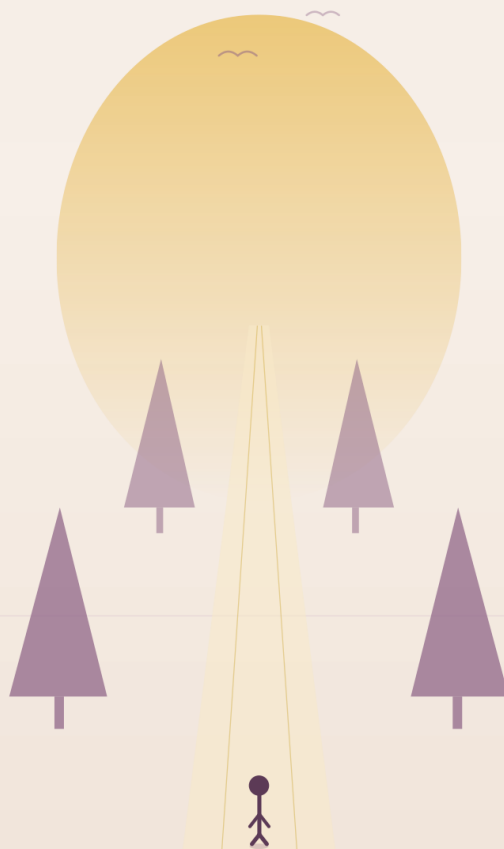


FIVE THINGS NOBODY TELLS A MAN GOING THROUGH A BREAK-UP

A Short, Honest Starting Point



BILLY'S BOOKS

Break-up recovery, written by a man, for men.

William 'Billy' Brown

Nobody hands you a manual for this. If you're reading this because you're in it right now, or because someone you care about is, I want to say one thing before anything else: what you're feeling has a shape, and you're not the first man to feel it, even if it feels that way at 2am.

I wrote a full series about this — three books and a workbook, built from my own marriage ending and the year that followed — but I wanted something shorter to start with. Just five things I wish someone had told me plainly, instead of me having to find them out the hard way, one at a time, over about two years.

1. Anger usually arrives before grief does, and that's normal

Most break-up advice assumes tears come first. For a lot of men, anger shows up first instead — short-fused, out of proportion, aimed at people who don't deserve it. It took me a long time to work out that the anger wasn't a separate problem. It was grief, wearing a disguise I found easier to have in public.

If you've been snapping at people who don't deserve it, or feeling a low hum of anger you can't quite explain, that's not a character flaw. It's often just the first wave of something bigger arriving in a form that felt more acceptable to let out.

2. Your body will tell you before your mind admits it

Clenched jaw. Chest tightness. Appetite that disappears, or appetite that won't switch off. Sleep that falls apart in one direction or the other. I genuinely thought I was having heart problems at one point. I wasn't. I was grieving, and grief doesn't stay in the emotional part of you — it moves into the body, especially when you're not giving it anywhere else to go.

Worth saying plainly: if this persists for weeks rather than days, get it looked at. Not because heartbreak needs a medical label to be real, but because there's a difference between grief that's moving through you and something like depression that's settled in and needs proper treatment to shift.

3. Going to the doctor about it is not a failure of manhood

I put off that appointment for months. Some part of me had decided that talking to someone about how I felt was something other men did, not something I did. A mate finally said something blunt enough to get me through the door: you'd take the car in if it was making that noise, why won't you do the same for yourself?

I'm glad he said it. What I got, eventually, was an accurate diagnosis and an actual path forward, instead of just quietly white-knuckling it for another year. If a part of you has been wondering whether what you're feeling is more than ordinary sadness, that's worth answering honestly, with an actual professional, not just by pushing through.

4. There's a long, undramatic middle that nobody warns you about

The crisis passes eventually. You stop needing daily check-ins. You can function again. And then there's this long stretch — could be a year, could be closer to three — where you're not in crisis anymore, but you're not who you used to be either, and you're not sure yet who you're becoming.

Nobody prepares you for this part because it doesn't make a dramatic story. But it's real, it's normal, and it doesn't mean something's wrong with you for not being 'over it' on someone else's timeline. There isn't a schedule. There's just the next ordinary day, and the one after that.

5. It's a chapter break, not a full stop

I know exactly how that sounds from the inside of a break-up — like something people say because they don't know what else to offer. I felt the same way when I first heard it. But I'm now years past the marriage that ended mine, and I can tell you plainly: the man who felt like his whole life had ended at that kitchen table could not have imagined the life he'd eventually build. I couldn't have designed it. I just had to keep going long enough to find out.

That's really the whole message underneath everything else I've written since. It doesn't feel true right now, and it doesn't need to, for it to still be true later.

If any of this landed, the full story — the marriage, the diagnosis, the bottom, and everything that came after — is told in detail across three books: *The Space Between*, *Still Standing*, and *Loving on Purpose*, along with a companion workbook if you want somewhere to actually work through your own version of it.

You can also read the whole thing that started it, my autobiography, *Billy*, if you want the fuller story behind the story.

Wherever you are in this tonight, I'm glad you read this far. Keep going.

— ***William 'Billy' Brown***