

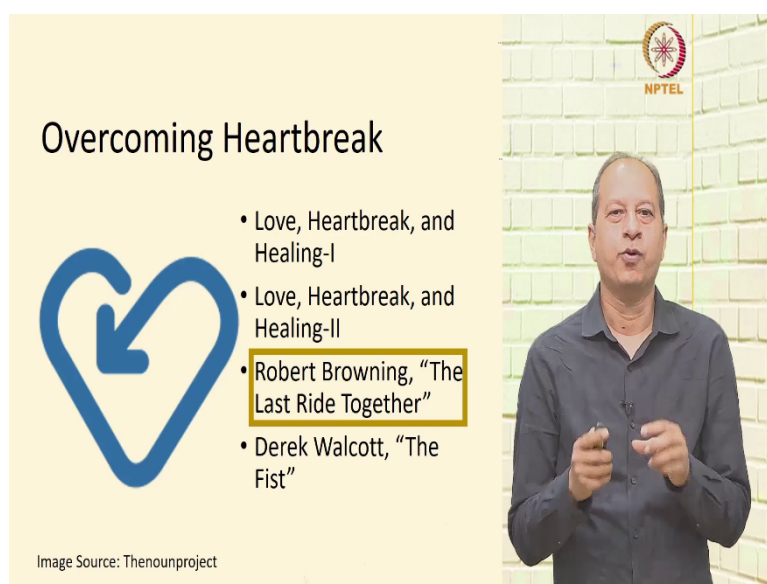
Literature and Coping Skills
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Lecture 31
Robert Browning, "The Last Ride Together"

Hello, everybody. I am Ajit K. Mishra, your course instructor for Literature and Coping Skills. I am here again with another segment on this module, Overcoming Heartbreak. As you all know, in my last two lectures, I walked you through the ideas of heartbreak, and the other ideas associated with heartbreak, especially heartbreak, its causes, its impact, its after-shock, the neurobiology of heartbreak and the psychological aspects related to heartbreak.

I also introduced you to the idea of physical pain, mental pain, and social pain that are very closely associated with the idea of heartbreak. I walked you through the ideas of various mental pain and how they lead to various mental challenges for us, as well. So, with that in the background, I am going to talk about a new segment with a focus on Robert Browning's, "The Last Ride Together".

And I am also going to tell you how we can develop certain coping skills and strategies with the help of our understanding of that particular poetic composition, so that we can prepare ourselves for the heartbreak phenomenon, or the challenges associated with heartbreak. So, let us start.

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The slide features a yellow background. On the left, there is a blue heart icon with a white arrow pointing clockwise inside it. To the right of the icon is a bulleted list of topics. The third item, 'Robert Browning, "The Last Ride Together"', is highlighted with a yellow border. In the top right corner, there is an NPTEL logo. On the right side of the slide, there is a video inset showing Professor Ajit K. Mishra speaking. At the bottom left, it says 'Image Source: Thenounproject'.

Overcoming Heartbreak

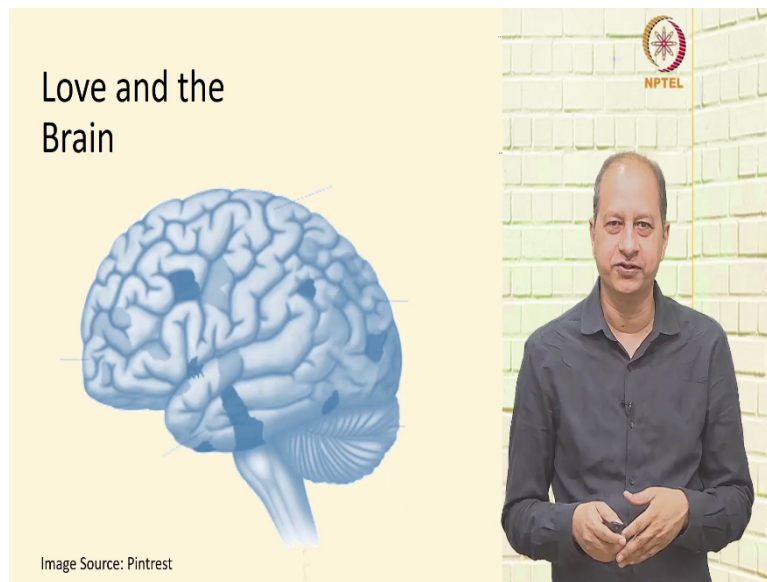
- Love, Heartbreak, and Healing-I
- Love, Heartbreak, and Healing-II
- Robert Browning, "The Last Ride Together"
- Derek Walcott, "The Fist"

Image Source: Thenounproject

As you all know, we have already taken care of the first two segments Love, Heartbreak and Healing. We now move to the third segment, that is Robin Browning's, "The Last Ride Together". And thereafter in the last lecture of this module, I will be focusing on Derek Walcott's "The Fist".

But in this lecture, I am going to focus in Robert Browning's "The Last Ride Together", and the kind of heartbreak, the speaker of this poem struggles with it, and the kind of coping skills the speaker is finally able to develop with the help of which the speaker is able to overcome the challenges posed by heartbreak. So let us take a look at each of those things.

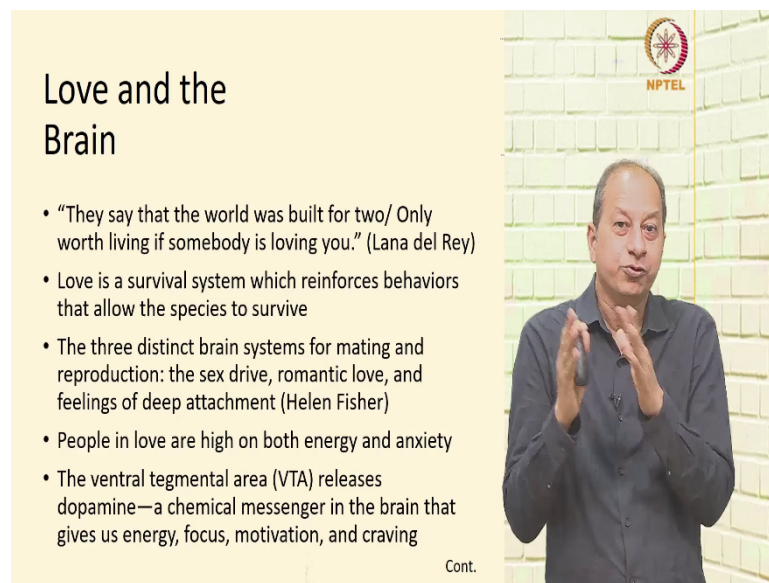
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I will walk you again through the ideas of love in our life, or the importance of love in our existence, or in our lives. And in order to understand that better, we need to understand the connection between love and the brain. So, we need to understand the role of love in our lives from a neurological or neurobiological perspective. So, when somebody is in love, the person experiences a variety of things that in fact, uplift the spirit of the person.

So, the person experiences an unimaginable high. So, the high can be so much that a person can walk for the whole night, talk for the whole night, can move mountains, and do a variety of things. So that is the kind of energy a person in fact, gains when somebody is in love. Why does this happen? And how does this happen, are some of the questions that we need to understand before we can understand the importance of love in our lives.

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The slide features a yellow background with the title "Love and the Brain" in black text. Below the title is a bulleted list of five points. To the right of the text is a photograph of a man in a dark blue shirt, gesturing with his hands as if speaking. In the top right corner of the slide, there is a circular logo with a red and white design and the text "NPTEL" below it. At the bottom right of the slide, the word "Cont." is written.

Love and the Brain

- “They say that the world was built for two/ Only worth living if somebody is loving you.” (Lana del Rey)
- Love is a survival system which reinforces behaviors that allow the species to survive
- The three distinct brain systems for mating and reproduction: the sex drive, romantic love, and feelings of deep attachment (Helen Fisher)
- People in love are high on both energy and anxiety
- The ventral tegmental area (VTA) releases dopamine—a chemical messenger in the brain that gives us energy, focus, motivation, and craving

Cont.

So, we can start with a very famous saying, by Lana del Rey, famous American singer and songwriter, who has very rightly said that; “They say that the world was built for two, only worth living if somebody is loving you.” So, love is important. If you are not loved, you do not feel like living. Your life is worthless and you do not find your life liveable. And that is the reason why most people think love is very, very important to our existence, it is an unavoidable, it is an unimaginable aspect of our existence. That means we cannot imagine our lives without love.

So, if there is no love in this life, it is not worth living. So, why is it so? Because love is our survival mechanism. It is our survival system, which reinforces our behaviours that allow our species to survive. So, love is our survival mechanism. Everything that we do, we do for the sake of love, because we love our existence, we would like to protect it because we want to survive.

So, love in itself is an entire survival system. It is an entire survival mechanism, which in fact, leads or takes us towards certain behaviours that help us protect ourselves, preserve our species, and thus survive.

So, the three distinct brain systems for mating and reproduction because this is one of the primary functions of the human species, or many species for that matter, mating and reproduction, so that we can continue our species, the sex drive, romantic love, and feelings of deep attachment. So, the sex drive that is very, very essential for mating and reproduction,

or procreation. And then romantic love, that gives you a reason to live, that makes your life worthwhile or worth living, that makes your life significant, important, liveable.

And that is why romantic love is very, very important, because it helps us create that bonding, it helps create the sense of belongingness in our lives, and then finally, the feelings of deep attachment. The feelings of deep attachment make us create bonds and relationships and care for people, so that we can trust them, we can live with them, we can spend time with them.

Unless we feel that attachment, we cannot do so, unless we develop that love and affection for others, we cannot do so. So, these three distinct brain systems are in fact, not the distinct phases. They can happen in any order and in any combination, so that is very, very important about these three brain systems. So, the sex drive, romantic love, and feelings of deep attachment.

So, people in love are high on both energy and anxiety. At the beginning of this lecture, I told you that people can move mountains. And we know how lovers have in fact, done that in history. And we all know what lovers are capable of, to what extent they can go in order to show their love, to express their feelings and emotions of love, so that is the reason why this is a very interesting phenomenon, that the lovers, people who are in love, are high on both energy and anxiety.

Now, that is quite paradoxical. Because lovers experience a great amount of energy, a form of energy that does not end, that does not exhaust. So, with that kind of energy, they can move mountains. They can talk about their love, they can walk long distances to meet their love interests, their partners, they can do several things to express how much they care, they love the other person, the partner.

So, they experience a high level of energy in them, but at the same time, the same lovers also experience a tremendous amount of anxiety. If I can remind you of Bhartrhari's poem on various types of fear, including the fear of death, you can quickly associate this particular phenomenon to that idea. So, anxiety is also very, very important when somebody is in love, because it runs parallel to one's feeling of energy, anxiety.

Because while in love, the same person begins to fear the moment, the time when there will be no love, because the person becomes so dependent on that love object. So dependent that you show impressions of addiction, or signs of addiction, you become so dependent on the

person, that you cannot even imagine your world without that person or without the love of that person.


So, while in love, a person begins to experience anxiety, we call it separation anxiety, when the separation has not actually happened, you begin to experience that anxiety as if you are being separated from that person, or what will happen when you are separated from that person. So, the anxiety level is also as high as the energy level, so that is a very interesting phenomenon when it comes to love and the brain. Because at the same time, all types of brain chemicals get released. And they lead to a variety of emotions and feelings in the person.

So, the ventral tegmental area, the VTA releases dopamine, it is a chemical messenger in the brain that gives us energy, focus, motivation and craving. So, because of dopamine, we experience these things, we experience energy, focus, because the mind is focused on the love interest, the partner only, the mind sees nothing else, except or beyond the partner. So, the mind is stuck, it is focused on the partner only.

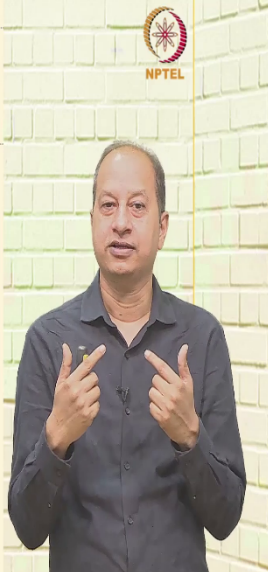
Research has established that 85 percent of the time, lovers generally think about their partners, so that is a huge amount of focus on the partners, the love interests. And then motivation you are, you are always in a state of motivation, as I told you, we can move mountains, when you are in love, when you are not in love, you cannot do anything. So, because you experienced that energy, you have that energy, you have that motivation, and then craving.

So, it ultimately turns into craving, you begin to crave for that. So, a moment's absence of the partner will create some kind of anxiety in you as if you have lost a partner forever, the separation anxiety will be so strong that people will not be able to manage or regulate it, so that will lead to some kind of craving because it turns into an addiction over dependence. So, the same kind of experiences that the addicts experience, is also experienced by people in romantic love, so that is another major aspect of it.

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- The experience of romantic love is led by three major neuromodulators: dopamine, oxytocin, and vasopressin (Debiec)
- Oxytocin and vasopressin are more intimately related to attachment and bonding
- When looking at our beloved, key areas of our brains decrease activation: the amygdala, frontal cortex, parietal cortex, and middle temporal cortex
- The frontal cortex, the center of executive functioning, judgement, and logic, is underactivated thus resulting a “suspension in judgement or a relaxation of judgemental criteria by which we judge other people” (Zeki 2007)



So, the experience of romantic love is led by three major neuromodulators. Dopamine, the pleasure brain chemical, oxytocin, and vasopressin. So, whenever somebody experiences romantic love, that means these three neuromodulators are highly activated in the brain of that person. Dopamine, oxytocin, the bonding hormone, the love hormone, and vasopressin.

So, oxytocin and vasopressin, we all know, are more intimately related to attachment and bonding. They help you create that attachment and strengthen bonding with people, especially the partners. Dopamine, which is in fact the pleasure brain chemical, is directed towards pleasure only, so that is the reason when looking at our beloved, key areas of our brains decrease activation, for example, the amygdala, frontal cortex, parietal cortex, and the middle temporal cortex. So, if you think about the amygdala and the frontal cortex only, these are two of the areas that get deactivated. Most of the time they remain under activated, because the amygdala, that is your fear centre, will not experience any activation, because you do not experience any fear when you are in love, you feel extremely safe, you feel loved, and you feel important, you feel happy.

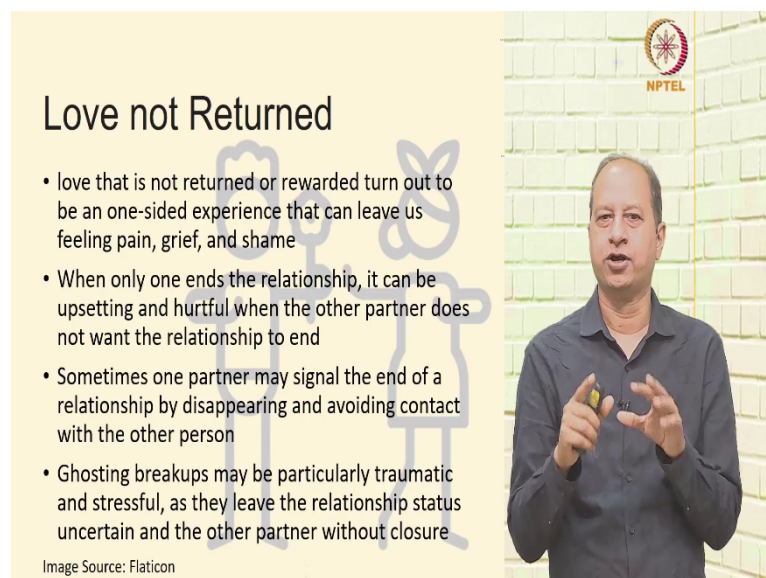
So, you are in a safe mode. Therefore, the amygdala will not be activated, it will be under activated. And at times, it also gets deactivated when you feel extremely safe and happy. Similarly, the frontal cortex, that is our executive centre, the decision-making centre, the thinking centre, that also gets under activated or deactivated at times. Because the other

regions of the brain get so much activated, the other regions, that there is absolutely no need for these, these regions to get or remain activated, so they generally get deactivated.

So, the frontal cortex especially, the executive centre, which is responsible for judgment and logic is under activated to such an extent that it results in the suspension of judgment, or relaxation of judgment criteria, by which we judge other people. And that is one big reason why love is generally referred to as blind, as a very famous phrase, love is blind. Blind, because it cannot judge. Love cannot judge, it is not that, it will stop the frontal cortex from judging things.

So, it will blind the frontal cortex, it will suspend the amygdala because there is no fear, there is safety and happiness only. So, the frontal cortex will remain in a suspended state as long as you are in deep romantic love. And thus, you will experience blindness, you will be blind towards various things. And it will be very difficult for the person in love to judge or to activate logical thinking.

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Love not Returned

- love that is not returned or rewarded turn out to be an one-sided experience that can leave us feeling pain, grief, and shame
- When only one ends the relationship, it can be upsetting and hurtful when the other partner does not want the relationship to end
- Sometimes one partner may signal the end of a relationship by disappearing and avoiding contact with the other person
- Ghosting breakups may be particularly traumatic and stressful, as they leave the relationship status uncertain and the other partner without closure

Image Source: Flaticon

So, that brings us to the question of what if love is not rewarded? Because we all know that it is all because of the reward system, the caudate nucleus. We experience love, and we direct love towards some object of our affection. What if love is not rewarded or not returned? So, if love is not returned or rewarded, it can promptly turn out to be a one sided experience. And that will lead to pain, grief and shame. That will be an instance of unrequited love.

So, it is not in the very nature of love that it will always be rewarded. You might show that particular feeling towards something or for somebody, but it is not really necessary that it will be requited, it will be returned in the same manner. So, when that does not happen, it leads to unrequited love, which is a major cause of pain, grief, and shame.

And then, when only one ends the relationship, it can be upsetting and hurtful when the other partner does not want the relationship to end. So, in most cases, relationships end because of the decision of one partner only. Most relationships do not end mutually. So, if it is not a mutual ending, it will lead to heartbreak, it will lead to pain, grief, shame, distressing feeling and a variety of other painful experiences.

So, in most cases, relationships come to an end, especially heartbreaks are the result of this one-sided decision in which one partner, only one partner wants to end a relationship, whereas the other partner does not want the relationship to end or to come to an end; so that is the reason why there is no sense of proper closure. And there is also a sense of suddenness, which leads to denial, shock and un-acknowledgement.

So, sometimes, one partner may signal the end of a relationship by disappearing and avoiding contact with the other person. In our times this is a very, very popular syndrome, popular phenomenon, because we generally depend a lot on social media. And it so happens in social media that one fine morning you do not find your love interest, your partner on social media, the partner has disappeared or the partner has reappeared with a different identity, the partner has suddenly changed his or her status to single.

So, you do not even understand and most often, such people disappear without intimating. So, when that happens, I mean, this is called ghosting in a relationship, when they suddenly disappear and they do not keep a contact, any touch with the other partner. So, what will happen when this happens? That will lead to heartbreak and grief.

So, such breakups are generally called ghosting breakups, or ghost or ghosting breakups. They are generally traumatic and stressful, because they leave the relationship status uncertain, first, and then they do not allow the other partner, the sufferer, to have a proper closure. That means, there is no discussion about it, there is no time to cope with the possible consequences of such a breakup. So, in the absence of that time, and in the absence of proper discussion, such breakups, ghosting breakups generally lead to massive heartbreaks.

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So, and then when that happens, people experience or begin to experience the breakup blues. So, the breakup blues promptly pushes them into these states, a state of emotional distress. That means you do not exactly know what to do about it. You are always in a state of distress, despair, grief, lamentation, bereavement.

That will also result in touch starvation, I have discussed touch starvation in detail. Just to give you a quick recap of what touched starvation is all about. This is a natural desire of the body, the skin hunger, which makes us long for external touch, touch from external stimuli, so that we can feel assured, we can feel we exist and we will feel very, very safe. Besides, it will also lead to the releasing of bonding hormones, attachment hormones, like oxytocin and then vasopressin.

So, touch starvation will be one of the blues resulting from a breakup or heart break. So, when you suddenly do not experience the touch of the partner, it can be symbolic or actual physical touch, you will miss both. So, the partner is not there, the partner has disappeared and you will not experience the physical touch of the partner, so that will result in touch starvation.

It will lead to emotional dysregulation, for example, it will be very, very difficult for the sufferer to manage the disturbing emotions or the negative emotions, you might end up, encroaching into the life of the partner, the ex-partner, or you may end up causing harm to the

ex-partner in various ways, both physical, mental, emotional. So, it will lead to emotional dysregulation.

And then it will also result in extreme thinking. This extreme thinking is also called black and white thinking, or all-or-nothing thinking, which is a form of negative thinking. This is also called splitting. So, either good or bad, either a success or a failure, either this way or that way, nothing in between. So, people who experience extreme thinking, they generally end up depicting their ex-partner as either evil or good. So, this kind of thinking will in fact lead to problems.

And then this is a major problem that can also happen. As there is a breakup, psychological snowballing. So most often, people do not know that they were not deeply in love with a certain partner. But whenever there is a heartbreak, they experience the stress in such an amount that the response to stress is one of a great disaster. They respond to such stress disastrously as if they have lost everything, they have lost their life, and there is no life beyond that point.

But most often these people do not realize that it is not because of the heartbreak or the breakup, that has happened. But because they are carrying the burden of trauma from the past. And that gets added to this particular stress and that leads to a disaster. So therefore, it is very, very important for people to understand psychological snowballing, so that you are not knocked down by this particular phenomenon.

And then finally, symptoms that mimic a heart attack, for example, cardiomyopathy. So, you will suddenly begin to feel as if you are going to have a heart attack, your heart will be cramped, it will be trapped. And you will feel as if you will have a heart attack very, very soon. But that does not necessarily happen. But that is an instance of a breakup blues. So, there are some of the breakup blues that we generally come across when we are heartbroken or when we experience the broken heart syndrome.

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The Last Ride Together
By Robert Browning

I SAID—Then, dearest, since 'tis so,
Since now at length my fate I know,
Since nothing all my love avails,
Since all, my life seem'd meant for, fails,
Since this was written and needs must be—
My whole heart rises up to bless
Your name in pride and thankfulness!
Take back the hope you gave, —I claim
Only a memory of the same,
—And this beside, if you will not blame;
Your leave for one more last ride with me.

Image Source: VectorStock

That brings us to the poetic composition by Robert Browning, "The Last Ride Together". Let me tell you that it is one of the most popular, dramatic monologues composed by Browning, the famous Victorian poet who was well known for his optimism. And this is a quite long poem. For the sake of convenience, I have chosen only 4 sections out of the 10 sections that this poem is composed of.

I have chosen these four sections, because each one of them, in fact, tells us about the problem the speaker is struggling with. And they also let us know how the speaker tries to cope with the problem through certain coping skills and strategies. And when we take a close look at these lines, when we try to listen to what the speaker is trying to tell us, when we try to walk along, the speaker will be able to understand how the problem that the speaker is struggling with, in fact, is taken care of, by or through a certain coping skills.

So "The Last Ride Together" is about a recently separated couple in which the lover, the male partner, thinks that he was betrayed by the female partner. And he was not given enough chance to plead his case, enough chance to protect his relationship, to give his relationship another chance. Therefore, the male partner is extremely pained as he is suffering the pangs of the heartbreak.

But then something happens here, which tells us how well the male partner is able to cope with the challenges of heartbreak. So, when we take a look at it, we will find that the partner is experiencing the same kind of longing, which is very deep. The same kind of longing, that

the middle part of the brain, the caudate nucleus experiences when the love interest is also gone.

That means the reward system is still very, very activated, the reward system has not realized that a breakup has happened, as a result of which there will be no more rewards coming from that particular source. But the reward system of the male partner is still in an activated state. It is waiting for those rewards to come. And that is the reason why the male partner still hopes as if everything will return to normalcy, still thinks that everything will be resolved and he will again be united with his partner.

But that may not happen because the male partner is struggling with both the ends. It may, it may not, it may, it may not and as a result of which the male partner finally comes to the realization that it may not happen. It may be that he has lost his partner forever. But then as that reward system is still very, very active, it makes the male partner plead for something. And then the male partner pleads with his female partner for something.

And what is that something? For one last ride together. So, then this is how the male partner pleads with the female partner. And he has accepted the reality, he has come to terms with the reality. So, he is not engaging in any negative reappraisals. And that is very surprising. So, what kind of coping skill is he exactly engaging in? We will, we will get to know that after a while. I will be discussing that in detail.

So, there is no negative reappraisals, he is very, very happy, he is extremely thankful to his mistress, to his lady love for being extremely kind, and blessing him with wonderful moments to cherish all his life. So therefore, he is requesting the beloved, for something, and what is that something? The thing is one last ride together, so that he can preserve that memory forever. And he will not make any claims, any claims to anything that he and his partner shared together.

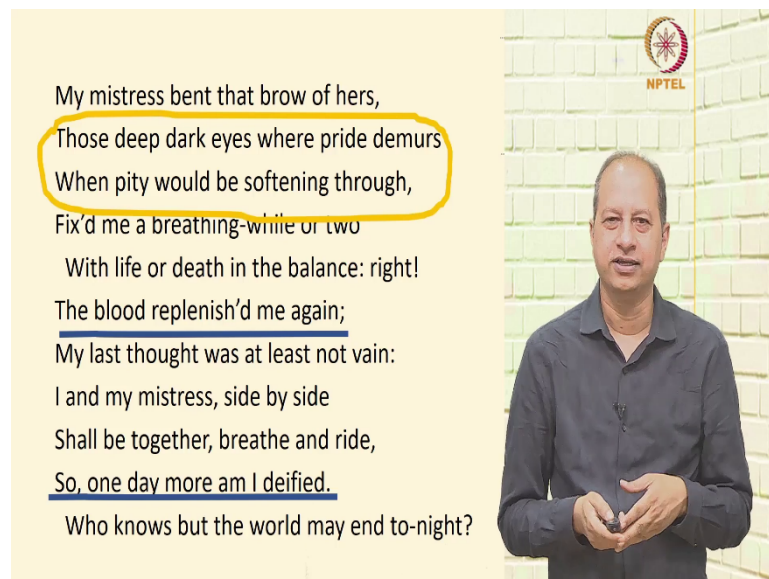
So, without laying any claim to anything, he will just preserve these memories in his mind, the last ride will give him that particular closure, that particular closure, because it was so sudden that the lady partner withdrew from the relationship and that led to the breakup, as a result of which the lover thinks, he did not get enough time for the closure, which is very, very important. And as a result of which he comes forward with that request. And this request is a result of the acceptance.

Therefore, he uses so many "since" in the very beginning of this poetic composition he said, since now at length my fate I know, since nothing all my love avails, since my life seemed meant for, fails, since this was written and needs must be, since it was destined as if it was destined. So, this "since" is one such word, which is repeated multiple times to suggest that the speaker is trying to resuscitate, logically thinking that means the executive function is reactivated.

Now, the person can logically think about it. Remember that whenever we are faced with any emotional shock, or disaster, we lose contact with the executive brain, then that is the prefrontal or the frontal cortex becomes deactivated. So, we do not know what to do about it. So, whenever somebody is in love, the frontal cortex is also deactivated.

Now that the frontal cortex is activated, therefore he can think about it, he can logically think about it. So therefore, he is in fact trying to resuscitate. So, he is extremely thankful to his lady love, to his lady partner for being extremely kind to him during the relationship. So, it is all about acceptance and acknowledgement.

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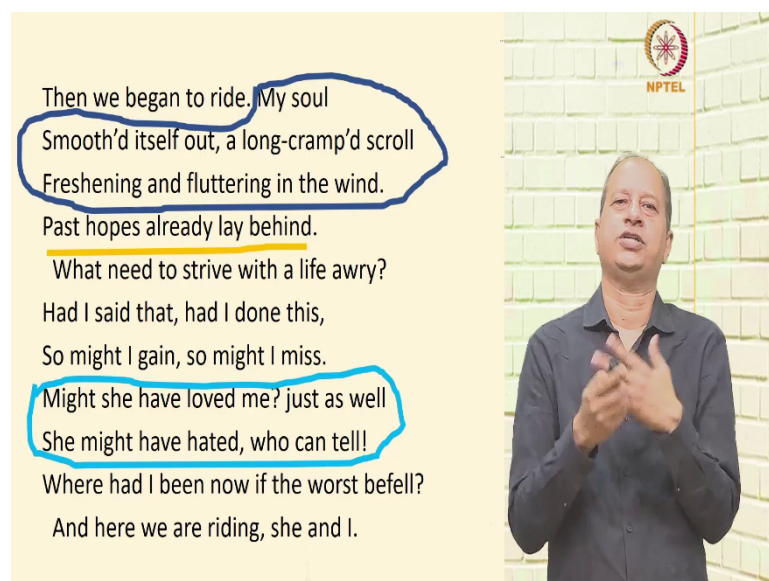
My mistress bent that brow of hers,
Those deep dark eyes where pride demurs
When pity would be softening through,
Fix'd me a breathing-while or two
With life or death in the balance: right!
The blood replenish'd me again;
My last thought was at least not vain:
I and my mistress, side by side
Shall be together, breathe and ride,
So, one day more am I deified.
Who knows but the world may end to-night?

Now, he is very, very happy, because his mistress, his lady partner has accepted his request. As a result of which he is extremely happy. And he is in fact, you know, depicting the beauty of his lady partner. So those deep dark eyes where pride demurs, when pity would be softening through, otherwise pride rules there. But this time, pity is going to soften that pride. That proud approach of the lady love.

So, in a way, although the male partner is not trying to engage in any negative reappraisals, this is a mild form of negative reappraisal, when he says that the lady love has been extremely proud. But then somehow, she is going to show some pity on him this time. And then, when this happens, the blood replenished me again. And we all know that whenever we experience these emotions, emotions of love and safety, trust, bonding, attachment. So, several parts of the brain get lighted up, and the blood flows vehemently into the brain.

So, he can experience that the blood replenished me again, that means the blood flew in a manner so as to make me energetic again. If you remember I talked about how people in romantic love experience a great amount of energy. So, he is experiencing that energy yet again. And then one day more I am deified. So, he is not treating his life as worthless, he is treating it as worthwhile, so that is the response.

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The slide contains a video of a man in a dark blue shirt speaking, with an NPTEL logo in the top right corner. To the left of the video is a poem with several lines highlighted in blue circles:

Then we began to ride. My soul
Smooth'd itself out, a long-cramp'd scroll
Freshening and fluttering in the wind.
Past hopes already lay behind.
What need to strive with a life awry?
Had I said that, had I done this,
So might I gain, so might I miss.
Might she have loved me? just as well
She might have hated, who can tell!
Where had I been now if the worst befell?
And here we are riding, she and I.

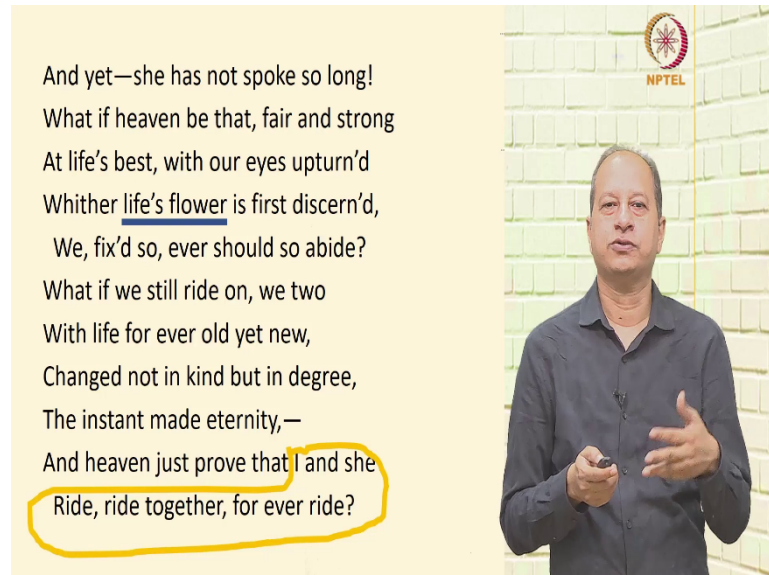
And then the writing finally happens. And when it happens, my soul smoothes itself out, a long, cramped scroll, freshening and fluttering in the wind. Now, this is a classic example of stress cardiomyopathy. If you remember, I talked about Takotsubo cardiomyopathy, the Japanese word for octopus trap. And that octopus trap resembles the left ventricle of the heart when somebody experiences heartbreak. So, the shape of the left ventricle of the heart changes when somebody experiences heartbreak. And this speaker was also experiencing similar symptoms.

Now suddenly, he says that my soul smoothed itself out. So, the shrunken state of the heart is over now. Now it can return to its original shape, freshening and fluttering in the wind. Because now he does not experience the pangs of his heartbreak any more, any further. So past hopes already leave behind, he is not worried about the past anymore.

And then might she have loved me just as well, she might have hated, who can tell? While talking about the snowball effect, I told you that there are several occasions when people do not exactly realize that they are not that much in love with a partner. They think they are very much in love with that partner, because they do not exactly know whether the partner loves them as much or not.

So, it may happen, because you become blind. Since the frontal cortex is deactivated, you cannot judge that. So, he says that now I am, I am not judging it. I do not want to judge, although I can judge now, I do not want to judge. So, whether she had loved me or she had hated me, that is of no use to me now. And who can tell that, I am not in for any judgment now.

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And yet—she has not spoke so long!
What if heaven be that, fair and strong
At life's best, with our eyes upturn'd
Whither life's flower is first discern'd,
We, fix'd so, ever should so abide?
What if we still ride on, we two
With life for ever old yet new,
Changed not in kind but in degree,
The instant made eternity,—
And heaven just prove that I and she
Ride, ride together, for ever ride?

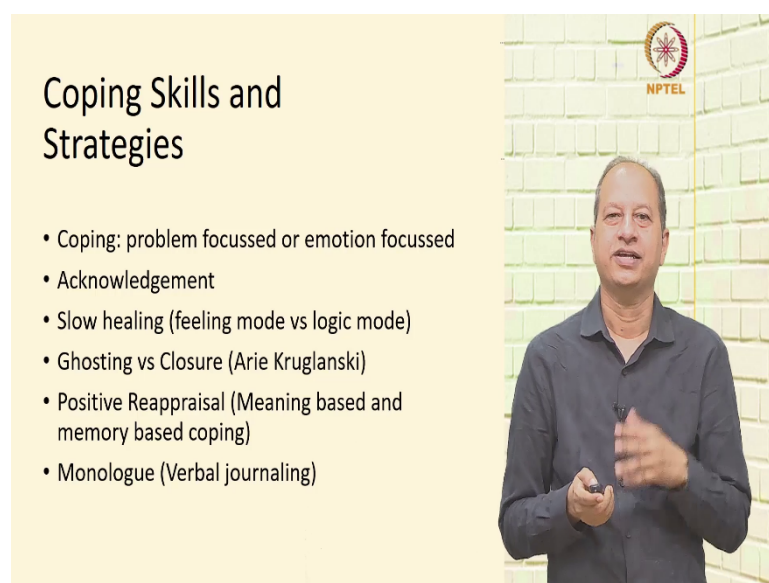
So therefore, he is free from those feelings now. And then he shows his appreciation for the lady partner by calling her life's flowers. And then finally, he comes to this particular thing I and she ride, ride together forever ride? With a big question mark. So, is this going to be the eternal ride? Is this going to be a never-ending ride? If that happens, then there will be nothing else required in my life. So, there is a wistfulness, there is longing.

Now we can know that that person is actually experiencing the pangs of heartbreak as there is a deep longing, which is expressed in these lines, so that way we, we came across the problem that the speaker is struggling with, the problem is that of the sudden breakup, for which the speaker the male partner was not at all prepared. It was a female partner who left the male partner suddenly, without giving him any time for a proper closure.

And that is the reason why he is in a state of disarray, but he does not know what to do about it. But somehow, he recovers from that initial shock and denial, and then tries to reframe things. And during the reframing thing, it was not a bad experience for him to fall in love with that lady, although it ended abruptly.

So, the reframing helps the speaker come to terms with his initial shock and denial. And then structure his emotional approaches as well. So, we also came across a lot of coping skills that the speaker shows during this poetic composition, which we will find.

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The slide features a yellow background. On the left, the title 'Coping Skills and Strategies' is written in a bold, black font. Below the title is a bulleted list of coping skills. On the right side of the slide, there is a video inset showing a man in a dark blue shirt speaking, with an NPTEL logo in the top right corner of the video frame.

Coping Skills and Strategies

- Coping: problem focussed or emotion focussed
- Acknowledgement
- Slow healing (feeling mode vs logic mode)
- Ghosting vs Closure (Arie Kruglanski)
- Positive Reappraisal (Meaning based and memory based coping)
- Monologue (Verbal journaling)

So, let us take a look at these coping skills. Before we can take a look at the coping skills, it is always a good idea to be very clear about what kind of coping skills we require for a particular situation. I have talked about these coping skills in detail in one of my past lectures.

But for the sake of recapitulation, let me tell you that. There are two types of coping skills, problem focused and emotion focused coping skills. In problem focused coping skills, we

find a problem and while coping with that problem, we would like to replace that problem with something else, so that we can cope easily.

But then there are occasions when we cannot replace the thing, we cannot change it. And we experience emotional energy or negative energy in us, emotional distress or disturbance in us. So, in such situations, we need to activate our emotion focused coping skills, so that we can take care of our emotions and manage our emotions in such a manner so that we can overcome that problem.

The problem will not change, for example, the death of a person, it will not change, it will cause a great emotional upheaval in the sufferer. So, the sufferer has to manage the emotional upheaval. So that the sufferer can cope with that particular reality, so that is exactly what happens here. And the speaker here knows that the breakup cannot be undone. Therefore, one has to manage one's emotions. That is exactly what the speaker does here. So, the type of coping strategy or coping mechanism that is involved in this particular experience is the emotion focused coping strategy.

The first and one of the most important coping skills that the speaker in this poetic composition shows is acknowledgement. There is no better coping skill than acknowledgement, although it is not an easy coping skill, because the initial response to any emotional distress or disturbance is one of shock and denial. But then beyond that particular response, one can always acknowledge and try to come to terms with reality.

And once that happens, you begin to acknowledge. So, the speaker in this, in this poetic composition, in fact, acknowledges. Acknowledges that they have broken up and there is no hope for them to be together again in life. So, he acknowledges that it is gone forever. I have lost my lady partner.

And then the speaker also believes, shows belief in slow healing. Now that is a wonderful coping skill, slow healing, that is time supported slow healing. At times, we think as if the healing will happen in a day or two in 24 hours or 48 hours, that will not happen. Slow healing is very, very important because it will allow you the much-needed time to switch from the feeling mode to the logic mode.

Because every time we are faced with an emotional disturbance or distress, we promptly enter the feeling mode because that particular mode is activated. So, the amygdala is over

activated and the frontal cortex is under activated or deactivated. So, therefore, we cannot expect to be in the logic mode, we cannot resuscitate, we cannot give reason to the things.

The first thing is to accept that I am experiencing a certain kind of feeling. Yes, I am afraid, I am depressed, I am experiencing anxiety, I am experiencing heartbreak. So, it all begins with that acceptance. When that begins with acceptance, that will gradually take you from the feeling mode to the logic mode, because acceptance is an acknowledgement of reality, recognition of reality. The moment somebody does that, it proves that the logic mode will be activated very, very soon.

And then, the speaker shows this important thing ghosting versus closure. So, based on the studies done by Arie Kruglanski, a social psychologist, closure is a very, very important concept. There are, there are two things one is ghosting, the other is closure. Ghosting means a sudden disappearance, which will cause a lot of stress to the sufferer, the victim.

Instead, it is always a good idea to go for a proper closure. And this is, this is very powerful skill. If somebody is the initiator of that particular action, that particular decision, then it becomes the responsibility of that person to go for a proper closure. If that does not happen, the person is engaging in ghosting, that means you are avoiding. But the sufferer will not come to terms with the pangs of heartbreak or the suffering until and unless there is a proper closure.

In this case, the male partner is not given an opportunity to close it properly. Since the female partner suddenly disappeared, suddenly decided that they would break up. So, the male partner needs a proper closure as a result of which the male partner requests the female partner for the last ride, so that he can properly close that relationship, so that there can be a proper closure to that particular relationship. And that is exactly what happens in this poetic composition. So, the male partner does that.

And then we come to positive reappraisal. Unlike negative appraisal in which you engage in preparing a list of the annoying habits, or behavioral patterns of your ex-partner, you engage, you depend on a positive reappraisal of your ex-partner. So, this is very, very powerful when it comes to meaning based and memory-based coping. In meaning based and memory-based coping, we always need positive reappraisal, which the speaker in this poetic composition does, that is why he is thankful to the beloved.

Although he shows certain signs of negative reappraisal when he is talking about the proud attitude or approach of the beloved, at the same time, he also says that she is also capable of pity, kindness. So, in a way that is nullified, but most often the male partner throughout the entire poetic composition engages in a positive reappraisal. So, he is actually trying out a meaning based and memory-based coping.

So, he is bringing back the positive memories of his relationship days, instead of bringing back the negative memories. So those positive memories instead of trapping him in the heartbreak, in fact help him release himself from the heartbreak because he has decided to preserve those memories as something that will help him overcome his withdrawal symptoms whenever he is in a disturbed state.

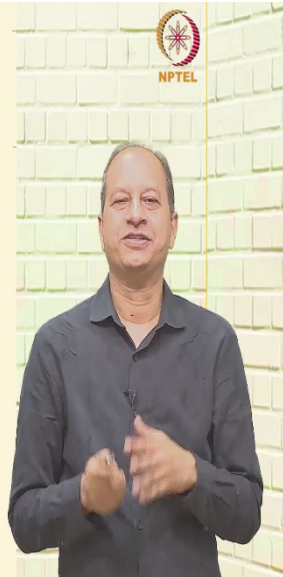
And then this is something that I call verbal journaling. You know, journaling is a very powerful tool, with the help of which we can cope with several of our emotional challenges or psychological challenges. In this case, the dramatic monologue, the monologue, allows the speaker to speak out his mind, his thoughts and to vent his feelings, his pain, his agony, in a manner so as to do verbal journaling.

So, all through the poetic composition, which is a dramatic monologue. So, this monologuing or monologue technique allows the speaker to vent. So, which leads to something that we call talk therapy, the speaker is talking in the, in the process the speaker releases, or gives an outlet to his repressed feelings and emotions, so that is exactly what the speaker does here. So, these are some of the coping skills and strategies that the speaker adopts in order to overcome the problem of separation and heartbreak, and thus overcome the pangs of heartbreak in a convincing manner.

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So that brings us to the end of this lecture. I hope you liked this lecture. And this lecture helped you understand these coping skills and strategies better. And it also helped you understand how we can, in fact, adopt various strategies in order to help ourselves overcome the pangs of heartbreak. Thank you very much for joining me.