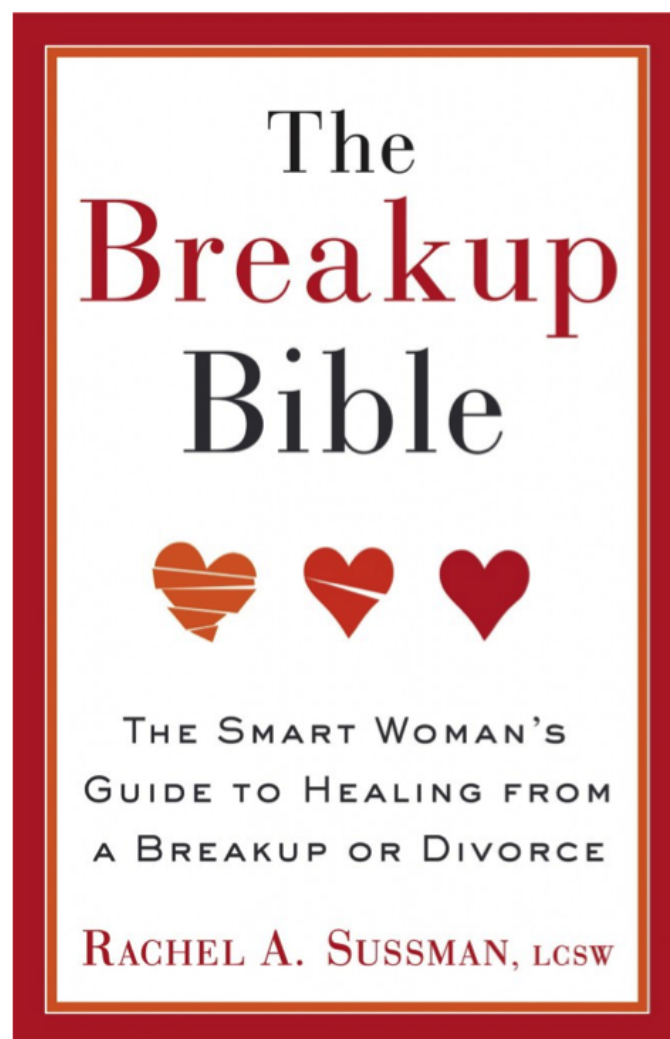


RACHEL A. SUSSMAN HELPS US RECOVER AFTER A BREAKUP IN 'THE BREAKUP BIBLE'



By Nisha Ramirez

It's easy to find a book about searching for your soulmate or discover-

ing the rules of dating, but where do you turn to after an excruciating breakup? Have no fear, psychotherapist and breakup expert, Rachel A. Sussman, LCSW, has your guide to healing, understanding and transforming your life after a broken heart. In her new book, *The Breakup Bible: The Smart Woman's Guide to Healing From a Breakup or Divorce*, she tells her readers how to create a personal love map and take the steps needed to get over an ex. We had the chance to speak with Sussman, who has counseled women in all stages of heartache and recovery, about her work and the importance of perseverance after a failed romance.

Tell us about *The Breakup Bible: The Smart Woman's Guide to Healing From a Breakup or Divorce*.

My program lets women heal in a building-block fashion. The first section is healing, which explains why it is so important to take the time after your breakup and just settle into your emotions. I think the biggest mistake is to make plans 24/7 and start dating right away. People stop taking care of themselves. That's only going to prolong your agony and lengthen your healing time. Instead, accept that it has happened and build a support system. That's the most important thing for a woman to do: build a really big support system. Rely on family and friends and, if possible, even colleagues, professional therapists, support groups and clergy. Everyone can then use the understanding and transformation sections to create their love map.

Related: [How Decoding Your Love Map Can Heal a Broken Heart](#)

Why did you write this book?

I wrote this book because, in addition to being someone's best friend or wake-up call, I wanted to give validation to my readers. They are not alone. There are millions of break-ups and divorces every year in this country, and there is a sisterhood of women out there who have experienced a similar suffering. If you're in a relationship and that relationship ends – your significant other cheats on you, lies to you or tells you that he or she doesn't love you anymore – it's like sticking a knife through your heart. It feels like you're going to die, and it feels like you're never going to recover.

Is it okay to be angry with your ex after a break-up?

Absolutely! I always say that anger is very important, and it is perfectly legitimate to feel that way. You just don't want to share that anger with your ex; it's important to contain your feelings. Make sure it isn't spilling out on too many people.

One of the hardest parts about breaking up is suddenly realizing how alone you feel. How do you get over that loss of companionship?

You have to learn to be alone to navigate. It's hard, but there's a difference between being alone and being lonely. I think that it's a good exercise for every woman out there to learn how to be alone. If you schedule yourself non-stop, you're going to be exhausted. It's an adjustment, but everything in life is an adjustment. You have to say to yourself, "I know it is hard right now, but it's going to make me stronger." If you can learn to be your own best friend, it's the greatest gift in the world.

Related: [How to Deal With Life After Divorce](#)

Why is it hard for us to see the bad in our ex after a breakup?

All of the time, people come talk to me, and they're complaining, complaining, complaining about their significant other. And then the relationship ends, and it's like the problems never existed and the relationship seems perfect. I think that it's easier to see the truth as you become older and more mature. If you understand your love map and do the necessary recovery work, then you can say, "Okay, this is really a bad relationship, and I need to get out of it." It helps to write down a list of all the reasons why you broke up with him.

When an ex says, "Let's just be friends," should we?

It never works. The only time people can be friends is if it was a really dispassionate relationship and it ended very amicably. In that situation, maybe you can be friends, but it usually doesn't work out that way. How can you be friends with someone who really hurt you? And if the relationship had any elements of dysfunction, everything that played out in your romance is going to play out in your friendship as well.

Related: [Is Dating Your Ex Off Limits?](#)

Are rebound relationships healthy?

A rebound relationship is never healthy, but a transitional relationship can be okay. Here is the thing: even if you follow my formula – you experience healing and understanding – and then you think it's okay to start dating, you're probably not ready for a full-on relationship. People get their confidence back and start saying to themselves that there are some good guys out there. So that can be a transitional relationship, but a rebound relationship is a terrible thing because you're still not healed and you don't feel good about yourself. You're probably going to attract the wrong guys, and there is a very

good chance that you're going to have another breakup.

When do you know that you have successfully fulfilled healing, understanding and transformation?

You've completed the program when you start feeling great about your life, when you start having so many more good days than bad days, when you have a circle of friends. You're not lonely; you're not depressed; and you're not obsessing about your ex. Maybe you begin to make new friends, to go out more. Then it's like, "Yes, I've made it! I'm here!"

To start Rachel A. Sussman's three-phase healing process, you can purchase [The Breakup Bible: The Smart Woman's Guide to Healing From a Breakup or Divorce](#) at Amazon. Be sure to read Sussman's blog at www.rachelasussman.com for even more tips.