



Flying Solo

**A brief guide on how to soothe the pain
and effectively manage the transition through break-up or divorce**

Finding yourself at the end of a relationship is a tough. A few things to bear in mind:

- 🌱 You are not alone
- 🌱 You are not the first and you will not be the last
- 🌱 You will get through this and emerge stronger and wiser
- 🌱 You will be happy again

Details of how you can get additional support can be found at the end of this guide.

Love and best wishes,

Isabel
BB-Coaching

Ask for Help

When we find ourselves at the end of a relationship the sense of loss can be overwhelming and the loneliness paralysing. We may acknowledge that we would like some help but often we find it difficult to identify the help that we are looking for so we soldier on hoping that someone, will come along with a plan to soothe our aching heart and resolve our practical problems. In reality, this rarely (if ever) happens. We are standing on the threshold of endless opportunities, looking backwards with no one to tap us on the shoulder and say, *“hey, look over there, the view is so much better.”*

The good news is that help is out there and I am tapping you on the shoulder and asking, *“What would be most helpful today?”*

Take some time to reflect and then consider some of the options below:

- ✚ **Family & Friends** – People want to help but they may not know how. Remember, they too are adjusting to your change in circumstances and, depending on the nature of your relationship, some may be more helpful than others. Be clear on what it is that you are looking for, choose wisely and reach out.
- ✚ **Professionals** – For some of you it will be the first time that you will have had to contemplate using solicitor, to consider your financial situation or handle the sale of an existing property or the rental of a new one. Do your homework, ask questions, and ensure that the people you engage are mindful of your situation and prepared and able to provide you with an appropriate level of service.
- ✚ **Healthcare** – If you had a broken leg you would seek treatment immediately, you would not sit at home for weeks on end hoping that it gets better by itself. When you have a broken heart the need for treatment may not be so obvious but it is equally important to attend to it. Support groups, GPs, counsellors, therapists and coaches can help; so take some time to think about what kind of help would be useful and take action.
- ✚ **Quick fixes** – Sometimes immediate gratification is the only way forward! A haircut, a massage, a manicure, a new outfit, a brisk walk, a visit to the gym, a drink from your favourite coffee shop or a visit to the charity shop with items that just serve to remind you of the life you had are not, in themselves, going to magically transform your life. However, they can be a catalyst for change and provide a window on to the happiness that is still out there waiting for you.

Staying with the pain or walking away from it towards self-determination, freedom and happiness is a choice, not an easy one I grant you, but a choice none the less. There is help out there and only you can decide what kind of help you need and whether you are going to ask for it. Asking for help is a gift to yourself and the person you are asking – it makes both feel valued.

Forgiveness & Gratitude

"Forgiveness doesn't excuse their behaviour. Forgiveness prevents their behaviour from destroying your heart."

Buddha

When someone we trust to uphold our best interests hurts us deeply the last thing we want to do is forgive them. Instead, we lean into feelings of anger, resentment, vengeance, injustice and sorrow firmly believing that we are justified in so doing. These emotions have a part to play in our recovery, however, moving past them enables us to make better decisions and secure better outcomes. Forgiveness is a process not the flicking of a switch.

When you're ready to make your wellbeing more important than their wrongdoing consider the following:

- ✚ **Healthy Release** – Work with your emotions and find a safe way of releasing them. Some options: engaging in exercise, punching cushions, cranking up the music, talking to a trusted friend. What works for you?
- ✚ **Forgive Yourself** - We do the best we can with the knowledge and experience we have at the time. Dwelling on what we should or should not have done keeps us stuck so forgive yourself for any perceived transgressions and move forward.
- ✚ **Regain Control** – Forgiving your ex does not benefit them. It diminishes their ability to control your reactions and empowers you to start taking control of your life and respond to their actions in ways that benefit you.

"Gratitude makes sense of our past, brings peace for today, and creates a vision for tomorrow."

Melody Beattie

Gratitude may not be the first thing that comes to mind when you find yourself all at sea in an old boat, battered by the winds of disappointment with uncertainty looming on the horizon and no rescue vessels in sight. And yet, even in these most challenging of times, you will find that there are things to be grateful for.

If you are struggling to find the positives in your current situation try one of the following:

- ✚ **Gratitude List** – Each day take a few minutes to make a list of those things that have made that day more manageable, more enjoyable or more hopeful. If you find this difficult just start with one thing each day and build up.
- ✚ **Gratitude Awareness** – Become aware of opportunities to exercise gratitude: thank others often, return the smile of a stranger, notice the beauty in nature or acknowledge a kind word or deed that lifts your spirits even if only for a fleeting moment. Good things are always coming our way even when we are not in the best place to receive them.
- ✚ **Gratitude Journaling** – Journaling can be cathartic and can help to re-frame our landscape. Taking a little time at the end of each day to focus on the good things, no matter how small, helps to calm the mind and open the gateway to a brighter future.

Working with forgiveness and gratitude will not transform your situation over-night, they are tools in your recovery tool-kit, and learning to use them effectively will help to ease the pain and discomfort and move you along at a faster pace.

SELF-CARE

- ✚ **Be kind to yourself** - If a friend found themselves where you are now, what would you be saying? Be your own best friend and develop the habit of loving self-talk.

Finding yourself at the end of a relationship does not make you a bad person, a terrible parent, totally incompetent, selfish, unlovable, ugly, fat, or any of the other negative thoughts that queue at the doorway of your mind from the moment you wake up. Yet, trying to silence the negative committee that meets inside your head on a daily basis can seem like trying to dig a tunnel through a mountain with nothing but a spade!

Re-focus. Take charge and tell the negative committee to sit down and shut up! Become a keen student of your internal chatter and take steps, no matter how small, to catch any unhelpful thoughts and toss them in the shredder. Make a note of the ones that come up for you most often and choose an empowering word/phrase to replace them with. Focus on your empowerment list, repeat them often and, over time, these will become your default position.

- ✚ **Have at least one nutritious meal every day** - Food has societal connotations that go well beyond its nutritional value: we go out for dinner, invite friends for lunch, celebrate special occasions with cakes, and meal times are, often, an opportunity to catch up with our nearest and dearest.

When break-up or divorce hits these rituals are disturbed and eating goes from being a pleasure to being a chore. Low mood and depleted energy levels encourage skipping meals altogether or choosing 'comfort' foods that require little or no preparation. If you have young children mopping up their left-overs becomes the new ritual because cooking a meal for one at the end of the day just seems unnecessary on top of everything else that's going on and serves as a reminder that you are well and truly on your own!

The benefits of good nutrition on mind and body are well documented but taking time to nourish yourself also serves you in a number of other ways. Planning meals and thinking about what YOU enjoy provides a welcomed distraction from the unpalatable demands thrown up by the break-up. It ignites the realisation that you have autonomy and control over the choices you make. Going out to shop for the ingredients is a gentle reminder that you matter and that life goes on outside of the all-consuming break-up story. Cooking provides structure to the day and an opportunity implement changes that will help you moving forward.

- ✚ **Make sleep a priority** - Sleep is fundamental to health and wellbeing: it plays a part in learning, memory, maintaining a strong immune system, resting and repairing the body and managing emotional and mental wellbeing. Lack of sleep can make us cranky, impair our concentration, sap our motivation, leave us permanently tired and 'washed out' and increase our propensity to negative emotional reactions. So it makes sense to make it a priority.

Even those for whom sleep is a friend during normal circumstances can struggle when the tsunami of the breakdown of a relationship hits. Sleepless nights rob you of energy making it harder to function at a time when what you need is focus, determination and strength so it is important to recognise that managing your sleep will help with managing your life.

Deciding that you are going to make sleep a priority is the first step and then you can put measures in place to maximise your success. What those measures are somewhat depend on what your relationship with sleep was before you got here: for some it may be enough to establish a bed time routine, for others changing the lay-out of your bedroom, buying new bedding and setting a new scene for yourself helps and in some cases it may be that you want to seek professional help to improve your sleep. I am not suggesting that this will be easy but making the effort to improve your sleep will help you now and as you move forward into your new life.

Dare to Dream

Adversity, of any kind, rocks our foundations and forces us to look at ourselves and how we interact with the world around us. Divorce destabilises our world, erodes our self-esteem, calls into question our abilities, highlights our flaws, robs us of motivation and energy, undermines our health and wellbeing and shatters our dreams. The emotions that surface before, during and after a break-up or divorce can be all-consuming and difficult to manage as we mourn the loss of what has gone before and contemplate the uncertainty of what lies ahead.

It takes time to process what is happening and come realise that we can rise up from adversity with greater resilience, a renewed sense of purpose and a better insight into ourselves. We can re-build our shattered dreams with a greater sense of who we are and a clearer vision of what we want our future to look like. This experience, however unwanted, allows us to break free from the shackles of compromise and gives us the opportunity to re-invent ourselves and emerge as an enhanced version of ourselves with new skills, new knowledge and new understanding.

When you are ready, here are a few ways to help you to re-build your dreams and your future:

- ✦ **Write a Bucket List** – Often associated with long-term goals but it doesn't have to be. You can start a bucket list with anything that you would like to do/have that will give you pleasure. It can be something as simple as buying that book you always meant to read and making the time to do it or something more complex such as completing a skydive in New Zealand. What does it for you?
- ✦ **Create a Vision Board** – Vision boards act as a visual reminder of the life that you want for yourself. Take some time to think about the things that are important to you and then start to add images and words to your board. If you feel so inclined you can draw your own images and write the words with calligraphy pens or coloured pencils, if not, use magazines, photographs or the internet to populate your board. Place it somewhere you will see it often and interact with it as and when you want to. Life is fluid and the things that feel very important today may not feel so important 6 months or a year down the line.
- ✦ **Record, Release and Replace** – It is easy to look back with rose-tinted glasses and convince yourself that what you had was near-perfect and irreplaceable. Take the glasses off and look again. In every relationship there will be some great bits and some not-so-great bits, record and honour the good bits and release the bad bits and replace them with images of what you want out of a new relationship. A new relationship may be the furthest thing from your mind right now but having a clear vision of what you want from a new partner will help you to recognise them when they appear and make it less likely that you will settle for something less than you deserve.

At the time of writing this Adele's new song "*Easy On Me*" has just been released, serving as a gentle reminder that from a place of total devastation real beauty can emerge.

Take Action

A fundamental part of finding our way through a break-up or divorce is taking action and yet, especially in the early days, this can be one of the most difficult things to do. Emotional exhaustion, lack of clarity and fear of the unknown all conspire to keep us rooted in our despair, looking for ways to manage the pain and making choices that, all too often, work against us rather than for us.

Wherever you are on your own journey, be kind to yourself, know that you will come through this particular storm just as others have done before you. Celebrate every success no matter how insignificant it may seem. Remind yourself that each new day brings with it an opportunity to move closer to the life that you want – you can write your own story you do not need to be a character in someone else's book. One day effort will be replaced by drive, eventually enthusiasm will take over, the sadness will lift and you will be flying!

A few things that may help you on your way:

- ✚ **An Accountability Partner** – This is someone with whom you can discuss your action plans and check-in with periodically to help 'keep you on track'. You need to pick someone who is compassionate and will hold you accountable rather than someone who will simply commiserate with you indefinitely.
- ✚ **To-do lists** – Some people love these and get a real buzz from ticking things off and some people hate the mere mention of them. They are not for everyone and the key to using them successfully is making them manageable – be realistic with the objective and the time-frame for completing it. You may like to have two on the go, one for short-term objectives and one for longer-term goals.
- ✚ **Make a Start** – It can be really difficult to get moving when you feel totally overwhelmed by what's going on around you but the reality is that staying put will most likely add to the overwhelm and keep you stuck for longer. Start slowly, take small steps and commit to doing something every day, as you pick up momentum you will find that things become easier and eventually you will start to take control of the situation and become unstoppable.

I hope you have found the information useful and that it helps you wherever you are on your personal journey.

Divorce is a common occurrence but a unique experience. To find out how a bespoke package can help you specifically, book a free discovery call. I look forward to speaking with you.

Love and best wishes,

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