

# The grief of lost friendships

**RAYA MEHNAZ**

The loss of friendships in popular vernacular is always accompanied with a careless shrug, maybe even an air quote. It is perhaps easier to describe the loss as “Oh, we just grew apart” than saying “They broke my heart.”

After all, friendships are supposed to be easy. They are supposed to be deep enough to provide sincere camaraderie, but not so deep that upon it breaking, it would shatter the person.

However, like any bond, friendships tend to not be so simple.

We spent most of our lives cultivating this seemingly harmless bond with people. As adolescents, we went home with our dost after school with scraped knees and no care for the world. Then the dawn sets, and our old friends get lost with the tides of time, and new waving faces of our “current” friends. The ones we picked a bit more consciously, ones we deem better suited as a companion for the person we have now become.

However, what gets seldom mentioned is losing a friendship, even the friendships we seem to just grow out of, hurts. It is like the sinking of a ship. One missed call becomes ten, and one day, you are just helpless to see your friend moving further and further away from you.

That’s the thing about the friends we lose. We carve out a delicate space for them in our life, only to see that space

empty. It is grief at its finest. After all, if it’s not grief that rattles our empty hearts when we think of them, then what is this anguish?

In this way, losing our friends is often more intense than losing our lovers. When we are younger, we are unaware of the shackles around our hearts. We let friends in easily. As we grow older, we tie up these shackles and keep tightening them, until all we have left is this phantom pain and unspent love that we’re afraid to bestow on anybody again.

That is why, even in adulthood, lost friendships hurt. Whether it is simply superficial exchanges, or even official cut off after months of decaying friendship, the grief is just as real.

Maybe that’s why friendship breakups are so hard to articulate. Maybe it’s easier to explain the hurt in air quotes or nervous chuckles. We lose people every day, in all manner of tragedies. So, why should this one tragedy be highlighted?

Friends occupy so much of our lives that it’s easy to forget their importance to us. So, the next time you have your friend within your reach, appreciate the bravery of loving your friends with the force of a thou-

sand suns, knowing that it may very well be temporary.

Appreciate the grief, which shows that your love wasn’t weak. Appreciate your capacity to hold on to the people you’ve loved and lost.

Send Raya sad music at [fb.com/raya.mehnaz](https://fb.com/raya.mehnaz)



# A NOTE ON NOTEBOOKS

**SHIMIN MUSHSHARAT**

*The little town we grew up in had exactly one stationery shop. That is where my love affair with notebooks began.*



PHOTO: SHIMIN MUSHSHARAT

The shop usually didn’t have anything that I liked, I just had to pick the least garish ones and try to love them the best that I could. I succeeded, regardless of the glitter and the inefficient little locks because many a time it was me and my shiny, chunky, tiny, or even crinkly little notebook against the world.

I had all sorts of notebooks. Journals were the most obvious ones. Writing journals has always been an excellent way for me to calm my mind. Especially because I am almost deviously introverted. Then came the to-do lists for academics, projects, shopping lists, to-be-read lists, and literally anything and everything else. Ticking things off a list felt, and will forever feel, like winning battles to me. Lists have also proven to be a lifesaver in classes and workplaces, especially when the instructions are multifaceted.

Notebooks are also bearers of nostalgia. My mother and aunts still have their lyric journals they kept when they were young. They would sit by the big radio and meticulously note down the lyrics to their favourite songs. This later inspired me to write down quotes, lyrics, and words I find comforting to look at when a day keeps getting tougher.

Another cosy and comforting idea I came across was to keep a leaf journal. It doesn’t necessarily have to be limited to leaves. Keeping flower petals inside notebooks and pasting them with glue to write letters on the following pages could be an effortless way to add warmth to letters.

Speaking of letters, allow me to introduce you

to a notebook specifically made for letter-writing. Subbir Al Razy, owner of Khero Khata saw the quote “Write letters, they last” in a post office long before hand-written letters stopped flowing so freely.

When phones arrived and the yellow envelopes took their leaves, he decided to pay his tribute to the craft of letter-writing by designing a notebook with that saying on the cover. Most of his designs represent Bangladesh with quirky slogans, and quotes from local poets and philosophers adorned by artwork from Bangladeshi artists.

If you want clean, basic notebooks, then Talisman is the place to go to. Their paper quality and craftsmanship is impeccable. Made with Love has you covered with their fun, bright patterns if florals match your spirit. Jatra – A Journey into Craft, Poter Bibi, and The Malachite Casket make notebooks that have kantha stitch patterns, hand-embroidered covers and arts of divine characters and tigers of the Sundarbans.

Notebooks can make the perfect gifts too. Do you have a friend who doodles on the margins? Get them a sketchbook. A coworker whose favourite colour is yellow? Maybe a notebook that says Holudiya Pakhi (Yellow Bird). Have a favourite poet? Hand them a customised notebook that has their favourite poem on the cover and notice how their face lights up.

Shimin reads everything she can find, talks to cats, and writes a lot of letters. Send her a book at [shim.mush@gmail.com](mailto:shim.mush@gmail.com)