



Mars and Venus Starting Over: A Practical Guide for Finding Love Again After a Painful Breakup, Divorce, or the Loss of a Loved One

By John Gray

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Is it possible to find love again after a breakup, death, or divorce?

At the end of a relationship, it can sometimes feel like the end of the world. Devastation, loneliness, and bitterness are some emotions that exist due to a breakup, divorce, or the loss of a loved one. But with the help of this compassionate guide, Dr. John Gray expresses that you will survive and tells you how to find love again.

While the process of healing is similar with both sexes, there are distinct differences between the ways men and women heal their bruised hearts. In *Mars and Venus Starting Over*, Dr. Gray offers gender-specific advice on how to:

- Deal with pain
- Find forgiveness
- Discover the strength to let go
- Rebuild confidence
- Rise to the challenge of finding fulfillment again

Filled with gentle guidance, healing practices, and compassionate wisdom, *Mars and Venus Starting Over* will help men and women explore the meaning of loss, find their way through the healing process, and discover the secret to moving on.

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Editorial Review

Amazon.com Review

A breakup, divorce, or loss of a loved one isn't just the end of your relationship with that person. It's a continuation of every feeling of abandonment you've ever suffered. It's the loss of a system of approval you'd come to depend on. The struggle, as Gray points out in *Starting Over*, isn't just to find a new partner, but to get over those feelings of abandonment or loss or anger or whatever else gets dredged up by the end of a relationship.

Perhaps the book's most crucial chapter posits that the best way to get over the loss of love is to focus on the "love" more than the "loss." That may seem impossible, especially if the bum took off with your best friend, your life savings, and your Lyle Lovett CDs, but Gray didn't get to be a household name because the advice in his Venus and Mars books doesn't work. Remembering only the bad parts, Gray says, leaves you with an important part of your emotional being closed to new business.

As for the Venus and Mars stuff, that comes in the second half of the book, when Gray looks at how men and women start new relationships from different points of view, with different priorities (a man might want to have fun with no strings attached; a woman might carry with her a lengthy list of requirements for her next partner, a list that excludes virtually all available men).

If you've never read Gray's work before, you have to be prepared to check your cynicism at the door. This is earnest stuff, but it's also based on decades of experience counseling clients. He's not one of those photogenic, nine-times-divorced shrinklets who's telling you how to conduct your relationships without any real clue of what makes love last. This is the real package: nothing glib, nothing quick and easy, nothing you could've figured out from a "Love Is..." cartoon.

About the Author

John Gray, Ph.D., is one of the world's leading relationship experts, and an authority on improving communication styles for couples, companies, and communities. His many books have sold more than fifty million copies in fifty different languages worldwide. John lives with his wife and children in northern California.

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Chapter One

When single again, men and women face different challenges. Just as we think, feel, and communicate differently, we also respond differently to the loss of love. During a crisis of the heart, a woman's instinctive and automatic reactions are not the same as a man's. Her issues are different as well as her mistakes. What is good for her is not necessarily good for him. In a variety of ways, their needs are worlds apart. It is as if men were from Mars and women were from Venus.

Although we cope differently, both men and women can experience equally agonizing feelings. Starting over after a divorce, a painful breakup, or the death of a loved one can be the most challenging experience of a lifetime. For most people devastated by the loss of love, it is beyond anything we could have expected,

predicted, or imagined.

Starting over after a divorce, a painful breakup, or the death of a loved one can be the most challenging experience of a lifetime.

Our hearts ache as they cry out in loneliness and confusion. We are stunned by our helplessness. We fight inside with our inability to change what has happened. We become distraught as we sink into the depths of despair and hopelessness. We feel lost and abandoned in a sea of emptiness and darkness. Time slows down and the passing of each moment seems like eternity.

After a loss, we fight inside ourselves with our inability to change what has happened.

It is a struggle simply to fill each empty moment and get through the day. At times the bittersweet pain of loss is replaced by a dull numbness, but then something reminds us of our loss, and once again we long to feel and love again. Never before have we experienced our need for love and connection so agonizingly. As we are forced to face and feel the raw pain in our hearts, we realize our lives will never again be the same.

Eventually, when the healing process is complete, we fully let go. In our minds and hearts, we surrender and accept that we can't change what has happened. Being single again, we start to rebuild our lives. Once more, we begin to reach out to give and receive love. Although we could not have imagined it, our lives come back to a sense of normalcy. After the darkness of despair, the warm, comforting, and soothing sunshine of love reveals itself once again. Although this happy ending is possible, it is not guaranteed.

Understanding the Healing Process

To heal a broken heart, we must be able to complete the healing process. This requires new insight and understanding, but most people are not aware of what is necessary. We are not taught how to heal a broken heart in school, nor is it something with which we have a lot of practice. Being in the dark and vulnerable, we either blindly follow the advice of friends and family, or we simply follow our own instincts. We make decisions and choices that may sound reasonable but quite often are counterproductive. Though we find temporary relief, in the long run we do not nurture or complete the healing process.

We are not taught how to heal a broken heart in school.

After the loss of love, some people do thrive again. Many are not so successful. After spiraling down to the depths of despair, they never make it out to the other side. To various degrees and in different ways, they continue to suffer their loss. Aware of the pain of losing love, they hold back from fully opening their hearts again.

Others, who appear to have let go, sometimes really haven't. They believe they have successfully moved on, but have done so at the cost of closing the door to their hearts. To avoid feeling their pain, they have moved on too quickly. As a result they have numbed their ability to fully feel. Without realizing it or recognizing how they did it, they have closed up. They carry on in their lives unable to feel the love in their hearts. Their ability to grow in love and happiness is stunted.

Becoming single again is definitely a crisis. Like any crisis, it is a time of danger and a time of opportunity. The opportunity is the possibility of healing and strengthening your heart and mind so that you will move on healthy and whole. The danger is that you do not complete the healing process. Time alone does not heal all wounds. How we cope with the loss of love determines the rest of our lives.

How the Heart Heals

To ensure that we complete the healing process, it is important that we understand the basics of how the heart heals. This process is most easily understood and visualized by considering how a broken bone heals. An emotional wound is abstract, but a broken bone is very tangible and concrete. Recognizing the various steps in healing a broken bone can assist us in acknowledging and respecting the needs of our broken heart.

When a bone breaks, our body already contains the natural healing power to correct the problem. It hurts, but eventually the pain goes away. As long as we don't interfere, the body heals itself automatically, in a predictable time period. When this automatic healing process is allowed and nurtured, the bone will actually grow back stronger than before. In a similar way, if you are able to nurture the healing of a broken heart, it also will grow back stronger. The pain and despair will pass, and you will find love and joy again.

When a broken heart heals it actually grows back stronger.

When a bone is broken, it must be reset and then be protected in a cast to allow the body's automatic and natural healing processes to occur. If the bone is not reset straight, then it will grow back crooked. If it is not given enough time to rest, protected in a cast, it will remain weak. Likewise, if the protective cast is never taken off, the bone will never fully become strong again. Similar warnings apply to the process of healing a broken heart.

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Barbara Shephard:

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