

## HOW TO DEAL WITH SADNESS AND LONELINESS AFTER DIVORCE

Divorce can be a disastrous experience, and the process brings forth a range of emotions ranging from guilt to anger to depression. Let me offer you some helpful suggestions on how to deal with sadness and loneliness after divorce.

Divorce is traumatic, and the broken relationship signals the loss of all your commitments and promises you had made together for your future. You may or may not have wanted it to happen, but the chain of agonizing events it triggers can be hard to deal with. When you got married, you always thought you would spend the rest of your lives together. Never once did you believe that the union would end in a bitter breakup. But life doesn't always turn out to be a bed of roses. Divorce can be all the more painful when children are involved, for them the absence of a parent from their lives can be very hard. A negative outcome of divorce can be insecurity and the inability to put your faith in the persons you love. This means harboring a twinge of resentment in your heart, and keeps you from opening up to the people who want to help you out in your time of need. This will only plunge you deeper into depression and not help you in getting on with life.

Recovering from a separation depends on your will power and courage. If you think that this is a permanent phase and that you have no way out of it, it won't help matters. There is no need for you to feel that the happy days of your life are all over. This is just a temporary phase, and it's solely up to you on how long you want to make it last. The sooner you deal with your problems, the faster things will start taking a turn for the better, and you will be able to start life anew. Here are some guidelines on how to overcome the sadness after your marriage has ended.

## DEALING WITH SADNESS AND LONELINESS AFTER DIVORCE

- A. Getting over a divorce does not happen in a flash. It can be a lengthy process. It's not wrong to mourn the loss of your spouse. Give yourself time to compose your feelings. Have patience. Forgive yourself and your spouse. Whatever happened is water under the bridge. It's time to pick up the pieces of your life, plan for the future, and move on.
  
- B. Do not mask your feelings. The intense anger and pain built up inside needs to be shown the way out. Cry and scream if you want to. Talk to your friends and family, confide in them. Write a diary if you want. Rid yourself of all the conflicting emotions huddled inside. Get it over with. Negative feelings bottled up inside can be mentally and physically draining.
  
- C. Surround yourself with the people you love and care for. Do not sever any relationship with your friends and family. Don't forget you will need all the support you can find to get through this turbulent phase in your life. Do not hesitate to discuss your problems with them. Plan activities with them just as you did when you were happily married. Initially, it will prove tough. But you will realize that a day spent in the company of friends can seem surprisingly wonderful, and you may even realize you did not think about your spouse or the divorce when you were with them!
  
- D. Get rid of all your spouse's personal belongings in the house and return them or just discard them. The more you see those things lying around in the house, the sadder you will feel. Rearrange the items in the house. Or even better, move into a new apartment. A change of scene can work wonders to uplift

- your mood and view life from a different perspective. Pursue a hobby. Maybe it was something you never had time to do when you were married. Now that you are on your own, take it up again and immerse yourself in it. Or cultivate a hobby which will keep you busy for hours at a stretch. Join a hobby group, and find others who share the same interests as you do. An added benefit, apart from learning a new activity, is you get a chance to meet new folks and make friends!
- E. Go back to work as usual. Spending the day with your coworkers and doing your office work may seem mundane and not appeal as much, but it's a sure shot way to keep your brain and mind occupied elsewhere, other than the recent breakup. Your marriage has ended, doesn't mean your job has to end too! Moreover, getting back to a routine you were used to will help in reorganizing your life, bringing back a sense of normalcy.
- F. Join a divorce support group. Meeting people going through the same emotional turmoil will give you a chance to know more ways of overcoming the loneliness. Do not shy away from seeking professional help. Visit a therapist or mental health counselor, if you feel that the depression is taking a toll on your well-being, and pay heed to your family and friends' suggestions. Remember they want to see you happy and are only trying to help.
- G. A bout of depression sees people either gorging on food all the time, or not eating anything at all. To forget the pain and suffering, people unknowingly resort to substance abuse, excessive smoking and drinking. This can take a toll on your health. Think twice before you seek refuge in any such activity. Take care of yourself. Eat a nutritious, well-balanced diet and keep up with an exercise regimen. Visit your doctor if your health is deteriorating. Pamper yourself. Buy new clothes, visit

a spa or a salon, get a new hairstyle, and see the rejuvenating effect it has on your senses!

- H. Try to get a hold of things and plan for your future, your post-divorce life. Before the divorce, perhaps your spouse was in charge of the household finances, but now since you are on your own, you have to pay the bills. Collect all important bank-related documents and get your finances back in order. Financial security is fundamental in getting your life back on track after a divorce.
  
- I. If you have children, do not neglect them. They may be too young to understand the reason why a parent is missing from their lives, and you have to help them overcome this feeling of anxiety and insecurity. The negative effects of divorce on children may not be as obvious as those in an adult. As a single parent, your responsibilities towards the kids increase twofold. Be open with them, and encourage them to discuss their feelings with you.
  
- J. Dealing with life after divorce is an arduous task, and how you manage your life and regain your self-esteem is subject to your mindset. Never forget that you can and you should get on with your life, for your own sake as well as for the sake of your loved ones. Structure your life such that you are back to normal again. It will take time, but the sooner you accept the situation and take matters in your hands to amend them, the sooner your life will change for the better.