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Grieving love

WHEN a relationship ends, there will inevitably be the process that follows – sadness, anger and questioning. But eventually you will get over it and find an even greater love that will fill your heart with happiness and joy.

When a relationship does end you should properly heal before moving forward. I have made the mistake in the past of not taking a step back and going into fresh romance before properly recovering from the heartbreak.

So many will just get back onto dating apps, go on dates, have one night stands and inevitably become disappointed and even more disillusioned than before. Just like when someone dies and you go through a grieving process, a relationship ending is similar in that a loved one has left you. Yes, you might be able to be friends, but it's likely you won't be able to maintain that friendship for long.

You might have just come out of a wonderful relationship where everything seemed perfect, but then the guy ends things and suddenly doesn't love you anymore. You start the "recovery" and close friends give you different advice including getting right back out there on the dating scene again.

This is the point we must stop and listen to our heads, rather than our hearts or close friends and go through the grieving process.

I sit here writing this after a relationship ended a few months ago. A short relationship, but one I was invested in nonetheless. Instead of taking a break I went back on to Tinder and have recently had numerous dates. These guys have been judgmental, sleazy and just very bad people. I mean there are certain people who have made me feel good about myself, but I want a long-term relationship. I want to find the one.

When we continue to date and don't find the one we are left disappointed, upset and hurt. Sometimes you have the fear that you might not ever find someone again and indulge in even more rubbish dates. But why? Why not just take a moment and breathe? Relax. Watch those movies you wanted to watch. Go take a solo trip and be happy again.

Sometimes it is hard but you have to walk away, especially from something you hold close to your heart, in order to move forward.

There is a line in the movie *Ae Dil Hai Mushkil*, which I'll translate into English for you, "We don't choose to fall in love, but we are able to walk away from that love" and this is something you must do.

If the guy comes back, he is not worth a minute of your time. No one deserves someone who is going to hurt you time and time again. Just stop for a moment, relax and when you are ready to fully love again, that is when you should start dating again.

'I could just let my emotions flow'

HOW ARTIST SABA RIZVI USED THE HEALING POWER OF ART TO FIND HER WAY BACK FROM A HORRIFIC CAR CRASH

by ASJAD NAZIR

THIS month Saba Rizvi will unveil her debut collection. For the talented artist, this means much more than just showing off her paintings, but the end of a difficult journey and the beginning of an exciting next chapter in her life.

Toronto-based Saba was a focused second year medical student looking forward to a bright career when a horrific car accident saw her lose everything she knew. *Eastern Eye* caught up with Saba to talk about her remarkable road to recovery, brain injury, art, inspiration, future hopes and more.

You were carefree, but focused. Then you had your accident. Tell us about it.

The accident was a hit and run, causing my car to roll about four or five times down a 25-foot ditch. The driver's side was indented from the top and we landed sideways. Witnesses managed to pull us out of the car.

What happened after the accident?

I was taken to hospital and was sent home after a few X-rays of my arms and back. A head CT scan was not done. I was informed the next day that I had fractured my finger. What they hadn't realised was that I had sustained a brain injury, dislocated my jaw, and developed fibromyalgia (hypersensitivity of the nerves and muscles to

any stimuli). The (internal) injuries were not recognised or taken seriously because I looked physically "normal".

How did having these injuries affect you?

A brain injury makes it very difficult to function. I had to quit school and was unable to keep a job at that time. It causes severe migraines, dyslexia, and insomnia, to name a few. Fibromyalgia causes clothing or water to feel like painful stimuli – it makes it feel as if you have severe sunburn coupled with the worst flu symptoms 24/7. My jaw dislocation made it difficult to talk or eat.

Tell us about the road to recovery.

The road to recovery was very difficult because the injuries can only be managed, not treated. Some medications cause more symptoms than relief. I learned to manage my symptoms via medication and art. Recovery consists of pre-planning my days and ensuring I only engage in activities that will not further exacerbate my pain levels.

What was the lowest point for you?

The lowest point was learning to manage the symptoms only to find that they cannot be controlled. Finding a way to manage the symptoms to a tolerable degree was difficult, but then the brain injury and fibromyalgia flaring up worse

than before was disheartening. The symptoms can't be managed the same way every time, or even to the same degree as they are affected by various triggers such as extreme weather, medication, stress and fatigue. So, you can overcome what you thought was the worst flare up of your life, which lasted anywhere from days to months, just to have an even worse one a few weeks later.

What was the biggest challenge to recovery?

The biggest challenge is dealing with people who don't understand or accept your situation because they can't visibly see an injured limb. People often believe invisible disabilities are a call for attention and react negatively. Dealing with negative people is a barrier to recovery.

How much did the support of family and friends help?

Family and friends' support is crucial because living through pain is not easy. Sometimes just having the support to sit quietly and not do anything is more important than any other treatment. Peace of mind is much needed when you live with chronic pain.

When did you decide to leave medicine?

I was determined for years to go back to studying, but didn't receive the proper treatment for about four years, worsening my symptoms. I realised

the temporary improvements, the mental and physical toll of medicine did not take priority over my health.

How did you connect with art?

I was exploring the different ways to express myself and relax when I remembered how much I loved to draw and paint. I started painting again and found I could just let my emotions flow. Art is a great alternative to classical meditation as you lose yourself in art, focus on the moment and just relax.

Tell us about your work.

My work focus is primarily abstract expressionism. Due to my brain injury, I have lost the ability to draw or paint realistic images. I work with mostly acrylic and oil paint on canvas. I try to promote positive mental health via my paintings as the paintings are my story, as well as the story of everyone else who is going through something.

Where do you draw your inspiration from?

I am inspired by my own life experiences. I have a work called *Migraine*, where I decided to start painting while I had a severe migraine. I just let my emotions onto the canvas. I remember choosing colours and letting the brush/palette knife do its thing. I try not to preplan my paintings and let the art flow through. The resulting painting was that of someone enduring a migraine, with the use of a palette knife and the colours showing the different pain levels, and how one feels. It helped me by visually explaining to others what I go through when I have a migraine. This was especially important with people who have never experienced a migraine, and don't understand what it feels like.

Who is your work aimed at?

My work is aimed at everyone and anyone. For example, my pieces *Migraine* and *Fibromyalgia* in particular are aimed at those who are going through the same experiences and need a visual representation to connect with or share with others who don't understand the extent of their injuries or pain via verbal communication. *Repose and Tranquility* encourage positivity and peace. They are aimed at people who need to look at artwork to relax, take a breather or gain inner strength. The idea is to form an overall positive visual and emotional connection allowing the viewer to know that there are others out there who are experiencing the same thing. Sometimes a conversation about what someone is feeling is too hard for some people, and looking at artwork whenever they feel upset, or happy, allows them to fulfil that desire to find someone who gets it.

What is your favourite piece?

I have a few favourites. Creating the work *Migraine* resulted in my migraine decreasing by 40 per cent that night and it helped others understand why they are so debilitating. *Not Your Average Rose* is meaningful because it represents a rose that is blooming despite its negative environment. *Tranquility* is also empowering and about weathering the storm. Signified by the use of an elephant, the multicoloured *Emerge* is about progression, determination and strength. *Fibromyalgia* shows the silent pain sufferers from this

condition endure. *Neuroplasticity* is about finding new connections and rebuilding yourself after something traumatic like a brain injury.

What kind of art do you like?

I am a huge fan of artists such as Monet, Caravaggio and Jackson Pollock. There are so many other great artists who have left a lasting legacy.

What advice would you give those recovering from a serious accident?

Educate yourself and be easy on yourself. Be vocal about what you are going through and what you need. You will meet more negativity than support. Others will be quick to tell you you're not trying hard enough to recover or are just being lazy, but the negative talk is representative of others and not you. Don't take on others' stress, and give yourself time to recover. Rest is the most important part of recovery. Doing nothing is actually beneficial to your health. You will eventually emerge out of everything. Discussing your story and experience is a great way to let others know that they have someone they can contact if they too are experiencing something similar. It provides an outlet for both you and someone else, as well as a means to explore more treatment and recovery options and to make new connections.

What kind of work are you doing to raise awareness about the issue?

I am a member of organisations including Brain Injury Society of Toronto and Brain Injury Association of Peel Halton. Otherwise, I try to share a lot of articles and information whenever I see something that is relevant. There is not enough information out there and just sharing content is sometimes enough to eliminate stigma.

What is your future plan?

I hope to go back to school for something related to therapy, as well as pursuing my career in art.

Where do you draw your inner strength from?

I have a strong belief in myself and my ability to do well in life. That itself stems from my family support and my faith in God.

Why do you love art?

Art is expressive and very subjective. It's a very personal experience creating a piece of art as it takes a part of you with it and functions as a release. At the same time, I can create a piece of art and have a very specific purpose behind the piece, but an individual from a different walk of life can look at the same piece and take away something I may have never considered. A piece of art can create a much-needed connection by igniting emotions in someone and bringing the positivity they need at that moment of time. It's something they can visit time and again.

See Instagram and Facebook: @sabsrizviart and Twitter: @sabsrizvi



Mita Mistry

The art of ancient healing



Big Fat Peaceful Wedding

YOUR wedding day is meant to be one of the happiest of your life, but the fairy tale can often turn into a nightmare. The happiness of the occasion can be shattered by an intolerably demanding bride for whom no one can do anything right, an over protective mother-in-law, envy from loved ones or unwanted guests. There is plenty that can be done to calm down the "bridezilla" and bring tranquility to an otherwise stressful day. With that in mind here are some tips to minimise wedding stress.

Manage expectations and set boundaries: Stress, disappointment and misunderstanding can be avoided or minimised by managing expectations and setting clear boundaries with family members. Clearly communicate your wishes for the celebration. Keep an open mind to ideas from family, but ultimately it's the happy couple's moment.

Positive affirmations: These can help shift your mind from negative to positive thoughts and expecting the best from this new chapter in your life. Try repeating them for a few minutes to uplift your thoughts.

"I have a strong relationship with my (daughter-in-law, mother-in-law, spouse)."
"We work things out calmly by talking."
"My relationships are happy and healthy because people want the best for me."
"We are open and sharing with each other."

Visualisations: Don't underestimate the power of visualisation exercises during a period of transition. Marriage is one of life's biggest changes, so a time to be settling down can ironically feel very unsettling. It is normal to feel anxious about the new life-long commitment, but you can take control of these feelings by talking with a partner or confidant. Perhaps picture the peaceful union of two souls in harmony or a new adventure with your little family. Visualising a positive future can promote feelings of warmth, happiness and excitement.

Yoga, mindfulness and meditation: To cultivate inner joy and peace try yoga, meditation or mindfulness. Making time to connect with your soul is an act of self care because your mind, body and emotions become one, making space for compassion, which is a secret ingredient for a successful marriage.

Kindness: Remember to be kind to yourself and those around you. Kindness can be a small act and it's free.

Enjoy the moment: There is no such thing as a perfect wedding and the chances are everyone is doing the best they can to ensure a happy day for all. So enjoy every moment; the good, bad, beautiful, emotional and ugly because embracing such moments is what the union of marriage is all about.

Mita Mistry is a highly qualified five-element acupuncturist and an expert in other ancient healing techniques. To find out more about Mita's work see @MitaMistry on Twitter and www.mitamistry.co.uk