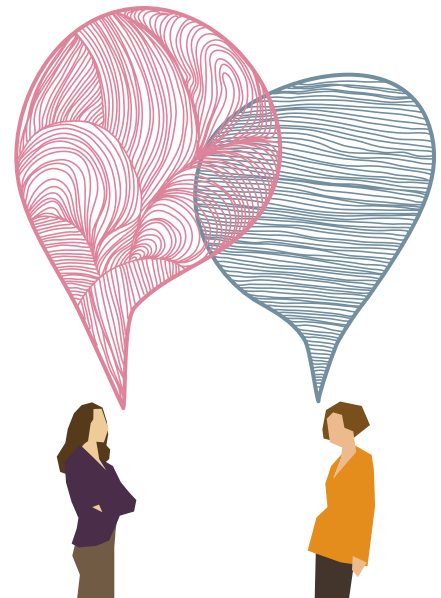


SELAH - PAUSE AND REFLECT

Why do we seek closure in relationships?

Humans tend to communicate with stories, we build narratives in our minds and these narratives help us make sense of events around us. After going through a stressful situation, like a painful break-up, we try to reason with it and make sense of why the relationship failed. We may make a narrative where we finally recognize and acknowledge the red flags in the relationship, maybe we view it as a learning experience, and maybe we view it as a complete failure. But what happens when we are not able to come up with a narrative? We are willing to endure a great deal of hurt, pain, and suffering if in return we are promised a narrative that would make sense to us. When we are not given that reason, we seek out closure. We seek to find the meaning and reason behind our experiences until we are satisfied with them.

What makes the narrative so important? Why do we endure so much just to tell a story? One of the reasons is that our brain needs an authentic narrative to make sense of what happened.



SELF-CARE TIP :

Maintaining Independence

It is important to set some time apart for yourself, in relationships. It can look like having a set of friends who are different from the friends you and your partner hang out with or engaging in a personal hobby. Having some time for yourself helps in staying grounded, being connected with yourself, and engaging in some self-care.



*Like time suspended,
a wound unmended--
you and I.*

*We had no ending,
no said goodbye;*

*For all my life,
I'll wonder why."*

*— Lang Leav, Love &
Misadventure*



Closure helps us solve the puzzle giving us a sense of accomplishment and/or satisfaction. This of course negates the fact that we went through a lot of trouble to actually achieve that sense of closure. A closure may pave the way for healthier relationships in the future. But do we really need this closure? Does it really make us feel better?

In the end, what is important is we take responsibility for our own actions, and what closure are we seeking? Is it something only the other person can provide or is closure also the acceptance and healing from our experience. Time does heal all wounds after all, so is that closure? Fundamentally, you are capable of moving forward by accepting our responsibility and making interpretations of others' actions the best we can.

If we do, how do we go about achieving it?

We are bound to make impulsive decisions when we are experiencing emotions of high intensity, but it is important to practice healthy boundaries. This means stopping yourself from stalking your ex-partner on social media, and contacting them when it is not appropriate to do so. Even though we are able to get a response from them, How do we trust it to be authentic? This is where acceptance of some level of ambiguity is important. In the end, it is we, ourselves who are responsible for obtaining that closure.

It's important to take responsibility for your actions, and ask yourself, what closure are you seeking, and is it only something the other person can provide? Because in reality, you are truly capable of moving forward without that dependency.



Healthy vs Un-healthy Relationships

On-screen

The stories we watch play out on the screen can form strong foundations and expectations from what we expect from our lives. Similarly, the relationships we watch on-screen form our expectations from our partners and how we view certain behaviours as acceptable and unacceptable. Let's review some of the popular relationships we have seen on screen, and how healthy or unhealthy they were.

1. *David and Patrick (Schitt's Creek)*

When David and Patrick first meet, Patrick is just realizing that he may not be straight and would never have had the courage to talk to David, so when David takes an initial lead in the relationship, it is a big moment for Patrick. He is never judged in the process or questioned. Patrick is also given the space to form his own identity, come into himself, and fall in love. Patrick is always there to support David and is always reminding him of his love through his actions.

2. *Chandler and Monica (Friends)*

Monica and Chandler start as friends who hang out together every day but never see their relationship to mean more than that. Even when Chandler proposes to be Monica's 'backup' for when they get older and both of them are single, Monica dismisses the idea by laughing it off as one of Chandler's jokes. However, when they do get together, things are never awkward between them. Of course, it can be chalked up to them being friends for so long that they felt comfortable with each other, but what helped their relationship last long - a first for Chandler - was that Monica had a more secure attachment style. She knew exactly what she wanted in a relationship and was not afraid to set her boundaries accordingly. Chandler on the other hand had a more anxious-dismissive attachment style, which would lead to him feeling low on confidence when it comes to relationships and why he was so quick to assume that his relationship with Monica had ended after just one fight. Chandler learned to feel more secure in their relationship because Monica modelled that behaviour. Ultimately both of them accept each other without the expectation of changing the other person.

3. *Jake and Amy (Brooklyn 99)*

Their relationship starts from healthy competition and friendship to a more mature romantic relationship. Jake and Amy, much like Phil and Claire, fall in the trope of 'opposites attract'.



Amy is a perfectionist, competitive, super organized, and very ambitious detective. Jake has more of an easy-going nature, where he tries to work by his own rules. What makes their relationship work is the complete acceptance of support towards the other person. Jake is never threatened by Amy's ambition and being in a higher rank than him when she does become a Lieutenant, and Amy accepts Jake's quirks and his individuality. Both of them have their own goals and ambitions, and they are always supporting each other to help achieve those.



4. Ross and Rachel (Friends)

One of the most on-again, off-again relationships on screen we've seen is Ross and Rachel. Ross has had a long-time infatuation with Rachel since they were in school. This is resurfaced when he runs into her again after she is running away from marrying her fiancé. They do get together eventually, but at very different stages in life. Ross is recently divorced, and Rachel is trying to find her individuality by working towards her career goals. The relationship soon becomes unhealthy when Ross starts feeling insecure and demanding a lot more attention than what Rachel can give him. This leads to unhealthy communication, impulsive behaviour, and eventual break-up. Even though the relationship looks romantic and exciting, it ends up romanticising the practice of intense and stressful love, where you have to keep fighting to keep the relationship going, which can become unhealthy.

5. Adam Groff and Eric Effiong (Sex Education)

This is a relationship that is reminiscent of the belief that 'he bullies you because he likes you'. Adam is a bully towards Eric for years and constantly harasses him. When they eventually do get together, Adam is dismissive of Eric's feelings and tries to hide their relationship from everyone else. It's okay to take your time and find yourself in your journey but you also owe it to your partner to offer what they need from the relationship and not make decisions.

Monthly Takeaway

"If you want to fly, I won't hold your feet on the ground. I want to be the one to push you off the cliff."

- Phil Dunphy (Modern Family)

Human relationships are complex in nature. They come with experiences people in question have had and the need to thrive 'better'. Oftentimes, these lead to disappointments and discouragements. Pause and reflect: what are you looking for in the relationship you feel unhappy in.



Morning Brew- Book Review and Discussion

The book covered in January 2022 - Art of Noticing by Rob Walker



We all have been wary of what this year was going to bring to us. Prolonged pandemic? A new wave? Some true relief or semblance of going back to how things were? The more bad news? Or hopefully happy news?

We have all been persisting with an alert state of mind trying to find happiness and comfort wherever and however possible. With this knowledge, it was obvious that we needed some time to truly rest and give ourselves a reminder that we are very much capable, and highly creative, as it lies within.

The Art of Noticing felt like the right choice to start the New Years' book club. This book is a great companion for the quarantine period. An easy read by Rob Walker acts as a reminder of how there is so much happening all around just to be seen and admired by us. Everything is an art and you are the artist.

Noticing is more than looking. It's relatively easy to gloss over what's around us. Technology pushes so many things at us that we often feel bombarded, pressured to either accept all of it or ignore it completely. But Walker has crafted an inviting book that helps alleviate some of the fuzz. And he isn't asking for much. The book is a reminder to just slow down a little.

The morning hours of the club served the purpose of reminding participants that they have the time in the day to practice something purely for themselves and we are very proud of them for trying.

The book has a bunch of activities with varying levels of difficulty to allow the reader to challenge themselves and experience their life differently. A fun game can be to randomly open a page from the book and try out what comes first. Depending on the feasibility, one can improvise accordingly.

During the discussions, we found out about the subtle hints of mindfulness activities spread across the chapters which are not as easy as they sound. From a therapist's point of view, the book can be a great entry into the world of mindfulness and incorporate it into your lifestyle.

One major con of this book would be that most references made were white/eurocentric which cuts down from a holistic view since most concepts can be seen in eastern cultures as well.

In conclusion, "Art of Noticing" by Rob Walker is a nice light read, which would also be a great recommendation for someone who wants to get back to reading without having to pick up heavy/intense subject material. Room was really happy to have hosted all the participants and we are looking forward to more of Morning Brew in 2022!



Things Happening at Room

- **Campus Ambassador Program** - Room is looking for students who are passionate about mental health, to advocate and be the voice of Room on their campuses. With the ambassadorship, students are given a chance to build a mental health-friendly community on their campuses and hone their business skills at the same time.
- **Internship and Training** - We are all too aware of the feeling of being disoriented and aimless after graduation. If you have recently graduated or are enrolled in a master's program for counselling and psychology, Room is providing online internships and training programs! Check our website for more details.
- **#sponsortherapy** - We aim to create a mental health community that is accessible to all. To be in line with that goal, and continue on that vision, Room provides pro bono and sliding scale options to clients who are not able to afford the full fee of the session. To achieve that, Room is accepting sponsorships where you can sponsor therapy for someone in need.
- **Morning Brew** - Was your new year's resolution to read more? Are you having difficulty sticking by it, or would like some company while you take some time out to read? Morning brew is a virtual book club where participants engage in an hour of silent reading which is followed by a discussion, facilitated by a therapist from the Room.

Words Submitted for the Newsletter

*My ignored wildflower
You are Survivor,
My dear soulflower,
Winds of thoughts,
Shower of anger,
Hailstorm of harsh words,
Sorry for everything,
My brave soulflower,
After all years
With my fears
Thanks for not dying
My drowsy soulflower,
I will care
And have the dare
To protect you from world
My cheerful soulflower.*

- Sonpari

A poem dedicated by the writer to oneself as an apology for not loving themselves all these years and a wish to express that love more.

