

Look before you speak

BUSHRA ZAMAN

Sometimes, in an attempt to speak discreetly to someone else in a public place, we may try to speak in a language we assume others present will not understand.

Suppose you're on a flight going abroad with your family. You carefully eye the food cart coming towards you, but it pauses after reaching the row in front of you. You wait for what feels like hours to finally look at your parent and go, "Juice shesh hoye jachhe toh. Beshi kore chaile ki taka dite hobe? Ekhon bujhlam manush keno lukay khabar ante chay."

Little did you know, the flight attendant was a Bangladeshi too. To your bewilderment, she replies with "Apu, juice ta free. Taka diye juice flight e ante chaile bag check er shomoy fele dile toh abar loss," after which you melt down your seat, only to find out you don't have enough leg room to hide. Do planes offer pillows large enough to bury your whole face in so no one can see you throughout the remainder of your flight?

The potentially embarrassing situations pile up even after you reach your destination. You could be speaking in Bangla to a family member about how you plan to eat store-bought sandwiches as a dinner and not dine at the hotel. I mean, hotel dinners can be crazy expensive, so avoiding them would not be much of a stretch. What may, however, be an awkward surprise would be to discover that one of the hotel staff understood what you were saying.



How? Don't ask me.

As inconvenient as it is when people hear or understand what you are saying when you would rather they did not, the fault is not with the language barrier, but with us. Sure,

sometimes situations require you to talk to someone in confidence, but you can just as well speak to them later when you are alone with them. Not only is it sometimes considered rude to deliberately speak in a manner that is not understandable to others right in front of you, but sometimes people can misinterpret the general undertone of what you are saying as insulting.

For example, you work in customer service and have a native tongue different from that of the general population. You might be talking about how the weather is unpleasant but the customers you are serving may feel like you are talking about them. This may lead them to wonder if there is something wrong with them today, and could potentially make them feel belittled.

Similarly, in case you're on an international flight and there is an unruly child sitting in front of you, you might complain about this child to your friend or family member sitting next to you without others understanding. On the contrary, you could also just ask the flight attendant for a solution or very politely ask the person responsible for the child to help you out.

Communication can be hard, let us not complicate things further by bringing in unnecessary language barriers.

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A BREAKUP SURVIVAL GUIDE

You Have 99 Problems, but a Breakup Isn't One

SYEDA TASNIM ISLAM

It finally happened. You, once a hopeless romantic and now simply hopeless, are now having to come to terms with your relationship ending. The butterflies in your stomach have died and the happy tune in your heart has been replaced by an orchestra consisting of only tiny violins playing.

Allow me to be annoying and remind you that there's still hope left. It may feel overwhelming right now, but there are ways you can heal that broken heart.

GIVE INTO THE CLICHÉ

Be as whiny, dramatic, and pessimistic you want to be. Cry a river, throw out the gifts, write angsty poems that your sleepless brain will definitely remind you of at exactly 3 in the morning a year from now. Remember, you don't have to seem strong for anyone. Let yourself *feel the feels*.

Bring out the big guns: Taylor Swift songs

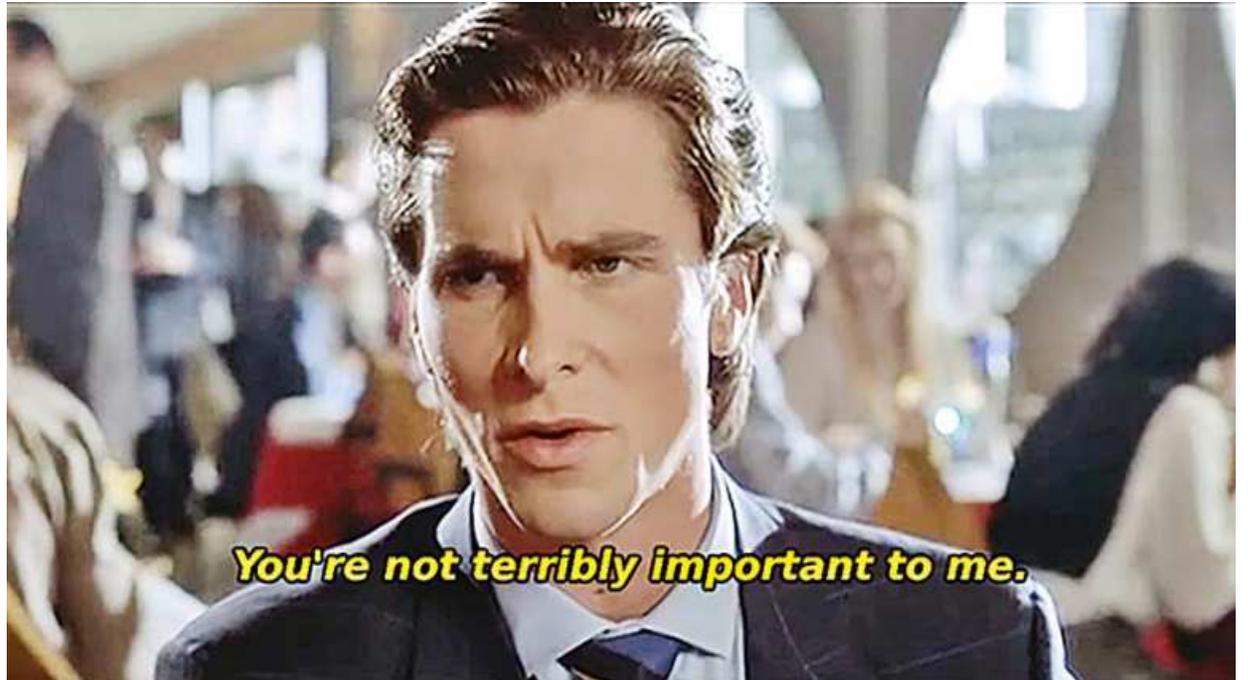
It's time. As much as we like to make fun of Taylor Swift's songs, we cannot deny that the woman just *gets it*. Go ahead and play "Blank Space" on repeat.

PHONE A FRIEND (OR TEN)

Surrounding yourself with people that love and care about you is the best remedy for loneliness. Sometimes all you need is to be reminded of how much more there is to you and your life, how your presence not only matters, but is appreciated. Knowing that there are people who are ready and willing to shower you with unconditional love and affection will help you realise that love not only exists in other forms, but that platonic love is just as beautiful.

USE YOUR TIME

Okay, this is exciting. Relationships are extremely time consuming, and sometimes we can lose ourselves while tending to someone else's needs. You'll quickly realise how much more time you have to yourself now, and even though it can feel lonely, it is an *opportunity*. Be as selfish



with your time as you want. Have your solo dance parties, binge watch all your favourite shows, learn a new skill, get back to old hobbies or just pick up a new one – the possibilities are endless!

PROCESS, AND FACE THE REALITY

Whether it was a good relationship, or a toxic one, it ended for a reason. Focus on that reason. Allow yourself to reflect back on the previous mistakes, and use it as a learning opportunity. A bond breaking with someone you care about is very hurtful, but it just means that you both have opened up a door to a better future. One where you find something

or someone who is truly suitable for you.

We often underestimate our own resilience and potential for growth. Remember that you are still whole and have a lot to offer. This is not the end, it's only the beginning for a newer version of you – one who is now more mature, has more experience, and has the perspective to choose better next time.

P.S. You could also just ignore all these steps and adopt a cat instead.

Tasnim is currently struggling to live, laugh, love. Send her tips at tasnim.upoma96@gmail.com