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EILEEN LAMB

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# Eileen Lamb



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You know you've found the right person when they love you when you are sad. They've seen you at your worst and they don't run away.

They won't even mention that you're telling them the same story for the third time today. They listen every time like it's the first.

They hug you quietly when you can't express the messiness of your mind in coherent thoughts.

They stay.

In a world where people run away at the first sight of struggle, find the one who stays. They're the keeper that keeps your heart safe.

The truth is, letting go is difficult. It doesn't matter how much your head wants to move on if your heart is still right there, stuck in the past, and filled with hope. Letting go doesn't happen overnight. It's not a linear process. There will be days when it doesn't hurt but there will be others when the simple act of listening to your favorite song or seeing their favorite brand of pasta at the store will throw you into a tailspin. And that's okay.

It doesn't mean you're broken or weak. It means you're human. You can't quickly forget someone responsible for some of your happiest memories. Not like that—not in the blink of an eye. It takes time, so be kind to yourself while you navigate the healing journey. They may be no longer in your life like they were, but they'll forever be in your heart.

Be patient with yourself while stuck in the in-between place—the place between here and there. That place between wanting to move on and holding on tighter. Even though right now you can't see it through your tear-filled eyes, you'll get through this. I promise, you will. And on those hard days, remind yourself that when life doesn't give you what you want, it's because there's usually something better coming up next.

Transitional moments in our lives often revolve around rejection. We're all meant to experience it, some of us more often than others. The fear of rejection can send shivers down even the most confident person's spine. I've experienced it both professionally and in relationships, and it always hurts. That is, the rejection itself hurts. However, what does get easier is the way you bounce back from it and how you learn to let it change you in positive ways.

If you've just been rejected, you have to remember that the person who rejected you only rejected one aspect of you. They rejected the shy girl they saw at the bar, the writer who didn't fit their current needs, or the overqualified job candidate. They never got a chance to see all the layers that make you who you are today. They never got to see your depth, what moves you, what makes you smile, what puts tears in your eyes. They never saw past that one facet you presented.

In a world of billions, not everyone is compatible. This one rejection doesn't define you, it doesn't make you any lesser. You're not losing out on anything because it was never meant to work out. Don't chase after the things that aren't

for you or you'll close yourself off to the things that'll actually set your heart on fire.

And in the end, you know what's worse than being rejected? Not knowing. Being the person who plays it safe, the person who's still wondering because they never took a chance. So maybe you feel sad right now, or maybe you're ashamed, but you have something special in the palm of your hands. You're brave. You're the one who tries, the one who takes risks. You're the one who looks fear in the eye and gives it a shot anyway. Those who don't get rejected as much as you do may not have hurt as deeply, but they have to live with that dull pain of a lifetime of what-ifs.

Putting yourself out there is one of the hardest things to do in this world because so much value, internal and external, is placed on acceptance and success. But the only real failure is not trying.

If you're feeling sad about being rejected, you've done something that so many wished they had the bravery to do, and you should be proud of yourself. Damn proud.

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She doesn't see it yet but there's hope. There is someone out there made just for her.

Someone who won't miss the hurt in her eyes when she hides it behind a smile.

Someone she'll be able to be herself with without fear of feeling judged.

Someone who will make her feel good about herself when she feels unlovable.

Someone who will know her darkest secrets and still love her with every fiber of their being.

Someone who will listen as she tells them all about the hardships that made her who she is today. And when she expects them to run away, they'll come closer.

*She* is all of us.

The hurt and depth of yet another betrayal don't have to turn you bitter. You don't have to become one of the hard-hearted.

You don't have to become someone who hurts people in an attempt to get even. You don't.

You don't have control over how people treat you, but you do have control over how you react to them.

You, more than anyone, know what it's like to be hurt by the people you trusted the most—to feel like your insides have been torn apart. You, more than anyone, know that no one deserves this.

Don't turn bitter because of them. Don't let them change you. Instead, love a little bit more, for the people who can't. This is how you'll heal from the weight of another betrayal. This is how.

Anxiety has a way of ruining good things that happen to me. Even when I'm happy, it comes creeping up on me like dark overcast clouds on my sunny day. I convince myself that too much happiness is suspicious, and if I'm happy right now, it's because something terrible is going to happen soon. Anxiety is not rational. Anxiety is knowing all about the logic of something impossible happening and still convincing yourself that there is a crack somewhere in that logic and that the 1-in-a-million chance of something bad happening will definitely happen to you.

Anxiety also comes with an intense mind that never stops ruminating, so much so that it becomes a form of torture. I sometimes wake up in the middle of the night sweating, thinking of the things I could have done better, like that one text a few months ago that maybe I should have worded slightly differently.

My anxiety doesn't only affect me, it affects the people around me, too. Anxiety makes my relationships harder.

I can be paranoid, and too sensitive—too much, too me. If I see changes in a friend's behavior, I come up with tons of hypothetical scenarios that would explain why they hate me right now, because if they didn't answer my text yet, clearly they do hate me. I skip right past the logical explanation that they're just busy, or feeling down about something wholly unrelated to me. I convince myself that they're mad, that I screwed up, and that they've finally had enough of my overthinking mind. I live in constant fear

of losing the people I love. I care so much that just knowing that there's a possibility that good things could end is unbearable to me.

My anxiety is trying to protect me. It's preparing me for the worst so I have a chance to grab a parachute to soften the fall. One of the downfalls, though, is that to prevent potential heartbreak, I distance myself from the people I love. It ends up affecting the relationship, even though in reality there was nothing to protect myself against to begin with.

My anxiety and I, we've gone through a lot together, and sometimes it's difficult for us to believe that people can stay even when we're not our best selves.

It's difficult for us to believe that there are people that actually stay through storms that life throws at us. It feels like utopia to believe that forever-friends do exist and that they can happen to us too. But forever-friends exist, and for them I'm thankful.

I know my need for reassurance can come across as clingy, and I feel like I constantly have to apologize for it. But I want my friends to know that this isn't something I can control yet. I know better than anyone how incredibly annoying an overactive mind is. I live with it, and, believe me, I wish I'd found the off button already.

Above all, I want my friends to know that having them by my side is the most beautiful gift that a girl like me, a girl with anxiety, could ask for. To the friends who stay, thank you.

I wish I had learned sooner that people can still love you even if their love is different than yours.

People can still love you even if they don't need you like you need them. They can still love you even if they don't say it as often as you'd like.

Sometimes you just have to trust.

Love is worth the risk.

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When you lose a friend, a little part of you dies. It hurts even more when the end is slow. It starts with them taking a bit longer to answer your texts. At first, you don't think much of it. Well, you do, but you tell yourself that it's your anxiety talking. They're probably just busy and have a lot on their plate. But then it happens again. And again. The daily phone calls? Gone. Not even weekly now.

Months go by and things don't get better. They've become a stranger, that one friend who knew your deepest secrets and whom you trusted and loved. They're gone. Gone from your life, but not from your heart, and that's why it hurts. You didn't want that friendship to end. It wasn't your choice.

Deep down you know people often grow apart. But with this friendship—this person—you thought it was different. You didn't think anything could break that bond between you. Not even time. Especially not time. But it happened. There wasn't a fight, nor a reason, but little by little you felt the distance. It was a slow death.

When you lose the one friend you thought would be in your life forever, you have to grieve. You grieve the beginning of the relationship. You grieve what you used to be. You grieve the tears you cried together, the laughs you had, and the texts that never went unanswered. You miss it.

You may even feel silly for being so sad. After all, you didn't live together, and you were never going to get married or have kids together; it wasn't like that. But none of that matters. You loved them. You still do.

Losing someone you love is a painful process no matter the circumstances.

I know you can't help but wonder why life keeps throwing people at you who aren't meant to stay.

I know you wonder if it's even worth investing in relationships if they're all meant to expire.

I know you wonder if temporary happiness is worth the pain. You wonder if you should walk away before you inevitably suffer. But maybe relationships just aren't meant to last.

Maybe there's beauty in its passing moment. Maybe life puts people in our path simply for the lessons they teach us and how they inspire us to change, to better ourselves, and to not commit the same mistakes again.

You have to believe that this person crossed your path at one point in time because you both needed each other. So hold on to the good memories, even if it hurts. Hold them tight.

If you love an overthinker, there are things you need to know.

Their neediness isn't simply neediness—it's fear.

I promise you, no one is more tired by their overactive mind than they are. They live with it every day, and wish they could live life without the dozen hypotheticals invading each moment. But they can't.

It's sometimes difficult to see, but there is beauty in overthinking. Those people who are most afraid to hurt are also those ones who love the most. If you love an overthinker, you should appreciate that.

Be there for them.

Tell them you're not going away.

Reassure them.

They are still learning to trust. They're learning to let go of their fears because the one before you walked away after love got a little hard. They are fighting every day to win the biggest battle, the battle against their own mind.



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by Eileen Lamb

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EILEEN LAMB is the founder of The Autism Cafe and author of *All Across The Spectrum*. Born in France, she now lives in Austin, Texas, with her husband and two sons, Charlie and Jude. On her blog, she shares the ups and downs of raising a severely autistic child while being on the autism spectrum herself. In her free time, Eileen enjoys daydreaming, wine, and road trips.

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who they are,*

not who you  
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I wish I had learned sooner that people can  
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People can still love you even if they don't need you like  
you need them. They can still love you even if they don't say  
it as often as you'd like.

Sometimes you just have to trust.

Love is worth the risk.

Loss is how  
the universe steers you

*in the right direction.*

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