

Struggling with the reality this isn't temporary

June 8, 2021 | 118 upvotes | by [Foomama48](#)

Went through a breakup back in September -3years, engaged, lots of drama with his ex wife and teen daughters - ultimately though the reality is he was an extremely LVM and the relationship was more a reaction to my divorce from a love starved marriage as well as the relationship being a massive trigger for my abandonment issues and played to my underlying feelings of shame and lack of own self worth. I've gone a tremendous amount of reflection, therapy, reading to understand what happened, why, and myself better. Overall I am in a much, much better state of mind than I was months ago.

I know there is more work I need to do on myself and more I want to fortify within myself - but I catch myself struggling with what does it mean to be a whole, complete person? I'm ok with being single and alone, but at any given moment I also struggle with realizing that this isn't temporary- this isn't a holding pattern until my life kicks in (ie which in the past meant a relationship). I was convinced that relationship was my "love story" and my safe place, my harbor after all I had been through. Reality is it was just an extension of the issues I thought it was my reward from.

So ultimately I know now that it's me, I have to be a better me, value myself higher, expect more, raise my standards- and at the same time I get hit with waves of fear that this is it- this is my life and not just a temporary stop until the "love story" happens. I know that I should feel joy for having the opportunity to figure all this out instead of dealing with that relationship anymore. I know that this opportunity is a gift - and at the same time it scares the hell out of me. How do I figure out what I want and who I want to become, how do I deal with the necessary lonely, fearful moments? Anyway, I hope this makes some sense-just feeling alone right now.

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AutoModerator[M] [score hidden] 8 June, 2021 11:15 PM stickied comment

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haunted_vcr • 44 points • 9 June, 2021 01:48 AM

You are the love story.

What really helped my healing was going and doing literally everything that a guy had let me down on, and doing it right. I took myself to the restaurants, bought myself the gifts, got a "special" toy that can go for an hour, and outdid their accomplishments by miles. I can honestly say I'm a million times cooler than any of my exes.

You have to get to the point where you respect yourself so much that you don't put dusties on a pedestal.

To begin, allow yourself to turn the sadness into rage. They suck and let you down. They could have done it right but they /chose/ to hurt you. The anger won't last forever, and it's healthy and good motivation.

Foomama48[S] • 25 points • 9 June, 2021 02:28 AM

I love this! The funniest thing is that I know all the good parts of the relationship were me, it was my joy and caring and humor and planning and more that made our experiences together happen, I know I brought so much more to the table than he did. In essence everything good in our relationship was me doing all of those things myself already, with him just tagging along! I am realizing that now I have to start doing more myself - not just the weekend errands and normal stuff I already do, but all the other things I want to do. Try tennis lessons, go kayaking, go camping on my own or exploring. It's getting into the mindset of "oh, I can do those things on my own, I don't have to be with someone!" I 100% put him on a pedestal absolutely no reason - I put him on a pedestal by projecting all these qualities onto him that were actually me! I went through rage a few months back, I think now I'm just looking to get to a place of peace. Where the bad things don't creep into my mind anymore and I can still keep the lessons and keep growing. Thank you!

sikulet • 7 points • 9 June, 2021 12:55 PM

I was looking for someone to save me... but I didn't realize, being the oldest Asian daughter, I've ended up saving everybody - financially, emotionally, other resources... it's like when Cher's mom kept saying you need a rich man, I was able to say, "oh. I'm the rich man". My last Ex, he was richer, driving a ferrari rich. And yet I was the one paying for groceries. ☐ I had to plan the dates too. Looking back there

were definitely a lot of moments I did think to myself, I'm doing all these why do I have you for?

The HVM if I can find him is just going to be dessert.

Aksentia_Ivanovitcha • 6 points • 9 June, 2021 02:26 PM

It was also something similar for me - only in doing all the things he said im not good at by myself, better than how i did them before, sometimes better than how he did them.

Theres this kinda spiritual mindset that doesnt work for everyone but might as well say it - when you stop wanting something, itll come. As long as you feel like you need a relationship you will always fall on bad ones. Only when you are whole in yourself will you "get from the universe" the opportunity to try yourself at being in a healthy relationship. Thats an idea i heard, it hasnt worked for me yet, but i think its an interesting idea to meditate over (btw - meditation is also great for existential fears and for balancing feelings of need and lack).

Foomama48[S] • 2 points • 9 June, 2021 04:31 PM

This is so true! Finding a relationship ship is easy when you're looking for it because you'll jump into and settle for anything! I am of the mind right now that I do not plan to date again until I am at a place where I don't want or need it, where finding someone isn't even on my list of things to do or a remote desire.

pickadaisy • 6 points • 9 June, 2021 01:58 AM

I relate to your methods of leveling up! I'd love to know all of the ways that you treated yourself in case I don't already have those crossed off on my list! ☐

Twolipz_78 • 35 points • 8 June, 2021 11:33 PM

Giiirl, I am feeling *all* of this totally and completely and I needed to hear it. I haven't been intimate with anyone in a little over 13 months and I am *not* used to this at. all!

This may be my period talking but I was seriously considering having a one-time thing with the next worthy rando the universe sends me and just pump and dump as I am SO SICK of thinking the LVX that continues to stalk me (showed up to watch me at my job 2 days ago ☐) was the last one I was with! I wanted to feel like I had power and control in using some guy for subpar sex and just block and delete right after because why not? They do it to us!

But that would just be lowering to their level and there's nothing really powerful about that especially since he gets a guaranteed orgasm and I just worry about STI's or watch he ends up knowing the person I finally end up with, lol!

So yeah, I feel ya!

spicyspa • 16 points • 9 June, 2021 12:14 AM*

I admire how you're taking these steps. Actually, you seem to be on it a lot earlier than most of us, myself included.

After following FDS, it also dawned on me that this is not temporary. I left a long marriage years before. I made considerable poorly thought out efforts to find a good man even though I told myself I would be happy without one. I fell for the "a woman has to be in a relationship" trope. I prioritized that over my own growth. Now after FDS, I'm working on myself and making up for lost time. I'm working with a new therapist and she's really got some great ideas to improve my life. She never even mentioned my "needing" to be in a relationship. Refreshing.

Foomama48[S] • 4 points • 9 June, 2021 12:17 AM

Same here, maybe this is part of the detox of that mindset. I love fds for always making me feel less alone in all of this. Thank you.

spicyspa • 6 points • 9 June, 2021 12:19 AM

You're welcome. FDS is a lifesaver!

kinkardine • 33 points • 8 June, 2021 11:43 PM*

For me it clicked after reading a book , ‘ CEO of everything’ , it’s a personal finance book, but it helped me to see me as a whole person rather than a part of some bigger institution called family(which is culturally only way for a woman to validate her existence). I started making an independent financial backbone for me starting from funeral and backwards. But now it reflects everywhere. I would rather have my own agenda and work towards my personal growth, practice discipline regularly in daily life to achieve something bigger, be someone better than waiting for someone to come by and swap my every investment with his whimsical lifestyle. I would rather invest my time in making meaningful friendship .. friends stay.. I had lots of ups and downs but always had my friends by my side. I do not want to be held hostage for sex or a belongingness.

Buying my own home was a great exercise towards it, it was a statement that I won’t wait and make the best out of my life at this very given moment rather than sharing with someone..(that someone may not be that special.. but a projection of your need at that time).

Foomama48[S] • 12 points • 9 June, 2021 12:14 AM

That’s where I think the struggle is coming from, that “belongingness,” and the realizations that keep hitting in small ways that I’m on my own, without that “belongingness” of the relationship - which was highly dissatisfying and traumatic in so many ways so I don’t miss that at all - just getting used to the transition from that mind rest to the hopefully eventual comfort that will come with not needing that belongingness. Thank you!.

kinkardine • 9 points • 9 June, 2021 12:31 AM*

And why do we (the woman in the family) have to always sacrifice for that belongingness? Our self worth, dreams, goals, family (parents, siblings), friends always be the first to let go to keep that belongingness intact? is the belongingness worth more than me ? sometimes even in a loving relationship? You will know when and where your soul is secured, but even after that at this moment I want to be self involved, cause I can see me improving.. self improvement became so sustainable and addictive once I started to desolate me as a product of meat market and grab a pen and write my own stories.

shockingupdate • 8 points • 9 June, 2021 04:58 AM*

I’ve been struggling with this, too. I’ve always seen relationships as a safe harbor where I can be myself with one person who truly understands me...despite the fact that that’s never actually happened. I saw what I wanted tk see until the truth was ringing in my ears. I’ve been homeless, beat.en, traf.ficked...but now I have finances and goals for the future that only I can achieve for myself. I’ve always known that friendships last longer than men, but now that I’m committing to myself I’m struggling to find the path forward to new, lasting friendships, a career I love, and a sustainable lifestyle I enjoy. Not because I’m a bad planner - my bullet journal and I are top-notch at that - but because I’m honestly kind of numb from everything I’ve been through.

It will pass. Just keep being kind to yourself, take care of yourself, get massages and gifts for no reason, let it be known that it’s perfectly okay to not be okay some days. Throw yourself into something you wouldn’t have felt

comfortable doing in a relationship, or something you used to love as a child. Get really obsessed with it. See if the light comes back. If it doesn't, try something else.

You will never be granted a "love story" or safe place. All that exists is the next step and the world you create for yourself in taking those steps. It is terrifying, but somehow it's something we all learn to do. I get the feeling far more people are dealing with this than you or I are aware of. We've just gotta get grounded and learn to feel safe on our own. I think the joy will come back when we have space in ourselves to let it in.

Foomama48[S] • 2 points • 11 June, 2021 09:21 PM

Yes, it's true- he never really saw me, I just projected so much onto him that wasn't there. The lovebombing and getting sucked in is no joke, I knew things weren't right but I kept getting pulled deeper and deeper into having to prove my worth. I've been focused on getting my head wrapped around it all, but I am ready to start working on joy - on my own! Lofty goals don't work for me either, slow steady incremental is best. On one hand it's comforting that I'm not alone in this, on the other hand it makes me hurt for all the amazing women going through it, who deserved so much better and hopefully will get it in the long run. It sounds like you've had your share of pain, you deserve all the joy and love possible from yourself and others - thank you for sharing this with me ☐☐,

alphasquish • 9 points • 9 June, 2021 01:10 AM*

Right there with you...went through a breakup from an engagement a few months ago mainly due to ex-wife and teenage kids drama, also triggered some issues I thought I'd resolved and was turning me into this anxious, naggy, miserable person I hated, and also realized he was an LVM even though he appeared to have a lot of green flags.

I'd say I felt really shitty until about a month ago. Loneliness, guilt, blaming myself, wondering wtf was wrong with me. Like you, I realized that my relationship was NOT a safe harbor and it was destroying me .I started therapy 2 months ago, which has been amazing, and now I'm also doing the inward focus. FDS has helped a lot.

What has been really helping outside therapy is working on my leveling up goals in small chunks. A bad habit I've had is making lofty goals, trying to do too much at once, failing, and then saying fuck it. It is definitely not a good way to go through life and ends in self-sabotage. So, one of my goals is to revamp my eating habits. Instead of saying, tomorrow I'm going to wake up and intermittent fast, eat all keto, log my food, etc....For about a week now, I've been logging my food consistently and eating within my fasting window. Next week, I will add a larger calorie reduction to that. The following week, I will start changing up the foods I'm consuming. So, I'm building a good habit slowly and being kind to myself with a reasonable time window. I think this can be applied to anything.

I know it still hurts. I know you are probably wrestling with doubts as to whether you did the right thing. Let me tell you...you did. My guess is you had doubts all throughout the relationship but got lovebombed and sucked into drama. It's so hard when you're in it, and when you're out, it's like wtf happened there.

You did the right thing, OP. It may be lonely and sad. You may get upset thinking about the good parts of the life you had with your fiancé. You may get upset thinking about the life you planned with him that is no longer an option. But it's now YOUR life again. You can move forward without dealing with the fallout of someone else's life mistakes that they handle poorly. And when you are ready to do so, you can open yourself up to meeting a HVM that you will be able to vet with your FDS lens and you will never go back to a loveless marriage or shitty LVM that can't handle the reality of post-divorce life.

Foomama48[S] • 4 points • 9 June, 2021 02:41 AM

I'm sorry you went through this too - it messes with your head in so many ways, I'm glad you're in therapy. It's been a huge awakening for me, I hope it's just as healing for you! You are spot on with the love bombing

and drama and doubts, like exactly spot on with how it went! I actually had ptsd panic attacks on an almost daily basis after things ended, because the whole experience was so toxic but I was so invested from the love bombing. Legit panic attacks for months! Never in my life had that before. I really don't think about the good parts, it's the replays of the bad that I'm working really hard to get past (like his 17 year old sucker punching me, that was fun.) but I started looking at the replays as lessons- every bad memory is something I need to learn about myself- what was I thinking and feeling at that time, what was I reacting to? It's my way of trying to figure out why I put up with it all, what underlying issues or trauma was being triggered. It's a slow process but I am healing, just some days like today the lonely, fearfulness kicks in. It helps to be able to reach out and hear everyone's stories and advice on here. Thank you for reminding me that the problem was a "LVM who couldn't handle post divorce life" and not my worth as a person - you have no idea how much seeing that in your response shifted my perspective tonight. Thank you!!

alphasquish • 5 points • 9 June, 2021 03:25 AM

Yikes, daily panic attacks are awful. I didn't have panic attacks, but I did have major anxiety and insomnia and went on antidepressants and started drinking a lot to cope. I had quite a few nights of picking fights and crying my eyes out - not proud of that but I was in a bad mental state. It all stopped after I left - I stopped taking my antidepressant and stopped drinking outside of the occasional dinner with friends. I think I dealt with the bad while I was in it, and then when I left I started doubting my decision and focused too much on the good.

I think it's good you are examining the how's and why's behind everything. I have been doing that with my therapist and it's been immensely helpful. It really is a day by day process. I was floored by your comment about being punched by his 17 yo. Were there any consequences for the kid? That is so awful and I'm sorry. I had gotten to a point where I'd go to his house and the only place I felt comfortable was his room. It sucked. I felt sorry for the kids because I think the majority of their behavior because both of their parents sucked, but I couldn't take the nastiness. You can't care more than the parents do, and you can't live with a man and kids that have a toxic dynamic with no boundaries or respect. It's not worth it.

We will get through this, and just remember that you saved yourself. Not sure if you have children of your own (I do), but you saved them too.

Foomama48[S] • 2 points • 9 June, 2021 04:40 PM

I actually had massive insomnia, went on anxiety meds, and started drinking way too much wine (never when the kids were around) - same with the emotional outburst I'm not proud of and crying my eyes out - while I was living with him for two years. Hello major red flag!! The day I left his house and went to parents I slept like a baby and have not had a problem sleeping or desire to drink. Go figure! The panic attacks have subsided but it took a while. No consequences for her hitting me at all- it was unprovoked by me, it happened because her mom was at our door screaming as usual so his daughter knew she could get away with it. After she hit me they girls and their mom stopped speaking to them because he dared tell them they were wrong for what happened. They would only speak to him again if we weren't together. It's what ultimately broke us up, but in all honesty if it hadn't been that incident it would have been something else. The girls, being trained by their mom, were incredibly controlling and manipulative and he had zero balls, self awareness, or backbone to stand up to them. I don't blame his daughters, the parents created such an unhealthy dynamic by not setting boundaries and putting the kids basically in charge and also in the middle. It was twisted and so were the girls. I'm glad for you and I that we're out of it! It sounds like you know exactly the dysfunction I'm talking about! No kids, cat and dog who are much happier out of that environment!! It takes a toll going through something like that, you and I will get through it and be much stronger in the long run ☐☐

alphasquish • 2 points • 9 June, 2021 04:49 PM

Wow, such a shitty situation! I think the only difference in ours was I was the one that left (I scorched that earth like a champ) and my ex wasn't divorced very long and was very cagey about his situation (one of the first red flags that my pick me ass ignored).

Keep reading here, and I also recommend the FDS Level Up sub, a lot of great input on there.

Foomama48[S] • 2 points • 9 June, 2021 06:55 PM

Yeah they had been divorced for over 6 years when we met, she had lived with several men and had a second marriage/divorce. I was his first serious relationship, first he lived with, wanted to marry. Honestly you would have thought I was a homewrecker the way she treated me and they way she manipulated the girls to be. His whole family loved me, which I think made her hate me. It was absolutely insane- plus he was dishonest about how she was and how much control she had over everything. It was a total shock to me when I moved in. She's definitely a narcissist, I know that word gets used all the time but she fits the bill in every way. Ultimately I couldn't take it anymore, and them not talking to him was super calculated on her part- she knew how to manipulate him. I couldn't bring myself to say the words to end it, but I was done with the craziness and basically gave him the permission or freedom to say it. I am beyond grateful to be out of it - it wasn't right for me in every way and my life would have just remained in chaos if we had gotten married. I have no regrets about it ending and have no desire to ever be in that situation again. Just going through healing and the residual trauma, which does get better every day little by little. FDS is such a healing place!

azureangel35 • 7 points • 9 June, 2021 02:24 AM

Beautifully put sis. I don't have advice as I'm struggling with the same feeling right now. ☐

Foomama48[S] • 4 points • 9 June, 2021 02:47 AM

We're in it together, hopefully some of the responses here will give you a boost as well. Some days are good, others it's a struggle with this. My hope for both of us is that the good days become more than the fearful. Hoping that with time, grace, and lots of work that happens for us. ☐☐

saraswati_beans • 7 points • 9 June, 2021 03:51 AM

It makes perfect sense. I'm in a very similar place. I initiated a long-overdue breakup almost a year ago with a man whom I thought was "it" for me— the relationship lasted for three years and was my first serious, long-term relationship after my divorce. It really did feel like "my reward" for living through/getting out of my toxic, abusive marriage. That was the narrative I had in my head. And I had my head in the sand when it came to the new man. I explained away red flag after red flag, because I was hellbent on living out the Second Chance Love Story that I thought I "deserved" as a result of surviving/leaving my marriage. Eventually his behavior and our deep incompatibility was such that I couldn't sustain the narrative anymore and I broke it off.

I have been single and not focused on dating/men since the breakup. And most of the time, I feel ok about being single— happy even. But at times I find myself thinking, "this is fine for now, but I'll be even better once I find a compatible/ HV partner." There is a sense of waiting for the next act to begin, a next act that can only be ushered in by a new relationship. Rationally, I know that a relationship isn't the Goal, isn't necessary, and isn't guaranteed. But the cultural/familial programming around the primacy of the romantic relationship runs deep. I don't know if I'm capable of ever fully breaking free of it.

I don't have any answers or advice other than to keep putting one foot in front of the other, and when you notice

the old holding pattern/ waiting for the love story script start to kick in, name it. Recognize it for what it is. Remember that it's not the truth. It will take time for the truth of who you are on your own to overwrite the false narrative that you're somehow incomplete without a relationship. It's taking time for me, but it is happening. I've had setbacks but I can see I've made real progress and experienced real growth. Progress and growth is kind of all we can really hope for, IMO.

Foomama48[S] • 2 points • 9 June, 2021 04:43 PM

Yes!! Everything you said is it exactly!!! It's really helpful to see that I'm not the only one, that this is all a normal part of the process. Thank you for posting this!! Sometimes the best help isn't advice but just knowing we're not alone. Progress and growth ☐☐☐