

# HERE'S TO THE HEARTS THAT ACHE

## 敬那些痛著的心

*A bestselling psychologist examines the topic of hardship through the prism of film*

This book takes eighteen well-known movies and uses the experiences of their protagonists as a way of exploring life's pains and tribulations. Learn the difference between chasing your dreams and building them from *La La Land*; the dangers of perfectionism from *Black Swan*; how to turn your life around from *Wild*; and how to deal with grief from *Zinnia Flower*.

Su Shun-Hui's own experience taught her how a lack of balance in life leads to illness, and the ache of illness compels you to face up to your problems. Our childhood, relationships, family, and sense of self – they each bring their own difficulties, and with a serious sickness their combined weight can feel even more overwhelming. In investigating all these different varieties of ache, this book will help the reader to become reconciled with themselves, to learn the right moment to let go, and to retain faith in love even after being hurt.

Su has drawn on her considerable experience as a counsellor to create this cinematic course in self-care that will enable readers to handle pain with composure.

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Su Shun-Hui has a masters from the Institute of Psychology and Counselling at the National Taipei University of Education, and has twenty years' experience in psychological counselling. She has worked as a social worker and counsellor at various medical centers and hospices, and is a specialist in childhood trauma; she currently works at the Puchen-Hsinyu Space Mental Health Counseling Center, an institute she founded. Her books have received the Golden Tripod Awards for social science and literature.



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## CONTENTS

### **1. Here's to the hearts that ache and to the fools who dream – *La La Land***

Sebastian, Mia and the big risk of choosing to build your dreams rather than chase them 21

Healing the heart: If the world doesn't make you happy, make a new world! 27

### **2. Even amidst the pain, just be sure to notice the collateral beauty – *Collateral Beauty***

The lessons that Death, Time and Love taught Howard 31

Healing the heart: Blessed are those who have experienced emotional pain. Having seen the light at the end of the tunnel, they are able to understand love more deeply. 37

### **3. How to wake up when you're suffering from the pain of love – *The Girl on the Train***

Rachel's muddled life 41

Healing the heart: The pain of withdrawal is necessary! Sobering up is the only way to regain strength. 48

### **4. If separation or bereavement leaves us feeling lost or incomplete, how do we ensure that life goes on? – *Brooklyn***

Eilis's dilemma: Where is home? 53

Healing the heart: We can never move towards love if we never leave. 60

### **5. Feeling useless and the emotional tsunami that comes with retirement – *About Schmidt***

How does Warren face growing old alone? 65

Healing the heart: The best way to deal directly with loneliness is to truly experience life. 71

### **6. How do you turn your life around when you are empty, numb, and falling apart? – *Wild***

Cheryl's personal journey 77

Healing the heart: Life is not about luck; unique experiences are what allow us to live life to the fullest. 083

### **7. Being misunderstood is like being in darkness; only love can shine a light – *Room***

Joy survived the trauma in her life thanks to love. 87

Healing the heart: It's enough that you have suffered; you don't have to keep paying for the rest of your life. 93

### **8. Waking from a deep sleep and realizing who you are – *Joy***

How talented Joy was able to work towards her dream again 99

Healing the heart: Letting the experience of giving your all sustain you for your next endeavor. 103

### **9. After losing a loved one, when does the pain of living alone finally go away? – *Zinnia Flower***

Nobody can understand the grief of someone who has lost their spouse 109

Healing the heart: The deeper the pain, the more you can appreciate and understand mercy. 113

**10. Even though my happiness was too fleeting, I am still being brave for you – *P.S. I Love You***

Holly's new life after saying goodbye to her true love 119

Healing the heart: Life is always changing, which is why being able to keep living is such a miracle. 124

**11. When we have to face the fear of letting go, we must believe that love will always go on – *We Bought a Zoo***

Benjamin's courage and fragility 129

Healing the heart: Darkness cannot banish darkness.; only love can bring the light. 135

**12. Striving to achieve perfection is a form of gradual suicide – *Black Swan***

In order to achieve perfection, Nina walks on the path of self-destruction 141

Healing the heart: Your existence enriches the beauty and color of the world. 145

**13. A mask of vanity and the fear of being rejected – *Blue Jasmine***

Jasmine is depressed and is trying to escape reality 153

Healing the heart: The pain and heartache of trying to be better than the rest; how to find inner peace. 159

**14. Without you, I have nothing – *Reign Over Me***

Charlie's deep sense of helplessness and indelible pain after his world is shattered 167

Healing the heart: People have to face the pain in order to heal. 174

**15. Accepting death is a form of immortality – *Wit***

Professor Bearing deals with severe illness and the loneliness of a hospital room 191

Healing the heart: You need to recognize your illness, become familiar with your illness, and understand your illness. 188

**16. Growing old together, and a hopelessness that cannot be escaped – *Amour***

Georges and Anne love each other until they have no more strength 195

Healing the heart: Writing a soothing and gentle conclusion to one's life. 199

**17. The pain of unfaithfulness and learning to forgive – *The Descendants***

As Matt deals with loss, he understands how to cherish what he has 205

Healing the heart: You have to acknowledge before you can forgive. 211

**18. How can we go on after we have lost the one we love? – *Rabbit Hole***

How can Becca and Howie still love each other after they lose their son? 217

Healing the heart: Just because you did something right, it doesn't mean the sadness will go away quickly. 233

**Sebastian, Mia and the big risk of choosing to build your dreams rather than chase them**

Life is a process of gradually building your dreams – until reality hits and we are forced to stop dreaming. Reality makes us think that our dreams are no more than wishful thinking, something only fools would believe in.

We have to make our dreams come true in order to make a mark on the world. Even though everyone has dreams, not many people can persist in making them happen. The monster of reality gobbles up our dreams until not even a trace of them is left.

Dreamers are often optimistic before they figure out how to realize their dreams, and will try and seize any opportunity that comes their way. Too many people go wild chasing after opportunities or rewards, battling for an opportunity to show what they can do, to be discovered.

But this process is filled with setbacks. Dreamers feel that they are not being taken seriously, they feel embarrassed, and they might doubt their own abilities: *I am not good enough. I don't have what it takes and people are not going to accept me. The world does not think I have any talent.*

Before long, worries and insecurities pile on top of each other. *Should I make compromises or even give up my dream so I can finally cope with the realities of life?* Questions like these are constantly nagging people who chase their dreams. They might think, *Should I try to be with the person I love and live a quiet life, sacrificing my dreams and letting my talent go to waste? Should I forget my dream, my calling, even though I want it so desperately?* These questions never go away, turning into a knot in our stomach that makes it hard to breathe.

While we are embracing our dreams, the many voices of reality interrupt us again and again. "Stop dreaming about things that will never happen!" "You need a reality check." "How much of your life are you going to waste on this dream of yours?" We might have to face the fact that we don't have any answers for our family or our loved ones. Worst of all, we don't even know how to answer the questions we are asking ourselves!

In *La La Land*, Sebastian and Mia are two struggling young artists who are trying to follow their dreams. They meet each other by chance and seem to be soul mates. After falling in love, they encourage each other to pursue their dreams throughout the winter, spring, summer, fall, and second winter they spend together.

In that first winter, they both felt sorry for themselves because nobody recognized their talent. We all have times in our lives when we hit a wall. We repeatedly come up against obstacles, struggling to find the path that will let us keep pursuing our dreams and unsure what we are doing here.

By spring, Sebastian and Mia both recognized the depth of each other's talent and the love blossoming between them. They understood how their talents and artistic personalities combined and they understand the setbacks and challenges in their environment. They came to cherish each other, each becoming a source of warm understanding and unshakable confidence for the other.

Chasing a dream with a partner is empowering. The love between Sebastian and Mia blazed like the summer sun. Their mutual love and support gave them boundless creativity and hope.

But even their love and support was not enough to overcome the obstacles of real life. There were things that they had to do in life, and compromises they had to make with reality just so that their dreams could continue. When autumn arrived, both Sebastian and Mia felt hopeless. This hopelessness came from the friction between reality and their dreams; the choice

they were forced to make between love and the need to put food on the table; and the imbalance of struggling for something they believed in and loneliness.

When winter came again, both characters had to make a choice about their future. When they started building their dreams rather than chasing them, they finally stopped treading water and reached a point where they had to commit their entire lives to their dreams. Their focus had to be all-encompassing; they had no time for second-guessing. And yet this was the moment where they realize they have to end their relationship. Even though they knew their love was genuine, they chose to give up on each other. They had to keep their lives hurtling forward so they could keep building their dreams. If they are lucky, they will become a bright star for one moment, throwing off an incredible light and heat for the entire world.

Helping someone else succeed is one way of showing your love, even if it means the two of you will not be able to stay together until the end.

During this process, the trials and opportunities of life will make us struggle and feel unsure. After repeated blows, our hearts break and we feel pain deep inside.

At one point, Mia felt overwhelmed by all of her unsuccessful auditions and the countless times people had rejected her or ignored her. She didn't want to try anymore – she wanted to give up. She was convinced she was not good enough and that her goal of becoming an actress was a pipe dream. She was afraid that she couldn't withstand another setback. When Sebastian asked her why she didn't want to go to an important audition she said, "It hurts a little bit too much." She also told Sebastian in a fragile voice: "Maybe I'm not good enough."

Haven't we all experienced that before? We feel afraid, worried that everything we have wanted to do and everything we thought we could become was simply impossible. We think that way because we have been rejected, we do not see results after we put in extra effort, and we are not appreciated for what we do. When a person hits rock bottom, what choice should they make?

Most people will decide to admit defeat, because giving up is easy and persisting is incredibly hard. All they can do is bury their aspirations and their yearnings. Who would want to keep being so foolish? Who would continue to passionately follow their dreams? Who would keep going after coming up against so many obstacles?

Sometimes we need someone beside us who believes in us and helps us feel confident again. That person can help us remember who we are, what we really want, and what our true talent is. At that critical point, Sebastian convinced Mia to go to the interview. At her audition, the director and the producer asked Mia to tell a story and she talked about France.

Mia told a moving story about her aunt. Mia said, "My aunt used to live in Paris.... she told us that she jumped into the river once, barefoot. She smiled. Leapt, without looking and tumbled into the Seine. The water was freezing, she spent a month sneezing, but said she would do it again. Here's to the ones who dream, foolish as they may seem. Here's to the hearts that ache. Here's to the mess we make."

Dreamers are always thought to be fools. Dreamers face emotional blows and their hearts always ache. But if the things people dreamed about were easily achievable, why would they be called dreams in the first place?

Before their dreams are realized, dreamers always struggle with doubt. They have to face attacks and ridicule. But if they are surrounded by people saying discouraging words or throwing cold water on their ideas, dreamers have to work even harder and increase their own ambition.

Even when a dream is about to come true, dreamers still have to face difficult questions that involve the intersection of love, dreams and choices.

Nothing is perfect in this world. Sometimes the ability to gain comes from the ability to give things up. Each decision can lead to different results. After we make a decision, we might feel regret, or we might have thoughts like *If we had done it differently, how would things have turned out?* The regret and sadness we feel after a decision is something that we have to accept.

But one of the most beautiful things in life is smiling when we look back at what we have done, despite all the regrets. It is beautiful to celebrate our loved one's dreams, our own dreams, our aching hearts and our resilient souls.

### **If the world doesn't make you happy, make a new world!**

As you are pursuing your dream, you will be called a fool, you will be considered an outsider, and you will hear criticism and rejection around you.

But you need to know your own strengths. If someone who loves you tells you that you are good enough and that you are a great person, then you can consider yourself lucky. If nobody tells you this, you should encourage yourself by thinking of all the hard work you have done and the persistence you have.

When you are chasing your dreams, you are trying to become the person that you want to be. You are trying to live the life that you have wanted for a long time. Other people will have trouble understanding – in fact they might be unwilling to understand or to listen to you.

When I was trying to make my ideas become reality, I was rejected many times. I thought that all of my persistence was laughable, considering all the problems I was facing.

Some people laughed at my dreams. You really are dreaming, they said!

I was also shut down by people. They said that my ideas were not important.

Many people asked me quite frankly why I thought my dream was achievable. Some even looked at me disdainfully as they said, "What does your dream have to do with me?"

All of those limits and setbacks are there to help you understand that when someone is finally willing to give you an opportunity, you will appreciate it, you will make use of it, and you will be grateful. You will know not to take it for granted, because each opportunity is rare. You will remember the person who gave you a chance and you will remember the people who listened to you. Finally you will try hard to keep training and to keep accomplishing things.

You work hard so that after all the training you can let your beautiful light shine.

Today, looking back at all the experiences I had in my life, I can see all the setbacks and the limitations created by the environment I was in. I was afraid to do something new, I was afraid of taking on a challenge, and the mainstream views of the time meant I was unable to receive recognition or appreciation for my dream. In hindsight, what I saw most clearly was that steadily increasing my own strength was the one thing I needed to keep doing after every setback.

This was a process of finding what I really wanted. The more people questioned my dream, the more it tested my commitment to my dream and my ambition.

French fashion designer Coco Chanel said, “My life didn’t please me, so I created my life,” and “Better to work on one’s own dignity and beauty than worry about being abandoned or disgraced by others.”

If this world doesn’t please you, then you need to create a new world. The world of the past has limitations and rules of the game that have been in place for a long time. It has never seen the dream that is in your heart and it does not understand the value of the things you care about. That is why you are so important. You make it possible to create something new in this world, to have a new vision.

So you need to continue to respect your dreams! You also need to encourage the dreams of others.

Here’s to the fools who chase their dreams! They are the ones who bring passion and progress to the world.