

Appendix: The “I’m About to Totally Freak Out” Checklist of Alternatives

Here is a list of things you could do when you think you're about to lose it. It's meant for those super-acute moments when you basically can't even remember your own name and you just need someone to give you a task. It is a semi-serious list divided into three categories (distract, indulge, fight) of things you could do instead of drunk-dialing, head-shaving, burning things down, or devouring many cakes at one sitting. I can personally attest to the viability of these items to take my mind off what ails me, even if it's only for a few minutes. Refer to this list when you are desperate for something, anything to do to distract, indulge, or fight against your sorrow.

Distract it

- Dump every single item of clothing you own on the floor and divide into two piles: things that make you feel attractive and things that don't. Take the latter pile to Goodwill.
- Organize your Netflix Queue
- Go to Amazon.com, Goodreads.com, or Shelfari.com and review all the relationship books you've ever read; begin dialogue with likeminded readers. Make your suggested reading list for others who are going through heartbreak.
- Organize your iPod playlists

- Identify 5-7 DVDs that do not make you cry. Could be funny movies or just absorbing ones. Keep this stack handy and when you feel yourself start to hyperventilate, pop one in the player.

My list:

40-Year Old Virgin

Anchorman

All About Eve

Flight of the Conchords (OK, this is the funniest thing I have EVER seen. =)

His Girl Friday

Intolerable Cruelty

Out of the Past

The Lady Eve

The Wire (Any season)

The Women (original version)

Any movie with a fashion show or makeover

I queried friends and these were on their lists:

Battlestar Galactica

Big Lebowski

Bowfinger

Coming to America

Dodgeball

Love, Actually

Mulan

Office Space

Princess Bride

Raising Arizona

- Popular lore (now debunked) has it that Eskimos have countless names for snow, perhaps because snow is what they live in. Heartbroken folks live in a world of tears. Make up names for different kinds of crying. To get you started, here are a few kinds of crying that should have their own names:

Sobbing without tears

When you feel like crying, but you can't—no tears come out

Crying that overtakes you out of the blue

Crying in your sleep

You don't even know you're crying

Talking and crying at the same time

You're so sad that the person you're talking to starts crying, even though you aren't

- If you haven't already, start following people on [Twitter.com](https://twitter.com). I love Twitter, which is a social networking site that enables you to instant message with people all over the world. (Follow me! [www.twitter.com/spiver](https://twitter.com/spiver)) Someone coined the phrase “ambient intimacy” to describe Twitter and that is just right. To experience it, log on to the site,

create a user identity, find people, and start “following” them. Right now, millions of people are chatting with each other 24/7—but only in 140 character increments which is what Twitter limits you to, so no one can get overly verbose. It’s like a cocktail party that’s always going on and it enables you to get and give some human contact whenever you want. And disappear when you want. Any time day or night you can find someone to talk to.

Indulge it

- Identify 5-7 DVDs that do make you cry. I’m not talking about those dark, gloomy movies that just make you depressed—I’m talking about the ones that make you bawl like a baby. Sometimes it’s a comedy and sometimes it’s Bambi or a reality TV. For example, the television show “What Not to Wear” always makes me cry even though it’s just a fashion show that shows women how to dress to suit their size, shape, age, etc. (Something about how they always see themselves as beautiful in the end...) Keep this stack handy and when you just need to let it all out, pop one in, and sob with dignity.

My list:

A Beautiful Mind

Dark Victory

Field of Dreams

Gladiator

The Last Samurai

Stranger Than Fiction (when Will Ferrell sings “Whole Wide World)

Anything where a dog dies

I queried friends (on Twitter, actually!) and these were on their lists:

Bambi

Big Fish

Dead Poets Society

E.T.

Fiddler on the Roof

Grave of the Fireflies

The Green Mile

Hotel Rwanda

I Am Sam

Life is Beautiful

The Lion King

The Little Mermaid

Million Dollar Baby

The Notebook

Philadelphia

Sisterhood of the Traveling Pants

Steel Magnolias

Sweet November

Titanic

Whale Rider

- Make a sob-sister playlist and listen to it. Here are my top 10 songs for when I want to get all worked up. (You can go to my website to hear them, susanpiver.com/_TK)

Change Gonna Come (Sam Cooke)

Dark End of the Street (James Carr)

I Can't Stand the Rain (Ann Peebles)

I Can't Stop Loving You (Freddie Fender)

I've Been Loving You Too Long (Otis Redding)

There is an End (The Greenhorns & Holly Golightly)

What Becomes of the Broken Hearted? (Jimmy Ruffin)

When I Get Like This (Five Royales)

Whole Wide World (Wreckless Eric)

Your Precious Love (Jerry Butler)

Fight it

- For god's sake, go to the gym.
- Take on an exercise regimen you think you can't do: If you're a yogini, try a 45-minute walk/run instead. If you're a runner, go to a yoga class. If you always take Spinning, try strength training. If you don't do anything, do anything.
- Walk. Walk. Walk. Drop everything and take a walk when you feel yourself about to collapse. You can walk in the morning or you can walk at night. (If you don't live in a

scary neighborhood.) You can take a break from your desk and walk around the block. You can walk in the summer and you can walk in the winter. There's something incredibly cozy and fun about piling on coats, scarves, and hats and taking yourself for a walk when normal people would stay inside (when it's raining or snowing, for example). You are not a normal person right now. Go with it.

- Help a stranger. This may be the most time-worn suggestion of all time, but it works. The very second you help someone in need, something completely magical happens. All the energy that you had been devoting to propping yourself up turns from half-assed to raging, a force to be reckoned with—when it's aimed at someone else. Self-hatred, depression, and insecurity disappear when you put yourself in the service of another. Everything you wish you could do for yourself—take your mind off it, recover your dignity, feel good about yourself, become energized—just happens. You can help someone by:

Giving him or her money: do some research and donate to a charity. Go a little out of your comfort zone. If you could afford \$10, give \$15. If you could afford \$500, give \$750. And so on.

Volunteer: to read to people in the hospital, help out at an animal shelter, for a politician you admire, or at your church. One of the best tools I ever found for working with my depression was to volunteer at a crisis center. Talking to others in crisis balanced me out for some reason. The best kind is when you get right up in there with people (or animals)

who are in actual pain, whether physical or emotional. Let their difficulty into your heart. You'll know what to do next. (And the volunteer agency will train you, too.)

Calling them: you can also help people you already know. Call a friend or family member who is going through some difficulty. Don't talk about yourself. Keep the focus of the conversation on them.

When you turn the attention away from your suffering and instead try to help others with their own, far from being a sacrifice, it seems to be as healing (or more) for you than it is for them.

Appendix: Resources

Books

On Meditation

John Daido Looi

Finding the Still Point: A Beginner's Guide to Zen Meditation

Shambhala Publications

Sakyong Mipham

Turning the Mind into an Ally

Riverhead Trade

Larry Rosenberg

Breath by Breath: The Liberating Practice of Insight Meditation

Shambhala Publications

Shunryu Suzuki

Zen Mind, Beginner's Mind

Shambhala Publications

Tulku Thondup

The Healing Power of the Mind

Shambhala Publications

Chögyam Trungpa

Cutting Through Spiritual Materialism

Shambhala Publications

Applied Meditation: Mindfulness in Everyday Life

Tsultrim Allione

Feeding Your Demons

Harper San Francisco

Pema Chödrön

The Places that Scare You

When Things Fall Apart

Shambhala Publications

Thich Nhat Hanh

Peace Is Every Step: The Path of Mindfulness in Everyday Life

Bantam Books

Byron Katie

Loving What Is: Four Questions That Can Change Your Life

Harmony

Dalai Lama

The Art of Happiness: A Handbook for Living

Riverhead Trade

Sakyong Mipham

Ruling Your World

Morgan Road Books

Shunryu Suzuki (Author), Edward Espe Brown (Editor)

Not Always So: Practicing the True Spirit of Zen

Harper Collins

Chögyam Trungpa

Shambhala: The Sacred Path of the Warrior

Shambhala Publications

Jon Kabat-Zinn

Wherever You Go, There You Are: Mindfulness Meditation in Everyday Life

Hyperion

Meditation & the Brain

Richard J. Davidson (Editor), Anne Harrington (Editor)

Visions of Compassion: Western Scientists and Tibetan Buddhists Examine Human Nature

Oxford University Press

Daniel Goleman

Destructive Emotions: A Scientific Dialogue with the Dalai Lama

Bantam Books

Rinpoche Yongey Mingyur

The Joy of Living: Unlocking the Secret and Science of Happiness

Harmony

Loving kindness Meditation

Pema Chodron

No Time to Lose: A Timely Guide to the Bodhisattva's Way of Life

Shambhala Publications

Sharon Salzberg

A Heart as Wide as the World

Lovingkindness: The Revolutionary Art of Happiness

Shambhala Publications

Santideva

The Way of the Bodhisattva

Shambhala Publications

Chögyam Trungpa

Training the Mind and Cultivating Loving-Kindness

Shambhala Publications

Meditation Teachers

To find a Shambhala center and meditation instructor near you: shambhala.org

Other recommended meditation schools:

Vipassana: Insight Meditation Society dharma.org/ims/

Zen: San Francisco Zen Center (affiliated groups) sfzc.org/zc/maps.asp?catid=1,11

Meditation Retreat Centers

Shambhala Mountain Center

Red Feather Lakes, CO

shambhalamountain.org

Karme Choling Shambhala Meditation Center

Barnet, VT

karmecholing.org

Dechen Choling

Limoges, France

dechencholing.org

Meditation Supplies

Free meditation timer download:

<http://wcrawford.org/2006/11/09/meditation-timer-12/>

For meditation cushions, shrine tables, and other supplies:

Dharmacrafts

dharmacrafts.com

Samadhi Cushions

samadhicushions.com

Ziji

ziji.com

Blogroll

Integral Options Café (integral-options.blogspot.com)

Jonathan Foust: Serving Humanity Since 1956 (jonathanfoust.com)

Monkey Mind (monkeymindonline.blogspot.com)

Numinous Nonsense (vincenthorn.com)

Sarahcentric (Sarahcentric.com)

Shambhala Sun Magazine (shambhalasun.com)

Reverend Danny Fisher (chaplaindanny.blogspot.com/)

The Interdependence Project (theidproject.com)

The Worst Horse (theworsthorse.com/)

Tricycle Magazine: The Buddhist Review (tricycle.com)

Welcome to the Mingdom (shambloga.blogspot.com)

Online Meditation Instruction

Sakyong Mipham

Learning to Meditate

<http://www.mipham.com/videos.php?id=3>

Podcasts

Buddhist Geeks (personallifemedia.com/podcasts/236-buddhist-geeks)

The Interdependence Project Podcast (theidproject.com/podcast.htm)

