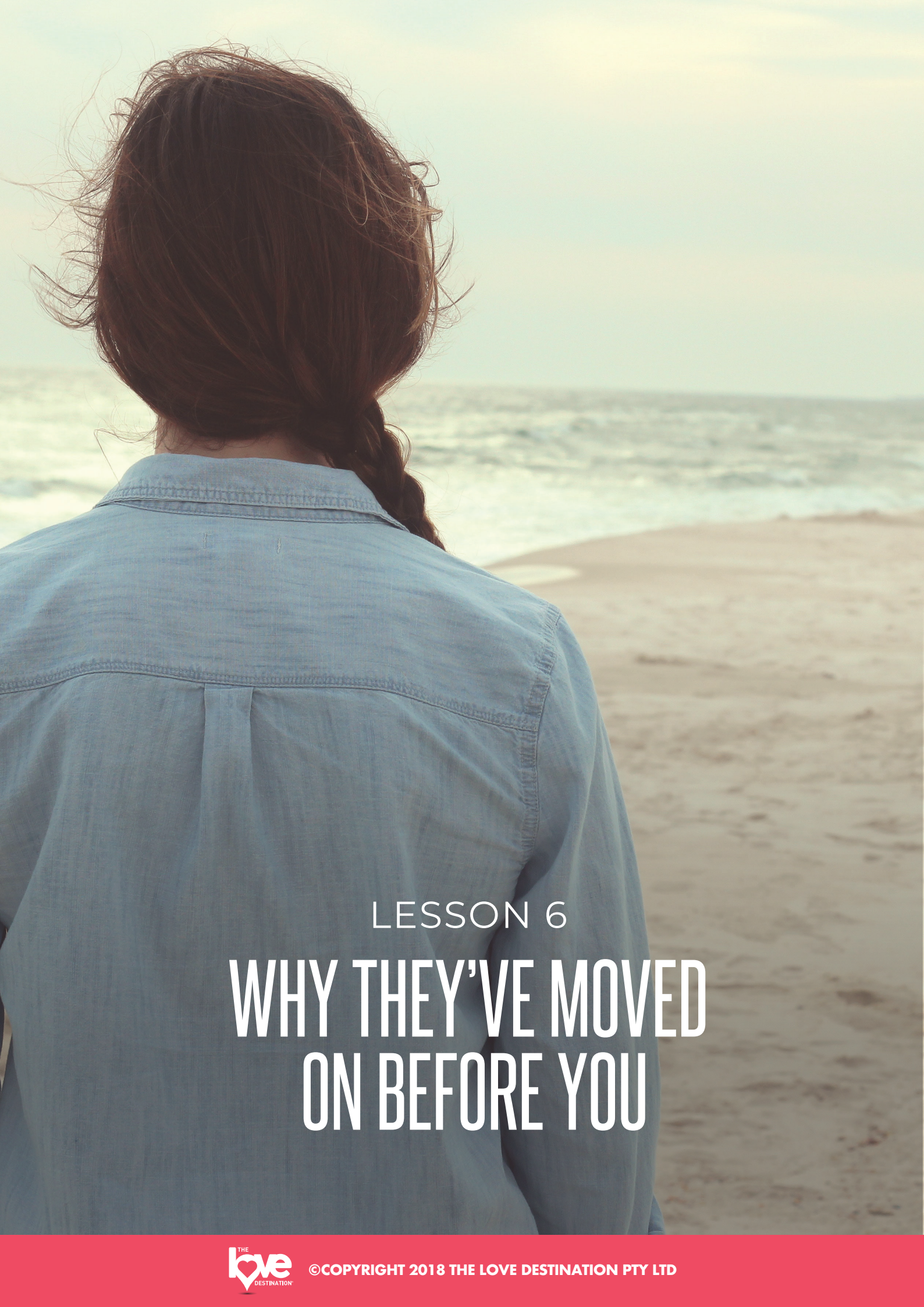


## GETTING OVER A BREAKUP ACCORDING TO SCIENCE

A study published in the Journal of Experimental Psychology explored the cognitive strategies used to get over a breakup. The researchers separated the participants into four groups. The first group was asked to negatively reappraise their partner, that is focus on their faults. The second group was asked to accept how they felt and to put a positive spin on the emotions that they were experiencing. The third group was asked to use distraction to help them move on, whilst the forth or control group weren't given any instructions.

So what did they find? All three strategies helped reduce emotional arousal, however, only negative appraisal reduced feelings of love.





LESSON 6

# WHY THEY'VE MOVED ON BEFORE YOU



# WHY THEY'VE MOVED ON BEFORE YOU

Regardless of who you are, losing someone you love is painful, and seeing them with someone new can feel like a double blow. So why is that they've moved on but you're still grieving.

**The person who ended the relationship has already had time to process their emotions.** Whilst the breakup may or may not have come as a surprise, in most cases it's not a spare of the moment thing. But rather, something that has been building. Therefore, your ex-partner has already had time to process the loss and grief associated with a breakup.

**Men and women tend to deal with pain and grief differently.** Whilst some may think that men move on quicker than women and therefore feel less pain, studies found no significant difference between men and women when it comes to the negative emotions associated with breakups.

Heartbreak doesn't discriminate, however, we all deal with that pain and grief differently. Men and women experience and cope with stressors differently. Whilst women are more likely to rate a stressor as more stressful than men, they tend to place more emphasis on social support and interpersonal relationships and are more likely to use more coping mechanisms and seek social support after a breakup.

Men are more likely than women to use distraction or denial as a coping mechanism in the wake of a stressful event and after a breakup that can mean jumping straight into a casual hookup or relationship. In fact, research shows that whilst women may remain celibate for a period of time after a breakup, men are more likely to engage in sexual relationships following a breakup.

Whilst expressing how you feel can help you heal, women can get stuck in a cycle of rumination as they go over and over what went wrong; keeping them firmly stuck in the past and playing the 'what if' or 'if only' game. (If only I'd been more attentive, given him more sex, hadn't changed, lost those ten kilos...). Men on the other hand, tend to be more practical and spring into action. So rather than caving your head in about what went wrong, perhaps it's time to reinvest in you.