

Handbook for the Heartbroken: A Woman's Path from Devastation to Rebirth

Sara Avant Stover

Sounds True (May 7, 2024)

Softcover \$19.99 (288pp)

978-1-64963-236-4

Sara Avant Stover's compassionate guide for a heartbreak-illiterate world moves beyond grief and pain to nurture richer appreciation for life and the awakening of deeper, more mature personhood.

Stover knows that heartbreak can be isolating and debilitating—she's been there herself. And following advice to “get over it” can do more harm than good, she says. With experience at her back, she's counseled many women through facing their heartbreak themselves. Here, she shares personal stories to illustrate the process, as of how one breakup catapulted her into shock, pain, and anger, and of how the resultant darkness swallowed up all hope and trust. On the other side of a breakup, she suggests navigating heartbreak in three stages, moving from devastation to transformation and rebirth—allowing the hard, transformative magic of such a loss to initiate a richer kind of living.

Heartbroken people, the book says, have to give themselves the time and space to grieve. There are suggestions for creating support systems, including being clear and upfront with one's friends and family about what one needs—and about when and how they need it. There are also suggestions for changing schedules and responsibilities to allow for recovery time; for finding small comforts; for taking nourishment from nature and art; and for recognizing when it's time to get professional help. Intimate descriptions of pain and heartbreak illuminate this work further, alongside clarifying assertions that grief is only part of a human life. Journaling prompts and guided meditations are included to help people explore their feelings—and, when they're ready, act in order to heal.

Handbook for the Heartbroken is a compassionate self-help guide to help women survive heartbreak—and thrive.

KRISTINE MORRIS (May / June 2024)

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