

you will feel
whole again



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Your healing belongs only to you. You are not healing for anyone other than yourself. Not to get someone back. Not to show someone what they're missing. Not to prove anything to anybody. You are healing for you. So you can finally feel some serenity in your life. So you free up room to savor everything this world has to offer. So you can be present in your own glory. You are healing to access the part of you that can love again, exist again, smile again. You are healing for you. So that you may never again give your best to someone who doesn't want good for you. So that you know better than to hand out love to every single person except yourself. You are healing so that the next time you walk through the dark, you will have faith that you'll catch the light again.

The beautiful thing about the emptiness left behind by those who walked away is that it will give you room to grow, expand, and breathe. You can fill it with whatever you like. You can choose what will move into that space and what replaces the things it used to house. You can leave it vacant for a time and teach yourself not to fear the hollow, but rather to embrace it. Take your time to fill it. Every single thing that falls into every single place of your life should be intentional.

Seek a love that lets you love you too. A love that gives you room to be, just as you are. Seek a love that only grows the more you love yourself. One that isn't scared of your loyalty and devotion to you. You deserve a love that sees only benefits in your healing. And which cheers at the sight of you thriving. A love that knows your love for yourself doesn't take away your love for them. You should want for a love so self-assured that it does not feel threatened. One that doesn't ask you to hide or bury yourself. A love that reminds you to love yourself, even on the days you've forgotten how.

It's funny how we can convince ourselves that someone who doesn't even like us, loves us. We stay with people who give us, at best, half the love we deserve, and we tell ourselves it's whole. We tell ourselves they make us whole. We create a whole relationship—an epic love story—without the other person even realizing or agreeing to it. They can treat us with contempt, and we tell ourselves they're just having a bad day. They pull away and we tell ourselves they just need some solitude. They put us last and we tell ourselves one day we'll come first. Our ability to tell ourselves the story we want to hear is so powerful and so impressive that I can't help but wonder why we don't tell ourselves a different story. I wonder why we don't tell ourselves that we deserve better. I wonder why we don't tell ourselves that we matter too. Why can't we tell ourselves that we shouldn't have to beg for love? If you can tell yourself someone loves you without confirmation from them, why don't you tell yourself that *you* love you and you won't accept less from others.

Those who are offended by your self-love have a stake in you not loving yourself. You are so much easier to manipulate and mistreat when you don't like yourself. It's easier for others to walk all over you when you don't realize what you deserve and when you don't regard yourself highly. Those who are offended by your self-love know that it's harder for them to get their way with you. It's harder for them to speak to you unkindly, take advantage of you, and use you. They know you'll stick around if you don't see why you should leave. They can continue to hurt you. Put you down. Step on you to lift themselves higher. This is the only reason someone wouldn't want you to love yourself. Those who love you want you to love you too.

Maybe it's not that they cannot love you—maybe it's that they cannot even see the depths of your being. When someone doesn't love you, don't take this as an indicator of your lack of worth or a comment on what you deserve. It's very likely that this person simply can't *see* all that you are. This is not an invitation for you to try to help them see you. This is simply a reminder that for each person who cannot see and appreciate you, there will be someone out there who can.

You will not always feel like you don't belong. There is a place in this world for you and there is a place in this life for you. No matter how much you feel like you shouldn't be here, you should. No matter how much you feel like you will never be wanted, you will. You won't feel lost and displaced forever. You will find the friends who are meant to bring you happiness. You will find the people who will love you the way you deserve. You will find love in yourself that is greater and brighter than anything you could have dreamed of. You will find the simple pleasures that remind you how good it feels to be here. And you will find the great big joys that make you feel alive. You are not here by accident. You belong here and I promise, you will find your place.

I know it kills you that you will probably never get an apology from them. So I will be the one to apologize to you. I'm sorry that you let the wrong one in. I'm sorry they didn't see how precious your heart is. I'm sorry that you feel deceived by who they pretended to be. I'm sorry that you now question yourself when you're simply someone who wants to give others a chance. I'm sorry they didn't hear your voice. I'm sorry you feel embarrassed and ashamed. I'm sorry that you're scared of what the future holds for you. I'm sorry people lie. I'm sorry someone preyed on your vulnerabilities. I'm sorry they tainted the concept of love for you. I'm sorry they didn't respect your boundaries. I'm sorry you didn't respect your boundaries. I'm sorry you kept quiet to keep the peace. I'm sorry you had to beg for the bare minimum. I'm sorry you never came first. I'm sorry you feel used. I'm sorry for all of it.

Sometimes your love for them and your love for you cannot live together in harmony. And for so long, you will sacrifice your love for you so that you may keep on loving them. You know deep down that there is not enough space to hold both, and so, you choose them. But eventually you must choose yourself. Eventually you must realize that if you are loving someone who takes all of your love, and leaves none for you, you will run out. You will run empty. And this is no way to live.

We tell ourselves that one day it will make sense and that one day we'll know why they had to leave, why we had to break, and why it had to hurt so damn bad. That someday the meaning, the message, and the lesson will be clear. But what if this weren't true? What if we never really come to a conclusion as to why it all had to come crashing down. Why they had to walk away. Why they had to unlove us. Why we had to sink to the bottom before we could even consider making our way back up. What if we just keep on living, breathing, reading, traveling to far-off places, making new friends, loving our families, getting lost in this life and collecting new experiences? What if we do this until we realize we aren't really that invested anymore in finding meaning in that sad thing that happened to us some time ago. What if over time it just becomes diluted and hazy and we conclude that it doesn't hold a lot of power over us anymore. It was, after all, nothing more than a sad thing that happened to us some time ago.

This is how you fall in love with yourself.

Pretend you are meeting yourself for the very first time. Note the uniqueness of your eyes, the way you stand, and your smile. View yourself through the lens of a lucky stranger who is catching their first glimpse of you. Realize that you are exactly the type of friend so many are searching for. Recall all the times you have been there for the ones you love. How you have lent loyalty, support, and a shoulder to cry on. Think about how much gratitude you have for those who have done the same for you, and then appreciate that someone out there is just as grateful for you. Remember yourself as a child. Think back to all the innocence that was inside of you and all the faith you had in yourself. Deep within you still lives that same innocent child who will forever deserve all of your love.

One day soon, you will realize that you are not a broken soul. You will not feel split in two forever. You will heal, flower, and rebuild. You will create something beautiful out of each season of heartache. You will feel whole again.



PARM K.C. is a Punjabi-Canadian writer from Alberta. She is a mental health advocate who has, from a young age, harnessed the therapeutic power of writing and poetry. She finds great fulfillment in offering comfort and empathy to others through her written words.

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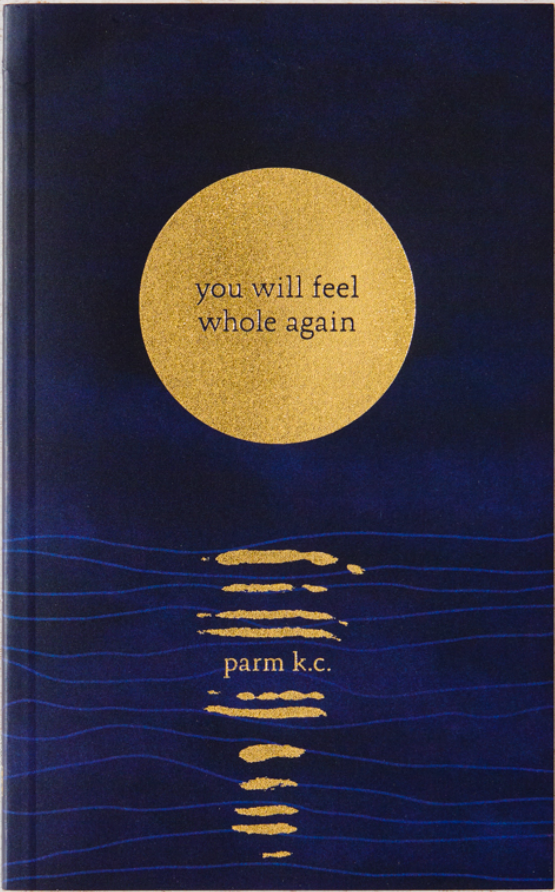
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It's funny how when our heart is broken, we think we can just will it to be unbroken. Like if we just tried harder or put forth more effort, we can somehow unbreak it and heal ourselves. We would never do this with broken bones or broken objects—we would splint them, cast them, rebuild them, call in the experts. Yet we shame ourselves for our inability to fuse together shards of ourselves without doing the work and calling for help. I think this does a huge disservice to our hearts. We deserve to be cared for at a time when we feel broken. We deserve to be wrapped in warmth and support. We deserve to be mended.

you will feel whole again

This is how you heal.

Spend more time with people who let you be you, and less time with people who don't. Trust your own gut before you prioritize the opinion and advice of others. Journal. Get in touch with your own thoughts, feelings, and consciousness. Understand that some friendships are not meant to last. Wish them well and move forward in your own journey. Love fiercely but not at the expense of loving yourself. If you ever feel you must choose between a relationship and your own wellbeing, choose you. Hold out for the relationship that doesn't make you choose between the two. Find reasons to laugh, and bring laughter into the heart of those you love. Go to therapy. If you have something you're passionate about, chase it. Don't let fear of judgment or failure stop you. Say goodbye to those who hurt you. Both literally and figuratively. Believe that you are worth healing and deserve it wholly.

param 4.4.
to live your life unvalidated. W
approval from others on your
and your dreams. Learn to
validation so that you stay in har
Trust yourself so deeply and
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to live your life unvalidate

A top-down photograph of a woven basket and a card. The basket, made of light brown, textured material, is in the upper right. The card, which is off-white, is in the lower left and contains text. The background is a dark, speckled surface, and a white fabric is visible at the bottom.

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It's okay if you lost yourself in someone else and are still fighting to find your way out. It's normal for the wounds to take time to heal. And for you to slowly move on. To rebuild. To find your way out of them and back to you. It is too heavy a burden to carry someone so deep in your being, to love them, to have them be a part of you and then walk away unscathed. So take your time. Treat your healing like a ritual. Go through the motions, even if you know you are only going through the motions. Let yourself feel lost. Let yourself feel like you won't be found again. It's not true, but fall into this feeling anyway. Let your healing be intentional. Let the wounds turn to scars slowly and with purpose. Let each night feel heavy and each morning empty. Until it doesn't anymore.