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Not all friendships are meant to last forever. There can be so much good, so much power, so much love in female friendships. But there is also a dark side of pain and loss. And surrounding that dark side there is often silence. There is shame, the haunting feeling that the loss of a friendship is a reflection of our own worth and capacity to be loved. My Other Ex: Women's True Stories of Losing and Leaving Friends is a step toward breaking that silence. The brave writers in this engrossing, diverse collection of 35 essays tell their own unique stories of failed friendships and remind us of the universality of loss.

My Other Ex: Women's True Stories of Losing and Leaving Friends Details

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From Reader Review **My Other Ex: Women's True Stories of Losing and Leaving Friends** for online ebook

Natalie Hoage says

When you read this, there will be tears. There will be lots of memories of your own friendships that have been lost. There may even be smiles and laughter remembering a special friend. My Other Ex may even make you want to reach out to a friend you've lost contact with. It's powerful and it's not an easy read, but it's a read that is worth it.

The hardest stories to read were the ones written directly to the author's ex. I've written letters before that have never been sent, and those words come straight from the heart.

My Other Ex stories are real and relatable. These authors allowed us to peek into the darkest, saddest, loneliest parts of their lives and it is intensely emotional to read.

Julie G says

Writing

As much as I enjoyed the content of this book, the essays are not all from professional authors and, in certain essays, it shows. That really didn't hurt my estimation of the book as a whole however, because I enjoyed reading what felt like the stories of everyday people, not essays crafted as works of literature. There was something genuine about reading a less-than-perfectly-written essay when describing a personal story.

Entertainment Value

The great thing about having a sister is that not only is she stuck with you forever, but she can also tell you the truth with an honesty (and bluntness) that a friend might hesitate to give. My sister was kind enough to tell me that my interest in end of friendship stories is "weird" and "creepy" and "twisted". But I can't help it. I love to hear women tell stories about friendship that just didn't work out. I don't know what it is about them that just captivates me, but I love reading them. This is the second book I read this year featuring essays about the end of friendships and I loved it just as much as the first.

Overall

If you're intrigued by other people's drama, this is a great book for you to read. It's also good for those who have lost a friendship or those who have a more academic sociological interest in how female friendships work and then stop working. Or you can just tell yourself it's academic when really you just like hearing the juicy details. My interest is purely academic of course.

Becky says

This book was a very healing book for me. Having lost my best friend over a year ago, these stories helped me to process the feelings and emotions that go along with that kind of loss. It helped me see that I am not alone and that some friendships stay and some do not. I encourage anyone struggling with the end of a

friendship to read this book. Life does go on and there is a time and season for every friendship.

Devon says

Great collection of honest tales of break-ups among women friends. Some more relate-able than others but all a little balm for when this kind of thing happens because it will: everything ends one way or another. Made me reflect on the astounding number of lonely women out there--often ending up lonely because of becoming a mother and taking on the isolation that comes with it while watching friends walk other paths. Also made me grateful all over again for the couple of "besties" I have had over many years despite different life paths.

Stephanie Chambers says

Didn't really have any advice or answers, but it was nice to know I am not alone. Female friendships are so messy and dark, and a break up can be completely devastating.

I wish there had been more normal stories. A lot them had so many crazy problems. I enjoyed the stories of everyday problems and how they can affect a friendship more.

Lisa Bentley says

Synopsis

My Other Ex: Women's True Stories of Losing and Leaving Friends is a collection of stories that celebrates the powerful friendships between women and the sheer utter heartache of when those relationships end.

Review

I was drawn to this book based on its subject matter. This may seem a rather obvious thing to say but admittedly I do tend to pick up books based on their cover – sometimes over content.

You see, I too had a powerful friendship that ended and this book, I hoped, would provide me some solace. Thankfully, it did.

The book is made up of several writers experiences and whilst none of them were the same as mine, some of the views expressed by the writers hit a little too close to home.

Losing a best friend is hard. It is like someone has cut off a limb, in some respects it is like the person has died. The chasm of sadness is unbearable.

I won't go into my tale of lost friendship here – even though after nearly three years I am still bruised by it – it is a story that probably does deserve to be told but open wounds are still raw.

One of the most poignant things that I took from this book was when one of the contributors said “friendship is a verb.” It is. It takes both people to work at it. It is not something that just happens.

If you have ever experienced the emotional turmoil of losing a best friend then give this book a read. It may just give you a sense of comfort to know you are not the only one.

My Other Ex: Women’s True Stories of Losing and Leaving Friends by Jessica Smock, Stephanie Sprenger and Galit Breen is available now.

For more information please visit www.herstoriesproject.com or follow on Twitter @herstoriesales

Jennie Goutet says

This book is filled with stories of loss and separation of the most heartbreaking kind that can only happen between bosom friends. And let me tell you, the stories in here are exquisitely written. I don’t think all that much about the friends I’ve lost - I tend to compartmentalise the pain and/or the embarrassment and move on. Perhaps when I was younger, I surrendered to the loss a bit less easily and tried to re-establish contact. But now I know myself a little better. And I understand the friends a bit better. It is never one-sided.

I think that’s what’s good about reading stories like this. You feel less alone, less ... stupid, I guess, for having missed the signs that things were not going well. You didn’t protect your heart, or you were not careful with hers. It’s not a bad idea to take the sometimes-catastrophic ending to a once-dear friendship out of that tiny compartment in your heart, and re-examine it to see if you have learned something - and if you are still better off apart than you once were together, and – in the case of a few people in the book – to try again, though decades of water may have gone under the bridge.

The stories make you question things, and feel things, and examine things. And that, in essence, is precisely what a good book should do. Highly recommend.

Leslie Lanagan says

This book helped me on several levels. The first is that I was fighting with one of my friends when I picked it up and needed something to ease the pain. Standing in these women’s stories made me realize that we are all our own terrible selves that need a place to call home with our souls, no matter what the definition of terrible might entail.

The second is that I was in an emotional (not sexual) relationship with someone 11 years older than me when I was 14. One of the writers describes a similar situation from the time she was ten. She cut her vein open on the page and bled just for me. I’ll never forget it. Another piece of myself closed to receiving scars.

Gladys Maina says

We all need closure from certain experiences in life. And when you find a book leading you there, you clutch it tightly till the very end. Beautifully written, poignant and cathartic despite the heart wrenching and raw

essays. I am amazed by the universality of loss and the will to move on even after betrayal, attrition and loss.

??Jülie ? says

My Other Ex: Women's True Stories of Losing and Leaving Friends

The stories within are placed into five sections from childhood friends to late in life, they are:

When We're Young
When We're Grown Up
Motherhood
Reconciliations
What We've Learned

Each section relating memories relevant to that category.

These are real stories, who's experiences are recalled and related by each storyteller.

For the reader, these stories might put into perspective some of the relationships that we fall into and out of during the course of growing up, growing out, maturing (or not), and the particular roads we traverse during the course of that journey towards being who we are and who we become.

Hopefully we evolve from each experience with a richer sense of who we really are, and hone our navigational skills accordingly...

But not always, sometimes we are so affected by a particular relationship, that when a breakdown occurs, it can be so deeply affecting as to cause long lasting pain and anguish...even emotional scars...especially if you are genuinely unaware of the cause of the breakdown and a reconciliation appears not to be an option.

It's a tricky business though, this friendship thing, there is no gauge to show you how much of yourself you need to invest for it to be a mutually beneficial relationship, even if you think you have given it enough thought and due consideration.

For example, you might emerge from its experience as a butterfly from its chrysalis and fly off into the bliss of a brilliant and caring/sharing, lasting relationship...or else, just as easily discover, after much time and emotional investment, that it is suddenly over and therefore, probably not the mutual nirvana you understood it to be.

Without warning, you find yourself feeling like an emotional train wreck, totally unequipped to face such a reality!

You surface from this new reality, red faced and reeling with myriad unanswered questions and a mounting inexpressible grief.

I think every woman could relate to some of these stories. They are very moving and heartfelt accounts of how these women were emotionally (and in some cases, even physically) affected by the breakdown of relationships that they held special.

Here is one revealing quote:

"I wasn't divorcing, but we have no language for the collapse of a friendship. No civil or legal understanding exists to encircle, protect, or declare its existence. No public ceremonies seal the relationship or shore it up when rocks pierce the hull and we have to swim for shore, the sound of wreckage and cold seawater filling

our ears.”

Who do you turn to, when you lose your best friend?

If it is a real death, then there are ground rules, support groups, family etc. people who understand and sympathize.

There is an acceptable mode of conduct which condones your grief and encourages gentle healing with compassion...

But what if your friend was still living, and it was the friendship that had died? Suddenly, inexplicably and without warning or reason?

What then?

How do you handle that particular brand of grief? How do you express it, explain it, or understand it? Where can you put it?

This, I believe, is a deeper grief because it has no name or formal recognition, and therefore no niche in the status quo. This is pain on a spiritual level, where even trying to convey its depth to anyone else in mere words would somehow further diminish its worth.

In such circumstances you would surely be loath to even entertain thoughts of a type of "virtual" funerary ceremony to lay such a "death" to rest, (for the purposes of closure) because you most probably harbour the secret prospect of a possible eventual reconciliation.

This is indeed, understandably a very sad state of affairs.

I'm not sure that this book has the answers the reader might be seeking, as I'm not sure there are any singular answers or placebo type of fix, but it certainly helps to hear other peoples' accounts of their own breakups and to understand that it is a very real and painful experience that many women go through and struggle to come to terms with.

If nothing else, at least some perspective might be gleaned from reading these stories.

I gave it 5*s because it is enlightening, and it addresses the subject matter openly and honestly. I would certainly recommend it.

Nina says

Jessica Smock, who co-edited the book along with Stephanie Sprenger, says that they started this project with the desire to look for answers for why women dwell on past friendships so much. “We wanted to know why these stories resonated so deeply with women, years and decades later, revealing wounds deeper than the scars left from romantic relationships.” In that search for answers, Smock and Sprenger wisely divided the essays into patterns such as childhood friendships, adult friendships, friendship issues that specifically involve the role of motherhood, reconciliations, and general reflections.

I saw other patterns, too. In Victoria Fedden’s letter to her unnamed former friend, we see how much Fedden wants her ex-friend to know the success she’s experienced and how much she’s changed. Don’t many of us want the friends that left us behind to notice us and hear about our good news? Catherine Carson echoes this reality, too, when she thinks about what it would be like to run into her former best friend. She says, “I’d want to show her who I’d become, how far I’d come into myself.”

Chelsea Schott, Angela Amman, and Allison Carter all write of their shame for abandoning a friend.

Meredith Napolitano reflects on the pain of a friend abruptly ending the friendship with no explanation, then

understanding that friend's choice when she [Meredith] later is the one to leave a friend seemingly out of the blue without telling her why.

Another pattern comes from women who feel they were to blame for a friendship's demise. Some blame the other friend, and there are those who are not sure exactly what happened. Suzanne Barston summarizes one of the more likely scenarios: "I don't know who left whom, or if anyone really left at all, or rather just failed to appear." I also nodded vigorously when Arneyba Herndon states that many of us possess the knowledge that a friendship wasn't quite right, balanced, or even good for us, yet we miss aspects of it anyway and wonder if the relationship could have been saved.

Some of the essays caused me to shout things to my Kindle because the pain from the past was so palpable. Throughout Alexandra Rosas's superb essay, I yelled, "Stop calling her!" To Cheryl Suchor I said, "She's cruel! You don't want her back!" When Jennifer Simon hopes to receive a wedding invitation from a close friend who has shut her out, then receives one on accident and has to be told she is actually not invited, I felt Simon's humiliation.

Of all the essays, I perhaps related most to Leah Vidal's description of being on the receiving end of biting comments from her close friend. She says, "While I never addressed the comments I also stopped sharing parts of my life with her. I'm not sure if it was out of embarrassment or to avoid such comments in the future. Either way, our phone calls become few and far between." I have been there, and like Vidal, I let the relationship whither to a state of surface politeness, a different sort of breaking up where we're still in each other's lives, but the intimacy is gone.

Another pattern in many of the essays is a sentiment of regret, which is stated succinctly by Shannan Ball Younger when she reflects on the friend who changed so much and drifted away: "I don't know why I didn't just call her. I'm sorry I never reached out. I don't know why I didn't." I have been there, too.

We get a reprieve from some of the heartbreak with a few stories of reconciliation. Estelle Erasmus's and Hallie Sawyer's stories of a friendship reconciliation that brought them even closer to their friends than before the drifting apart reminded me of the way I reconnected with one of my best friends from college years after our breakup, a story I told in the first collection published by The Herstories Project. Alison Lee wrote about reconciling with an online friend, a new world of relationships many of us here in the blogging world joyfully (and sometimes awkwardly) navigate as actively as our non-virtual friendships. Lea Grover's story of getting her sister back in her life was moving and powerful. (You'll have to read the book to find out why they didn't speak for years.)

While I really liked going on a friendship journey with each writer, I also appreciated the final section of the book titled "What We've Learned." Editor Stephanie Sprenger begins the section with some reflections on what she's learned about friendship breakups. I liked her point that we shouldn't feel so ashamed about the friends who drift away as well as her realization that some of her closest friends are women who at one time had vanished from her life for years at a time.

In this final section of lessons learned, Galit Breen admits to having been a serial friend abandoner, someone who pulls away when a friend did something that upset her. Breen's essay and her self-awareness about shutting out friends when things got tense in order to avoid a deeper hurt illustrated Sprenger's important argument about how conflict can eventually bring people closer. Sometimes when one friend does the shutting out, however, she doesn't also get to mend the friendship on her time table. The other person may be too far gone by then, too hurt by the silence and space. In other cases, the cooling off period works for everyone involved. Every situation is unique. I appreciated Vicky Willenberg's reminder that sometimes a

friendship can be saved by “making yourself vulnerable one more time in order to say ‘I’m sorry’ or ‘I was wrong’ or even ‘I miss you.’”

Kristin Shaw, however, makes a good point about the tricky eggshells that exist while putting a friendship back together. In Kristin’s words: “It’s hard to know when to stop bending over backward and just be yourself. You can lose yourself on the road back, wondering if you’ll ever be good enough again. It has to be worth that trip back with each tiny step.” I have found that in some cases the work involved in erasing those old hurts takes too much emotional negotiation, or the eggshell period lasts too long. There are times when it’s worth reconciling, and times when it is not. Katrina Anne Willis’s piece was a perfect one to come after Shaw’s as Willis realizes that she needs to stop dwelling on a friendship that ended. She moves on from trying to find out why it ended or even hoping for some kind of happy ending. There are times when that’s the only way to go. I have reconciled with no regrets and let go with no regrets, too.

What unifies all the essays is a brief but important mention in Alexis Calabrese’s piece. She says, “The good news is I have learned from our breakup. Like all long-term relationships that meet their demise, there is wisdom in the wake.”

There is much wisdom in the pieces I mentioned here and in all the ones I didn’t have space to name. Trust me and read this collection of essays! If you’ve lost a friend or left a friend (most people I know have been in both positions), you will relate and respect the writing, too.

Jolene says

I read a phenomenal book that hit home on so many levels..... The Other Ex , which is a compilation of personal stories told by 35 brave women about their close friendships with women and the hardship they felt when that friendship ended. Lessons learned, tears shed, trust broken, scars exposed....these ladies laid it out there and guess what I learned, I’m not alone.

While I read story after story I couldn’t help but feel as though I was opening the door to my friendships past and recalling moments when my friendships ended. LIFE happened. PROMISES broken. TRUSTbetrayed. SECRETS revealed. I began to question how those experiences changed me into the woman that I am today. Definitely, I’m not as trusting as I once was ... I hold back and “sniff the person out” no I’m not checking to see if they have bad hygiene, in a sense I want to see if they are true to who they say they are. Overtime, trust is built and like any relationship the walls come down and memories are created. Hours on the phone gabbing about work or things you can’t really share with your boyfriend or spouse, things a GUY couldn’t possibly understand. Respect is given and over time the friendship gets stronger and that bond is built.

Then, LIFE happens.....again. Soon the same old song and dance is showing its face, the one that seems so eerily familiar is being played out again. Daily conversations become non-existent, text messages put to the side meant to be answered at another time, new friendships begin making the old ones vintage and worn, they have no time to listen to you yet you have plenty of time to listen to them....it’s at that moment, blinders come off...the walls rebuilt and it’s time to retreat.

Lesson learned, my friend.

Tanya (mom's small victories) says

Brutally honest, beautifully written. This book took me on a reflective journey of the friends I've loved and lost.

35 fabulously diverse women contributed essays about the female friends they've loved and lost along the way in *My Other Ex*. The book is divided into essays about friendships when they're young, when they're grown up and when they're moms. Each essay takes us on the development and demise of a best friendship. My heart was filled with joy, giddiness, surprise, grief, and sadness as I read each story. The writing is brutally honest, each writer pouring onto the page her innermost thoughts and sometimes shocking confessions. This book took me on a reflective journey of my own friendships and helped me learn things about myself and the kind of friend I was and want to be. And that, my friend, is a pretty amazing and powerful book.

For my full review, visit my blog at [Mom's Small Victories](#).

Debbie "DJ" says

This book is divided into 5 sections, 1) When we're Young. 2) When we're grown up. 3) Motherhood. 4) Reconciliations. 5) What we've learned. Each section consists of different authors sharing experiences with female friendships through these categories.

I found the introduction and first section excellent. In fact, many times I found myself crying. There is no denying the powerful connection of female friendships and the feelings they evoke. As I moved on to section two, (When we're grown up) I found myself unable to connect with these experiences. This surprised me, as the beginning had been so beautiful, yet, something was lacking here. Having lost a best friend of 20 years in adulthood, I felt this section would have hit hard. It lacked intensity and felt more like commentaries. I confess to having skipped section three about motherhood, as it didn't interest me. Section four had some delightful writings on reconciliations. How often humility, and reaching out reunited many women. The last section on what we've learned was very good. While a lot of the information seemed self-evident, there were some real gems here. Lots of things I knew, but needed to be reminded of. One statement in particular I found very useful, "When you don't put time into something it dies." I literally grabbed a pen and paper, and wrote a list of friends who I wanted to keep in my life. The friendships that mean the most to me, which I often neglect because I'm too busy! I'm glad I read this book, even though some sections I found hard to relate to. But, my experiences are different from everyone else's, and the various writings that lacked for me, could be exactly what draws another.

Allie Smith says

My Other Ex: Women's True Stories of Leaving and Losing Friends is a compilation of essays about the painful passage that most of us have experienced – when a friendship comes to an end. I can't help but think of that famous friendship poem that periodically makes it around the internet. "People come into your life for a reason, a season, or a lifetime." This collection has all three covered. Although most of the stories are about loss, some contain the element of reconciliation. There are essays about friendships in all phases of a woman's life: childhood, the teen years, post high-school life, young adulthood, and motherhood. The

anthology is published by The Her Stories Project, a blogger website that was created for female writers to share their tales of friendship. The project was so popular that it produced a book of the same title. In the original book, the essays about friendship break-ups garnered much attention and feedback from readers. The editors, Jessica Smock and Stephanie Sprenger, decided to further explore the topic of loss and why it affects women so deeply. A second book was born!

Although the quality of the writing in this collection has resulted in a book with a literary tone, it'll resonate with fans of chick lit - because we love our girlfriends! Girlfriends are universal and the bonds we establish with other women often transcend age, race, religion or socio-economic factors.

Unfortunately, our friends also have the power to break our hearts.

The most compelling aspect of the book is its writers' courage in telling their stories. Some of them are pretty gritty. Oh, it gets very personal and I became emotionally invested in each tale. So much so, that I wanted to scratch a few eyes out! A number of authors took the fall for the end of a friendship. The pictures they painted were not pretty, and it took guts to reveal them. But I think the raw honesty with which the essays are written is what makes this such an engrossing and heartbreaking read. These women poured their hearts out and I cried more than once. I don't usually do heartbreak when it comes to my reading, but so many of the stories resonated with me that I kept going.

I think my favorite part of the book was the last section, What We've Learned. This section featured essays that were reflections of the change in the role that friendship has played in an author's life. One particular essay by Linda Wolf, titled Frenemies, really hit home. Wolf shared the types of friends that she's let slip away or distanced herself from over the years. Here are just a few that she cited:

- The one who was only happy when she was making someone else feel bad.
- The one who tried to move into my friendships and then leave me out of their social plans.
- The one who always lied. About everything!
- The one who wanted to turn the entire wedding/pregnancy process into a competition.
- The one who gossiped about everyone, and probably gossiped about me the moment I walked away.

She concluded with, "To them I am grateful for the lessons learned and say a hearty, 'Good riddance.'"
