

From Married to Single: Coping with the Transition

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Experiencing divorce is a significant transitional event that impacts every area of your life. Knowing how to best navigate during this time is essential to your well-being, and doing so allows you the opportunity to grow from the experience and be your best self.

Your status in society has changed from being married to divorced. And so your role and identity has changed from being a wife or a husband to now being single.

It's understandable to feel a mix of emotions – sadness, disappointment, anger, fear, anxiety, overwhelm, loneliness, and confusion especially when there's so much uncertainty about the future. And self-esteem can definitely suffer. You can feel lost if you're not sure who you are right now. What you thought you knew has changed. You might question what you really want and your likes and dislikes might not be clear.

Years of interacting in a marriage can cause people to conform in order to make it workable. After years of quieting our inner voice and not expressing our true feelings, it can be hard to connect with our authentic selves again.

Let go of the stigma of divorce that is so prevalent in society. Refrain from viewing this experience as a mistake or something shameful. And don't feel the need to keep repeating the details of the event negatively, which only perpetuates the pain. You can view this transition as an opportunity to live an empowered life that you have the freedom to create.

You want to get through this time with a sense of hope and curiosity. Through the process, you will develop your strength and courage which will empower you in the end. There are several things that you can do to support this process.

Physical health can take a toll after divorce so it's important to step up your self-care practices. Eat well, get enough sleep, and exercise. Be out in nature and engage in activities that feed your soul. Schedule visits with healthcare providers. Learning how to set boundaries for yourself is another form of self-care. It's okay to say "no" when you need to. Prayer, meditation, and writing in a journal are additional supportive practices.

For emotional health, honor your feelings and allow them to change by processing them. While this can be an exciting time for some, other individuals can feel significant grief. Whatever comes up, just be the observer knowing that you can allow the feelings to be felt without judgement. Become more accepting of your circumstances. Comfort and reassure yourself. Your interpretation of events will determine whether your emotional state is positive or negative. Practice forgiveness for yourself and for your ex-spouse. Reach out for support from family, friends, and professionals.

Allow yourself to have fun and pleasure too. Feel the excitement about uncovering who you are today and explore the many possibilities that await you. What interests have you thought about exploring, or maybe you want to expand on a hobby? Whether it's gardening, painting, skydiving, or dancing,

just to name a few, this is a great way to give to yourself. Think in terms of your career. How can you enjoy your current job more, or what career would you prefer to be doing instead?

Decorating your home in a way that represents your style can feel uplifting. Changing up your clothes and hairstyle might be another way to welcome your new identity.

It's important to find the right emotional balance between the degree of change that you're feeling while maintaining existing routines and other things that provide consistency and a sense of security.

Friendships can also feel different now. They often shift after divorce. The internal and external changes that you make can affect these relationships. The connection that you had can feel different. It's an adjustment for everyone and some people have a harder time overcoming it, causing them to disengage from the friendship. However, while some might end, there will be other friendships that will become even deeper and more meaningful.

Take this time to get to know yourself. Rushing into an intimate relationship can make it harder to establish the "new" you.

I want to leave you with this question to help you focus on the needs and action steps that will guide you in a positive way...

What would have to happen for you to feel content at this point with your new life?