

Divorce Equals Loss

By

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Grief and loss constitute many aspects of life, it's not limited to death and dying. It's so much more than those things. With loss there are many, many emotions involved that must be facilitated to achieve a good grief reaction. One of the many forms of loss is divorce. Divorce encompasses a whole range of loss emotions and it's not limited to the two individuals involved. Generally, it's a family unit that's equally affected.

Let's consider the married couple. Things are bad, there can be no reconciliation and the ultimate ending is divorce. Sounds simple but it's anything but simple. At first you have denial, basically trying to make it work but it just doesn't. It will always have its good moments but those aren't sufficient for a happy and sustaining relationship.

After that, you isolate yourselves from one another thinking that time apart is what's needed. Time apart when there are marital problems creates a rift between people that, more often than not, is like new leather. Uncomfortable at first but the more it's worn, the more comfortable it becomes. That still doesn't work. Things are progressing and it doesn't feel good.

First and foremost after that is your anger at the other for whatever reason. This isn't simply anger, this is hurt. Generally, it's a betrayal type hurt. And this isn't discussing cheating in a monogamous relationship. Betrayal overall and within the context of marriage mostly means hurt, hurt that he/she could do that to me. Whatever it may be. Abusive language, physical abuse, not spending time together, cheating, not providing (financially or emotionally), lack of interest in the other. All these things, and more, are forms of betrayal.

You have all these feelings of anger which is really hurt just expressing itself. That's the second step of the grieving process. A necessary step. Examine deeper and you'll understand that you still love that person. I mean, you didn't just get married. At some point you felt something real, something genuine and overall good for the other. Which makes the hurt all the more intense. And guess what ladies, the guy is feeling the same things. We just don't express it as such but it's still there.

At some point you may start bargaining, discussing things and trying to make unreasonable changes that just won't work. Your trying though. It still doesn't work which usually brings back the angry feelings. It's a loop you're stuck in. This loop exacerbates the situation and the inevitable happens. The divorce.

The fact that you tried, you did everything you could but it still just didn't work makes you angry further. It's not your fault, it's nobody's fault. It just happened. You still must facilitate that grief but there are other things around that are just not good. Everything seems to be falling apart still and the divorce is final.

That brings us to the others involved in the whole messy business of divorce. The little ones. Your children. The world has turned upside down for them. They are now missing a regular parent in their lives. This angers you further. There's that loop again. All part of the grieving process. And as a parent, you want to take it all from your children, sheltering them from the hurt and pain of this ordeal.

Children are resilient individuals but that's not to say "Be a trooper". They need to experience the loss, adapt to it and move on. They should be encouraged to express their feelings and it's of paramount importance that you, the parent, set a good example. Be the role model of their lives. Children will handle situations, especially grief and loss

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situations, as they are taught. They watch, they see. What does that mean for you? You should do all those things as well.

Show your children how to better cope with loss by dealing with that loss openly and constructively. Openly share your feelings, have them share with you. But don't mistake sharing with open fights with your soon-to-be ex or your ex. Don't start the name calling or yelling and whatnot in front of the children. This achieves nothing and really gets us nowhere. It also causes that loop to return but also passes it to the children. Not what you want.

If one experiences depression, that's ok and perfectly normal. The little ones won't experience it as keenly as the adults and that's normal too. The key here is that you feel this, share it and let the little ones understand that, sometimes, it's ok to be sad. This way they'll understand that they're feeling sad too and it's going to be ok. Just don't let it intensify into something more.

Grieving a loss, a divorce in this case, should be a personal effort as well as a communal one. You'll all achieve a better grief response and become closer for it. It takes work but it will help you in the long run to facilitate your grief even if you don't believe that is what you're feeling. Most people say it's a relief after divorce. In some ways, yes it is. But there is still grief work to be done.

And when you've facilitated these processes, you'll reach acceptance. Acceptance is sweet indeed. It's as if the weight of the world is gone, you can actually feel it. That's a good thing too. It's almost like telling yourself, "I went through some bad stuff, didn't choose it but somehow, I'm better for having endured." A truly good feeling.

Now, there are so many people that get stuck on one or more of these steps. That's normal too. It doesn't mean anything other than you just need some help. Get some counseling, it's well worth it in the light of choosing between an easier road or hard one. Nothing to be ashamed of or embarrassed about. I personally have never met anyone that didn't stumble on some of this. Just means they're normal. If you need help and you get that help, you are courageous and a person that has said "I will take measures to make myself and my family happier." I applaud these people. I don't care who you are, we all need a little help from time to time.

This essay in no way endorses divorce but sometimes it's an unfortunate necessity. If you've recently divorced, take heed these words and get some help. For your sake, the little ones and for your future. It's an entirely wonderful thing to wake up in the morning and feel care free and able to look to the future with sweet anticipation rather than looking back at the past with bitter feelings.

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