

INTRODUCTION

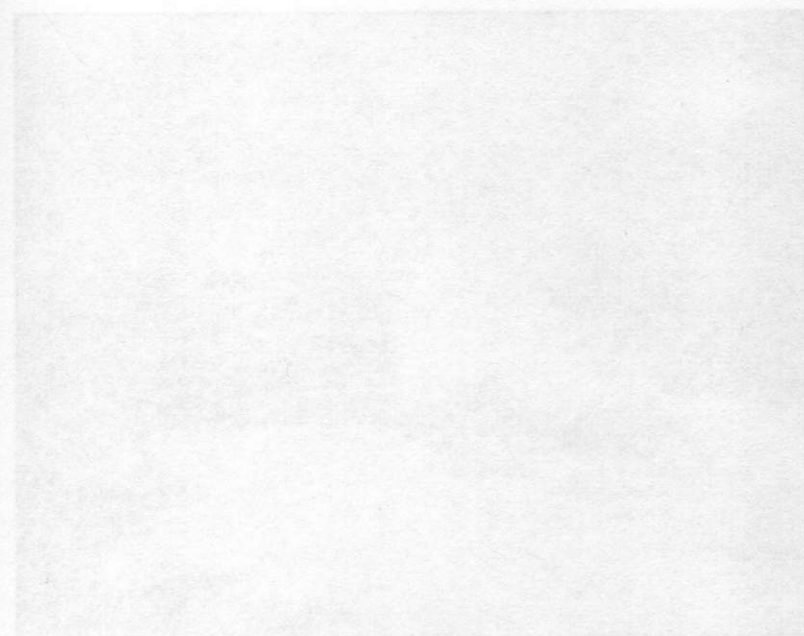
Reclaim Your Heart is not just a self-help book. It is a manual about the journey of the heart in and out of the ocean of this life. It is a book about how to keep your heart from sinking to the depths of that ocean, and what to do when it does. It is a book about redemption, about hope, about renewal. Every heart can heal, and each moment is created to bring us closer to that transformative return. *Reclaim Your Heart* is about finding that moment when everything stops and suddenly looks different. It is about finding your own awakening. And then returning to the better, truer, and freer version of yourself.

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ATTACHMENTS

WHY DO PEOPLE HAVE TO LEAVE EACH OTHER?

When I was 17 years old, I had a dream. I dreamt that I was sitting inside a masjid and a little girl walked up to ask me a question. She asked me, “Why do people have to leave each other?” The question was a personal one, but it seemed clear to me why the question was chosen for me.

I was one to get attached.

Ever since I was a child, this temperament was clear. While other children in preschool could easily recover once their parents left, I could not. My tears, once set in motion, did not stop easily. As I grew up, I learned to become attached to everything around me. From the time I was in first grade, I needed a best friend. As I got older, any fall-out with a friend shattered me. I couldn't let go of anything. People, places, events, photographs, moments—even outcomes became objects of strong attachment. If things didn't work out the way I wanted or imagined they should, I was devastated. And disappointment for me wasn't an ordinary emotion. It was catastrophic. Once let down, I never fully recovered. I could never forget, and the break never mended. Like a glass vase that you place on the edge of a table, once broken, the pieces never quite fit again.

However the problem wasn't with the vase, or even that the vases kept breaking. The problem was that I kept putting them on the edge of tables. Through my attachments, I was dependent on my relationships to fulfill my needs. I allowed those relationships to define my happiness or my sadness, my fulfillment or my emptiness, my security, and even my self-worth. And so, like the vase placed where it will inevitably fall, through those dependencies I set myself up for disappointment. I set myself up to be broken. And that's exactly what I found: one disappointment, one break after another.

Yet the people who broke me were not to blame any more than gravity can be blamed for breaking the vase. We can't blame the laws of physics when a twig snaps because we leaned on it for support. The twig was never created to carry us.

Our weight was only meant to be carried by God. We are told in the Quran: “...whoever rejects evil and believes in God hath grasped the most trustworthy hand-hold that never breaks. And God hears and knows all things.” (Qur'an, 2: 256)

