

This is an email I received several days ago from [Ashley Stahl](#), a recent LinkedIn connection:

Hi John,

A dear friend called me the other day after a getting a stressful text message from her recent ex-boyfriend.

“He says he wants to talk, and man, I just felt this knot in my chest... Should I tell him I was flirting with that guy at the gym right before it ended?”

I felt her guilt.

I felt her sadness.

I felt her making herself wrong.

But more than anything else, I felt her humanity.

[More on being human in this audio.](#)

She went on about what a bad person she thought she was and I interrupted her.

“Okay, so you’re human is what you’re telling me. Sounds like it’s time to remind yourself that you’re human. I mean, it’s not your best self to be flirting with a random before you broke up, but you’re human. And you’re not your behavior—this was out of character for you.”

I felt her ease up.

“We’re wired for connection,” I told her, “And you weren’t getting it from him. So you sought it somewhere else. You’re human. And if I didn’t know who you were, I would think that you are your behavior... That because it was out of integrity, you don’t have integrity. But that couldn’t be less true. Because I know your soul. And it’s a good soul. So take responsibility to him. Apologize, and first... Forgive yourself. Don’t talk to him until you forgive yourself.”

[I talk a lot about self-forgiveness—and how to do it— here.](#)

Forgive yourself first always.

Have a conversation with you. Explore the judgments you have on yourself. Write them down.
Forgive yourself for believing the lies. Let yourself be freed of these untruths before you ask
someone else to forgive you.

No one can make you wrong for what you own.

So own it. And release it.

[Here's how.](#)

You're lovable. Everything else is a damn lie.

So see it, question it, release it.

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