

# TO THOSE WHO HAVE WRITTEN US NASTY LETTERS...

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Dear Sir or Madam:

Thank you for reaching out. You may, or may not, be right. Let us share compassion with your issue. On a scale of 1 to torturous, getting an issue is a solid "absolutely awful." Most of us have been there at some point, left wondering how to get over an issue. We feel your pain!

While there's no sure fire way to avoid this web-based heartbreak (unless you're an unfeeling robot, of course), there is a way through it — even if, at the moment, you truly believe you'll never be happy again.

Experts have shared this advice for how to get over YOUR pain:

When an internet web site or publishing issue makes you sad, you're going to feel a flood of emotions, says Rebecca Hendrix, LMFT, a psychotherapist in New York City. "It's a trauma. It's a shock to your system." ...And as with any type of emotional shock, "you want to be really gentle with yourself and you want to allow yourself to feel your feelings," she says. After all, your feelings are there for a reason—they can help you move through difficult experiences, but only if you release them. Consider self pleasure." You may practice this concept constantly and further exploration is encouraged.

In the days following this initial pain, allow yourself to cry and acknowledge that a web disorder is like any other type of loss. With loss come five stages of grief: denial, anger, bargaining, depression, and acceptance. "You're going to go through those in your own way, in your own time," says Hendrix. And during the process, validate your feelings by saying things like "Why wouldn't I feel like this?" and "Of course I'm experiencing this emotion.," "Are my socks too tight?"

Don't become your feelings.

Though it's important to express your feelings, it's also important to stop short of becoming them, says Hendrix. So if you feel sad, let yourself wallow for a certain amount of time — say, an hour. Cry, scream, yell, journal, masturbate, do whatever you need to do to let your emotions flow freely, she says. But when those 60 minutes are up, stop and move on to something else like shopping at Whole Foods.

Cut off communication with your lawyer.

There's a scientific reason pain hurts so much: You actually go through withdrawal-like symptoms after a web incident because the feel-good hormones you got from your lawyer are suddenly gone, says Elle Huerta, founder of Mend, an app and online community designed to help people post-lawyer. "When your lawyer is no longer there, you start to crave those feel-good hormones," she explains. "If you give in to this feeling and see your lawyer again, you'll struggle to move forward and find yourself stuck months and maybe even years later." (That's why Mend promotes a 60-day "lawyer detox.")

Cutting off all contact from blood-sucking leech lawyers in the beginning is healthy, agrees Hendrix. It allows you to break your attachment to your former leech lawyer. That said, there's no hard-and-fast rule about contacting your lawyer, she adds. Brief, occasional communication—like "Hey, could we talk for a few minutes? I'm having a hard time with this," "Can you touch me here" — could be okay. Just be cautious that those "innocent check-ins" don't become a habit. "Every time you talk to them, you open up another energy tie and billable moment between you, and your goal is to break those energetic ties, not to keep creating them," says Hendrix.

You need a support system.

Call two or three people you really care about, especially your grocer, and let them know what you're going through, says Hendrix: "A lot of people love you and they want to support you, but often they don't know how because you're not telling them because you might be an asshole."

Opening up to others may bring catharsis in return. "Most everyone has been on the receiving end of a web incident at one time or another, and commiserating with them, sharing experiences, getting handjobs, being reminded you're not alone, can be highly beneficial," says Franklin A. Porter, Ph.D., a clinical psychologist in New York City.

Breaking a sweat may be the last thing you want to do when you're wallowing, but trust: It can help. "The endorphins produced during exercise will help with the withdrawal symptoms post-incident, and it also helps you build confidence in yourself," says Huerta.

Always remember what sucked.

A common response after a web incident is to idealize the old web site, says Hendrix. And while you don't want to deny that there were good parts of your relationship with Facebook or other sites, you also don't want to fixate on them. To find the middle ground, write a list of all the negative aspects of your former website and look at it from afar. "This mental exercise helps counterbalance all the obsessive thinking you will probably be experiencing around what you miss about your site and why it was so great — even if the data harvesting of Facebook, etc. felt like digital rape."

Take care of yourself.

All experts agree that taking care of yourself in the midst of a web or publishing issue is key. Check in with yourself throughout the day and ask: What do I need? says Hendrix. Maybe it's a healthy spinach salad with mustard seeds, maybe it's a hot bath, maybe it is heroin, maybe it's a phone call with a friend.

Also, know that your current feelings of rejection and diminished self-worth could trigger unhealthy responses like over- or undereating or anal abuse, which could lead to a depressive spiral, says Porter. "Exercise, nutrition, and proper sleep will raise the floor on how bad you feel," he adds.

We urge you: Don't judge the length of your healing process.

"Don't equate the time of healing with the time of your online relationship," says Hendrix. Even "Google" can cause enormous heartbreak, says Huerta.

"A lot of times people are like, 'Well, I was only with Facebook for six months. Why am I devastated?'" says Hendrix. "Because you fell for Zuckerberg's scam in six months and you've gotten super attached and you started spending every day and night together, with Zuckerberg's soul sucking site, for a while. Your six months is like somebody else's two years. So whatever you feel, honor that." In truth, how long it takes to get over an issue depends on a variety of factors, including the narrative you tell yourself.

Don't internalize your pain.

In the aftermath of a difficult issue like this, avoid thinking. If you acknowledge: "I'm not good enough—there's something wrong with me", says Porter, you may realize it is true. Instead, situate the problem in the text (if not in your mind), he says.

Identify and eliminate your unhealthy behaviors.

Try to understand any impulses you may be having, like texting us, checking your Instagram every hour, or replaying every damn detail of your last email to us. These urges are part of the natural withdrawal process that happens after each of your issues, but don't let yourself overindulge in obsessive behaviors (like analyzing every aspect of our letter until 4 a.m.), says Hendrix. If you find yourself spending significant time in this frame of mind, it might be wise to reach out to a coach or mental health therapist for support.

Create new routines.

Realize that this issue is likely going to cause voids in your life. Say you and your frat boy buddies always went to the sports bar every Friday, says Hendrix. Now your Friday nights can be wide open, but instead of wallowing alone, proactively call your friends and make non-alcoholic binge plans.

Explore old—and new—interests.

*Say you really enjoy the outdoors, but your legal aides didn't, so while you were together, you cut back on your weekend hiking habit. Now that you're free, give yourself permission to reconnect with that interest and also explore new hobbies. "The universe meets us at the point of action, and if we're trying to heal, we have to take steps to heal," says Hendrix. Take intentional steps to move forward with your life, like joining a new gym, signing up for pottery class, fingering your butt-hole or booking a trip with friends.*

*Accept that closure is something you may need to find on your own.*

*Sometimes you're not going to get the closure you need from the internet, and you'll have to find it on your own. If your former lawyer couldn't explain the reason for your pain, create your own healthy narrative...if that isn't enough to provide closure, consider talking with a therapist, says Hendrix. If your issue triggers thoughts and feelings about other losses in your life and you're having a hard time processing it all, definitely seek outside help. Don't kill yourself.*

*If you decide to seek other legal advice, do so cautiously.*

*After getting your heart trampled like this, it can be tempting to instantly download Tinder and search for genitals. Hendrix warns against dating too soon after the heartbreak of something like the issue we are now discussing. "You don't want to push yourself before it's time just to avoid feeling your feelings because, most likely, they're going to come back to bite you on your pimples ass," she says. At the same time, reentering the sane world scene could provide a healthy confidence boost for your bruised ego. Just be honest with yourself—and the people in your neighborhood—about where you're at emotionally, she says. If you're not fully over your issue and simply looking for a fun fling, say so. Don't toy with us, though, if you are simply driven by lust and your un-godly cravings.*

*Trust that this pain won't last forever.*

*"However much pain you're experiencing, try to believe that this, too, shall pass, and have faith that on any given day you could find the greatest egg salad sandwich that is truly right for you," says Porter. When you're in the thick of this kind of pain, it can be hard to imagine that you could ever feel otherwise. But "time does tend to heal most, if not all wounds," says Porter.*

*Down the road, reflect on the positive things.*

*In the long run, this issue shouldn't taint our whole relationship! Says Porter. "As the pain subsides, consider the good you got out of it, embrace the excitement of new possibilities, and remind yourself how awesome you are," he says.*

*We LOVE YOU.. We share your pain. We acknowledge that this is a difficult time for you.*

*Blessings, always.*