



30 DIVORCE MYTHS

THAT STOP YOU FROM MOVING FORWARD

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Introduction

When we hear the word myth, it may think of Greek Gods and fantastical stories involving supernatural phenomena. Yet it's so interesting to acknowledge that at one time these fantastical beliefs were held as truth. Nothing has changed, the divorce myths that I'm about to share with you may not occur as fantastical or supernatural but they are certainly misunderstood by most of the people I meet. And, this makes perfect sense given this is exactly what a myth is. A myth is defined as "a widely held but false belief or idea". If you find that you have fallen victim to believing some of the myths outlined in this book please know that you are not alone. Many others including many divorce professionals also share these myths. In fact, at one point I believed many of them myself.

So I can't help but wonder *how can this be?* How can intelligent people believe these untruths? Especially after studies have proven that these outdated beliefs don't work. Once you have read this book, I believe it will be clear to you why they have been so easy to believe all this time. The reality is, you have likely heard many of the myths that I'm about to share with you; the people that you like and trust have shared them; including your family, friends and healthcare professionals. The bad news is that much of what they have shared is inaccurate. Coping skills like avoidance, ignoring, pushing through and waiting for things to improve do not help you heal, but rather, they leave you in a hopeless state of suffering. This is precisely why I'm creating greater awareness around this phenomena. It's because of this lack of awareness that these myths have been so prevalent. Learning about these divorce myths will provide you with new insight and a new healing opportunities. With greater awareness around true healing, versus these outdated myths will begin your healing journey, moving forward in the direction that will lead you to new hope and happiness once again.

Myth 1

Time Heals

“Time Heals” is perhaps the myth that I hear most often. This expression is so common that I’m quite certain you have heard it. Given that this particular myth doesn’t sound outlandish it is almost never challenged. It’s familiarity and widespread use has allowed it to be accepted as truth. The question is, does time heal? The reality is that over time people can heal, nobody can debate this. The problem is that we attribute the healing process to the passing of time, making time the hero and the solution. We have given "time" all the credit.

I now want to offer you a new perspective and one I believe to be a far more accurate one. Time does not heal; but rather healing actions heal. Taking the right healing actions is what helps you heal; which inevitably takes a measure of time. We all know of a person who years and years later is still suffering; she is still hurt, bitter and unhealed. We also know of others who in what was seemingly a short period of time moved on and is now much happier than ever before. How is this? How can this happen? It always comes down to actions. What healing actions are you are taking? What are you saying to yourself? What is the internal dialogue or discussion you are having with yourself? What ownership are you assuming in your personal healing process? Or, how are you hindering your healing process? When you begin to and choose to take actions towards your healing you deserve all the credit. When you have put in the blood sweat and tears you are the one to acknowledge not an arbitrary thing called time.

Myth 2

Healing Takes Time

It is also believed that you cannot expect your healing to happen too quickly. The commonly shared belief is that to heal properly takes a set amount of time. I've heard countless silly formulas like dividing the length of your relationship in half, so if you were together 20 years it will take 10 years to heal; or for every 5 years of being together that is 6 months of healing; and then there are set time periods, what I call healing after breakup averages, such as it will take the average person 18 months to heal. This may sound absurd to you now, but you likely believed your own version of this, as almost everyone has their own beliefs around how long it should take you to heal and move forward. Have you ever noticed your own skepticism if someone seems to move on too quickly? People do not trust that you can heal too fast, and at the same time, they are concerned if you don't heal fast enough. There is a lot of pressure on healing at just the right time; not too long, not too short, it has to be just perfect. Can you see how this does not make any sense and how ruthlessly unfair this is to you and your emotional state of being? Not only are you trying to manage your grieving process, but you are now trying to manage the expectations of others and the expectations of yourself. The truth is there are many factors that determine how long your healing will take and at the same time consider this, if you are taking your correct healing actions you may heal far faster and far better than you could have imagined. In contrast, trying to move on, ignore or push down your pain will keep you emotionally stuck for decades. Yet, if you are willing to do the essential and very personal healing work you can and will have access to inner peace, personal trust, self-confidence and the future you deserve again.

Myth 3

Don't Feel Sad

How much do you hate feeling sad? How much do you judge yourself for your sadness? We are taught that feeling sad is bad. As a western society, we do not want people to feel negative emotions. We regularly say, "Don't feel bad, it's okay, it will get better soon." We consider emotions like sadness, anger, loneliness, fear, and confusion to be negative emotions. We are encouraged to only think positive thoughts and to avoid or forget about these more difficult emotions. We hear things like "Think on the bright side" or "Be grateful". Yet, when you are grieving it is essential that you embrace all of your feelings, particularly the difficult ones. The feelings that are not pretty, the emotions that make you and others uncomfortable are likely the ones you need to embrace most. For you to not feel sad would be weird, very weird, given what you are going through. In the case of your separation or divorce to not feel any of these more difficult emotions would be impossible and it's not realistic and your feelings are very normal and appropriate. Researched physiological theory supports that feeling all of your emotions is strongly supported, this is discussed in greater depth in the area of Positive Psychology and Self Compassion, which recognizes that to feel happy you must also experience your authentic sadness, your 'not happy' emotions. Faking happiness is never the answer and avoiding your pain is also not the answer. If your sadness is painful this is completely normal. Do not look for ways to numb out or shut down your emotions, but rather find healthy ways to express each emotion and move through your feelings using healthy healing actions.

Myth 4

Be Strong

Have you been taught that you should be strong for yourself and others? If so, know that this is so common. Strength is a trait we have been taught to admire from a young age and unfortunately sad emotions have traditionally been perceived as weak and have been discouraged. Many believe that it is necessary to control their emotions so that they didn't worry others. They've tried very hard to look happy and normal so others won't worry; and yet somehow, this facade hasn't worked.

It is proven that by forcing yourself to be strong and by controlling your feelings can often end up having an adverse effect on your emotions and your body. Faking your happiness or pretending to be strong will drain your energy and it will affect your ability to complete even the simplest of tasks. Fighting to stay strong is highly stressful on your body; it increases your stress hormones, affecting your immune system, digestive system and the overall health of your body.

Healing requires expressing all of your emotions in a way that is true and authentic to you. I invite you to stop being strong or tough; but rather, try being vulnerable. Give yourself permission to grieve and show your true emotion; and yes, requires a deeper vulnerability and far more courage and strength. A new type of strength is allowing your heart to open even when your heart wants to stay closed. Being strong is having the courage to face your deepest fears and perhaps to stop controlling your environment, surrendering yourself to your journey. Being strong may look very different than you have viewed it in the past, I invite you to try a new approach to being strong.

Myth 5

Stay Strong for The Kids

As parents, it is our job to protect our children, but it also our job to raise our children to be healthy well-adjusted adults. Being strong for your kids could end up causing more harm than good. Taking into consideration all the that you read in Myth 4, grief is natural and normal, it would only make sense to responsibly share your sadness with your children. Yes, you read that correctly. I strongly recommend that you share your emotions with your children and model for your children what grief and healing from grief can look like. While at the same time be responsible for all of your emotions, being mindful not to unload your emotions on your children, but rather share with love, kindness, and self-reflection. Consider that it would be strange to not feel emotions and to not let your kids see your emotions. Remember that this divorce strongly effects them as well, it has affected the whole family. A different way to consider this may be by understanding the dangers of bottling up all of your emotions. And therefore, you can choose to model your healing actions and your emotions to your children in a healthy useful way. What if your doing this allows your children to know that it is safe and okay to feel their emotions? How powerful could this be for them?

* The key to expressing your emotions with your children is to let them know they are loved and you are okay and that you can manage all that is happening, including keeping them safe and secure. You are still the parent. This is not permission to fall apart and not parent, but rather to show a mature, authentic healing process. Talk to you children and be curious about them. Find out what they are feeling, you can all share your feelings without blame and shame.

Myth 6

My Children Deserve to Know the Truth About Their Mom/Dad

No! As a parent, it is always your job to honour the other parent. No matter what has happened between you and your ex; even in the case of infidelity and lying. It is never appropriate for your children to know what happened especially if it is coming from a place of revenge or with the intention of creating a wedge between your children and the other parent. What about when the other parent is inconsistent and if they are late for visitations or if there are 'no shows'? Is it still your job to continue speaking highly of the other parent, no matter how difficult. This is a time to nurture and support your child/teen providing give extra love and compassion. No matter how hard it is, always give your children the very best opportunity to nurture that relationship with the other parent, this is for your child's emotional health. And if your child is as important as you say, you will do this for them, even if you don't think the other parent deserves it or is as good of a parent as you are. And, let's face it, although you will always do your best as a parent there will be times that you too will hurt and upset your child; this just happens. As parents, we all make mistakes and mess up. Over time your children will make choices that are right for them, but you cannot influence this or it will come back to bite you. Many parents lose the trust of their children when their children realize that one parent tried to alienate the other parent. Getting back at the other parent can feel satisfying in the moment, but in the end, everyone loses, especially your children.

Myth 7

Children are Resilient, They Don't Grieve

Of course, they do and they should have the opportunity to grieve. Children grieve just as much as adults do, they just show their grief differently. I believe most children are incredible and powerful but just like adults, they can feel defeated and broken for periods of their life. Children may not have the language skills or the ability to express and interpret their emotions as quickly as some adults but their grief is still there. It's important to watch for behavioural changes with children as it is common for children to blame themselves even when it seems so obvious that it's not their fault. If you are concerned for your children's mental health please reach out for extra support. This is a difficult enough time for you, and you have far more coping skills and many more years of life experiences. Do not assume your child is okay and do not wait for her to come to you. You must connect with your child regularly and ask questions, show your love and support. Children need a safe nurturing place to grieve. They require support, security, new language, and skills to work through their grief. Research shows us that childhood trauma can impact us into adulthood in countless ways, both psychologically and physically. You must provide your child with the appropriate attention and tools to cultivate that resiliency.

Myth 8

I Should Be Done Grieving By Now

Most of my clients come to me because they want the grief to stop. Yet, depending on the situation grief could be forever. Don't worry, this isn't as hopeless as it sounds I promise. What I mean is that your divorce grief may show up occasionally throughout your lifetime, and this is completely normal. It just doesn't have to be all-consuming or as painful as it currently is. You shared a life with your ex, and you can't erase all of your memories, nor should you. But with memories come emotions. What would it be like if you could accept your feelings as natural and you began learning how to roll through your emotional grief with far greater ease and speed? Imagine the possibility of your sadness lasting for mere moments and not hours, days or weeks. Feeling grief doesn't have to consume you. Because as you have noticed you have the incredible ability to feel many emotions while grieving. Emotions such as joy, passion, connection, peace, contentment, sadness, fear and so forth are all normal to experience while you are grieving your divorce. As human beings, we are complex and have the incredible ability to feel many emotions and to flow in and out of our emotions, this is referred to as emodiversity. Scientists report that having a high emodiversity, meaning having the ability to experience a very broad spectrum of emotions leads to greater long-term happiness; and yes this spectrum includes even the difficult emotions. If you choose not to erase the memories from your past (which, by the way, is almost impossible to do) you will experience natural emotional responses to a memory, this is healthy. When you allow yourself to heal you will learn to allow the memories to move and flow in and out of your life so you can experience them all and honour your past. This will have you be far happier in your present and in your future.

Myth 9

Replace the Loss

Some believe that to feel better you need to replace the empty sad feeling. Many try and replace it with work, sex, alcohol, food or shopping or with someone else. This is akin to the same way your parents replaced your cat when it died, or a toy when it was lost. How often was your sadness replaced with a cookie? The belief for many is that there are a lot of fish in the sea and you better find a new one. However, this does not help the healing process. To heal means you must grieve. Grieving your loss is part of the healing process. Replacing the loss is trying to avoid the pain is like putting icing on a mud pie - it's still a mudpie. Moving on too quickly without going through your healing process and without taking the healing actions that you require will lead to an unhealthy relationship. When you are not at your best you are unable to attract the best partner.

Try this exercise. Rate yourself on a scale from 1-10 (rate yourself based on your happiness, feelings of success and self-confidence). If you reported feeling that you are a 3 or a 4, you can only attract another person to your life who believes that they are also only a 3 or a 4 (or close to this range); you can never attract someone who believes they are a 9 or a 10. If you want to attract a 7, 8, 9, or 10, then you have to improve your own view and opinion of yourself so that you are your best version of yourself.

Myth 10

I Shouldn't Start a New Relationship until "x" Time

Have you heard that after x time, you should be ready to move on? People around you may want you to move on and begin dating again because this makes them feel better, it often puts them at ease. Yet, your grieving and your healing process is just that, its yours and yours only. There is no one answer or no right answer that fits everyone. It is for you to discover for yourself based on your values and currently emotional status. It can be very common for people to take their time and in some cases people choose to take years to heal, and during this time they self-reflect and grow. Yet others desire a connected physical relationship much sooner. For many a physical connection can also be a powerful way to heal. Many people find it important to do both, to self-reflect and to begin new friendships and romantic relationships. It's important to do what is right for you. If you notice that you are afraid to date or you are afraid to be alone, these are good signs that you should continue your healing journey. If you feel that you *have* to be with someone to make you feel valuable or important this is also a key indicator that you have a lowered self-esteem and I'd recommend that you also continue additional interpersonal work. Notice if you are looking for others to fill this void within you. On the contrary, to have the support of someone or to feel desired by someone may be just the medicine you need to help you move in the right direction. Do some self-reflection and make a choice that is right for you.

Myth 11

After the Grief, Life Will Return Back to Normal

When I hear the phrase 'normal' I often think "back to how it used to be". Yet, I don't believe anyone can go back to how it used to be after their world has changed so much. As you heal you will move forward and grow, but you will seldom go back to how it was. I often create a visual with my clients creating a line. This line represents the moment the relationship ended when you knew that the marriage was over. At that moment you only had 2 options. Option 1, fall below the line and become a smaller more protected version of yourself; a shell of who you once were, someone guarded and untrusting. Or you can become options 2. Option 2 is a stronger, wiser, more peaceful version of yourself. Someone who has greater self-esteem, self-assurance and a deep sense of knowing them self. I believe you can always become a better, stronger, happier, more purposeful version of who you were and you can use this grieving process to get to know yourself better and like yourself beyond what you did before. The pain will be gone and you will be able to begin creating a new future that will become your new normal. Having the power to create and design your future, your next chapter, can give you tremendous peace and power.

Myth 12

There is a Normal Way to Grief

Although grief is natural and normal, there is not a normal way to grief. My clients very often ask me "Am I normal?" and "Is what I'm going through normal?" And I almost always say YES. How can I do this, how is this true? The reality is everyone grieves differently. There is no one way or no one right way to grieve, and there is nothing predictable or consistent about your grief. Your grief is not linear; quite the opposite in fact. It may feel like you are taking two steps forward and one step back, then you take an exponential leap forward, and then you fall hard again. There are no set stages, everyone is unique. This is perhaps why we have so many challenges around grief. We like predictability and consistency. It's our human way. We feel comfortable being able to label and measure human behaviour. I strongly believe that there are key areas to focus your healing on based on your Healing Language Assessment and I believe this will help you with being able to focus your healing process. For example, some people heal better using their 6 senses, others heal better through understanding, learning and studying, others heal faster if they are being more spiritual and energetic, others heal faster in physical activity, others heal faster in creation and creativity.

Your grief recovery will help you know yourself better and become a stronger more self-aware version of yourself. This can all begin to happen very fast. It can be a process much like peeling an onion. How deep do you want to go, is always up to you.

Myth 13

The First Year is the Worst

This is not true. The worst of the grief can hit you years later. There are 2 different ways to look at grief: Acute Grief and Chronic Grief. Acute Grief is the deep heartbreak or the very physical feeling of your loss (like your heart has been ripped out). If this Acute Grief has not been healed or attended to it can then turn into Chronic Grief which I consider to be more harmful. Chronic Grief is often more hidden, meaning you may not notice it because it isn't as physically painful as Acute Grief. Chronic Grief may show up months or years later. Chronic Grief is reported as feeling numb or you having a deeply guarded heart or you may find that you just feel less happy most of the time, or you feel less energy, or you simply don't trust anyone or yourself. Chronic Grief can be described as a leading cause of dis-ease, a lack of ease and healthy flow in your body. The belief is, that over time this could result in life-threatening health issues. Stress is one of the biggest health dangers today, and unhealed grief causes extreme amounts of stress in your body. Most people are trying to feel better yet they are relying on old disempowering coping skills or short-term coping strategies for extended periods of time. Grief is interesting because it is not until you feel your grief (without judgement) and experience your physical grief that you can begin to move forward. People often confuse suffering with grieving, thinking that they are grieving and healing but they are actually stuck suffering. Without processing your grief you could be trapped in your pain and suffering for many years to come, so it is essential to experience your grief in a way that helps you heal. Your grief recovery will help you know yourself better and become a stronger more self-aware version of yourself.

Myth 14

This is Grief!

You may not be grieving you may be suffering. Grieving is a natural and normal process of healing through your divorce loss. Grieving is the physical sadness, pain and emptiness that often leaves you feeling stunned, lost and in a bit of a fog. You don't know how life is going to be in the future. Life has radically changed because you have just encountered a massive relationship loss.

Suffering is not grieving, suffering is what you do that prevents you from healing. Suffering is all of the negative judgmental things that you say to yourself about your situation. Suffering is caused by self-abuse. It is all of the overt and subtle things that you say to yourself that diminishes who you are, your hopes and dreams for our future. Suffering is all that you say about the past that you can not change or undo. Suffering is replaying how you 'should have' done it differently over and over again in your mind.

Grieving is knowing you will be okay and access ways to support yourself and support your healing. For example, self-compassion is one of the most important aspects of healing. If you know you are okay and that you are grieving, and that grieving is okay - you are in a good place. If you do not feel like you are okay, or you question your ability to function it's time to turn to others for support. Being stuck in the downward spiral of the proverbial rabbit hole can have you stuck for much longer than you need to be. It is time to learn new strategies to help move through your grief more productively. The suffering aspect of grief is a very hurtful hard place to be. To move beyond this will take very specific actions that honour you and support your healing process.

Myth 15

Keep Busy

The belief is that if you just keep busy and distract yourself, you can get through the heartbreak and pain. This sounds like a good plan, but it is not accurate. Staying busy and avoiding your feelings will actually prolong the inevitable. Yet so many people easily fall into this distraction coping mechanism because let's face it life can naturally become very busy. Yet, to begin healing it is essential to slow down and face your grief. If you want to heal, you will have to face your grief and not run from it. It is also strongly recommended to do this sooner than later because not attending to your grief can lead to Chronic Grief. Chronic Grief is the next stage of grief, where your body can become greatly affected by the stress of unhealed and unattended to grief. Do you find you are getting sick more often? Unhealed grief is very stressful on your body, so it is important to work through this. If you notice that you are always feeling tired, or you can't move past this heartbreak you may have a lower Happiness, base-point ... do you just feel blah. Take personal time and giving yourself permission to feel and focus on your healing, allowing yourself to move through your emotion. This is a much quicker and far more effective way to heal and move forward. It will yield the very best long-term and long-lasting results.

Myth 16

If You Still Cry - You Are Stuck

The myth is, if you are still crying when you think/talk about your ex after x years/time it means you are stuck. Here is what we need to know about tears, tears are usually brought on by a memory, followed by a positive or a negative feeling. This is natural and normal. Reminiscing and feeling moved is nothing to feel shameful about. How much you are grieving and whether this is healthy is likely a personal judgment call. Do you believe it is reasonable that you are crying? Or do you feel unable to move on? Tears can often be accompanied by regret, shame, guilt or hopelessness. Here are a couple of ways to measure your grief: Does your sadness limit your happiness, or stop you from doing the things you love? Does your sadness stop you from moving forward or interacting with people? Do you feel stuck and unable to move on? If you are answering yes to any of these, I would recommend additional healing support. There is a way to move through this far faster than you think, such as working with a Divorce Recovery Coach, Grief and Loss Coach or a Grief Therapist.

If you find that you are answering no to these questions, then trust that your tears are normal. Now it may mean you still have more work to do to move on so you are in your best place. If this the case, I'd strongly encourage this. Use your grief as an opportunity to support yourself and honour your healing. Also welcome love to be present, it is not necessary to hate your Ex. Your love is your love and it is completely normal to have authentic feelings of love towards all people past and present in your life. Remember that hate is toxic and love is healing.

Myth 17

Men Don't Talk About Their Grief

Men want to talk about their grief, and they need to, but all too often they don't know who to speak with. Men can end up suffering and not grieve as effectively as they would like, particularly because they are trying to manage themselves within the stigma that men don't cry and with the expectations that men need to stay strong. We often have interesting stigmas around strength and what men or woman should do. Men need a place to heal, a space without judgment or stigma. I recommend to all of my male clients to balance their soft, tender vulnerable side with their strong mature masculine side. Yes you are grieving and it hurts and equally important to healthy grief is feeling confident, strong and in control of your life. These are very extreme pendulum swings, and yet extremely important.

Men may choose to express their grief alone, or with a counsellor or with a coach as they may be less likely to show these emotions to friends and family members. For men, it is extremely important to physically express grief through actions; honouring and respecting self and others. Men seldom heal just through talking; they need to be taking healing actions. If a man's grief is not healed, he is at greater risk of falling into a depression than his female counterpart. Depression is unnecessary and completely avoidable. If you find you are reaching this point, there is another way out. Please reach out to a professional who can support you and understand how men heal differently than women.

Myth 18

Friends and Family are Your Best Support

If you are feeling empowered and supported by your friends and family great! But, sometimes this is not the case. Your friends and family mean well, but they just don't know how to help you. They may not understand your pain, or they might be trying to fix everything. They want you to get better and it's difficult for them to watch you suffer and they will make every attempt to make you feel better. And in doing so, they will often say or do things that cause even further harm than good. Often, they push their opinions onto you, or they unknowingly say things that are counter-productive to your healing. If this sounds familiar, then your friends or family are not your best option right now.

For some of you, your friends have been your salvation, and this is wonderful.

To honour that important connection be sure to be a supportive and grateful friend back. When friendship becomes unbalanced this can often become stressful on the friendship. Bring more self-awareness to your close relationships, as they are also processing your divorce whilst trying to be a good friend. For others, if you don't have friends and family and or you've lost most of your support in the separation, this is a now the time to begin creating new connections. It is essential for you to begin cultivating some new connections because we need connections to heal. Nurturing connections is your responsibility and learning how to do this takes practice. It's time to get creative to begin finding new community and friendships. For some people this is a perfect time to get a pet, a cat or dog can be an incredible companion through this time.

Myth 19

A Good Friend Offers Good Advice

You may be surprised to hear that no one should give you advice unless you ask for it, and even then it should be offered and received with caution. When going through a heartbreak it is very common to stop trusting your ability to make good decisions. If you find that you are turning to your friends because you are now unable to trust yourself and you feel incapable of making smart logical decisions, this would be a powerful self-observation to pay close attention to. Turning to friends and accepting their advice or opinion about your life can lead you into a dangerous downward spiral. You may be turning to your friends for their advice somehow hoping that they have a clearer more objective perspective. Yet, your friends can and will only give you good advice based on their perspective and their values, not your values. These perspectives are valid for them and their life but their choices are not your choices.

When you don't feel able or qualified to make the best decisions for yourself and your life, this is a clear indication that you are feeling insecure or your self-esteem has declined. Friends are great to brainstorm with and to exchange thoughts and ideas with but are always just that, a perspective. It is not necessarily the best advice for you. If you are unable to make a choice that you can feel good about, perhaps you don't have to make a choice quite yet. Self-reflect, journal, and do the self-awareness work to help you trust yourself again so that you can make the most powerful and right choices for you. This would also be the perfect time to determine your core values, your core values are your internal barometer that measures your integrity within your own life.

Myth 20

Someone Who Has Experienced a Divorce Will Understand Me Better

Someone who has also experienced a separation, divorce or broken heart will be supportive and understand what I'm going through. All people express and process their grief differently. No one person is the same. Grief after a breakup is extremely personal and unique to each person. Sometimes it's true people with similar losses can end up being your best support, other times someone with a very different perspective can also be your best support. Because we all have our own reasons, experiences, and way in which we heal it cannot be assumed that someone else who has been through a separation or divorce will understand you. It's not fair or reasonable to expect this. Also be very aware that misery loves company. Try not to fall into the trap of finding someone that you can complain to. Sometimes it feels good to be validated, but this can quickly turn into a very negative energy draining relationship. If you spend time believing your life is miserable and hopeless with someone who is also feeling scared, untrusting and lonely this is an unfortunate recipe for unhappiness. I always encourage people to connect with others who raise their energetic vibration. Choose people that you feel supported by or with whom you can laugh with rather than getting caught in the downward spiral of hopelessness. Yes divorce sucks, but now what? Being the best version of you in the face of uncertainty, sadness and overwhelm is a place to aspire to. Who will you be and who will you attract?

Myth 21

5 Stages of Grief

Elizabeth Kubler-Ross' 5 Stages of Grief is a good guideline. According to Russell P. Friedman, executive director of the Grief Recovery Institute and co-author, with John W. James, of *The Grief Recovery Handbook* (HarperCollins, 1998), "no study has ever established that stages of grief exist, and what is defined as such can't be called stages, Elizabeth's book *On Death and Dying* was never written as a study of grief and bereavement, and many of the "stages" of the dying described in the book have been simplified. Her book is a dialogue between two people discussing the meaning of dying". It is not a grieving theory for people healing through loss and grief.

The five stages of grief come with many criticisms. If you find that this theory works for you, then please continue to use it. For many others, they do not feel that their grief fits into this mould. They don't connect to all of the stages, or these stages don't encompass all of their emotions. The five stages denial, anger, bargaining, depression, and acceptance doesn't allow for all the others places one might be in like: loneliness, jealousy, anxiety, fearful of the future, or the inability to trust. I believe that to simplify your healing into 5 stages is not realistic or helpful. There are no stages of grief that fit any two people or any single relationship, but there is a grieving process. I'm currently developing a test that helps you discover your healing blueprint. Each of us heals differently. Learning your healing blueprint will help you heal in the most power efficient way for you. Stay tuned!

Myth 22

It's Not Fair

Some people believe that grieving is bad, and it's not fair. It's believed that we shouldn't have to grieve or feel negative emotions. It's unfair that people die or leave us and these types of painful things shouldn't happen to anyone. Simply said, we don't want to see people hurt and we don't want to be hurt. Many people believe it is bad and that it is wrong to endure sadness or pain. We often forget that grieving is completely natural, it is the most normal reaction to loss. In fact, nobody can avoid loss and grief.

And yet, truthful each one of us will experience loss in our lifetime. Here is my belief; just because something is painful doesn't mean we shouldn't have to experience it. It is unrealistic to think that you won't be affected by grief. The real problem is that we don't know how to heal through our grief, it is not that the loss and grief in and of itself are the problems. Grieving is an incredible opportunity to learn more about oneself and expand. Learning how to heal through grief is a powerful and necessary skill to have. Healing through grief is surprisingly not as difficult as it seems, yet so few people have been taught how to grieve properly. Grieving effectively is a learned skill and once learned will transform your life. Did you know that scientific studies are now proving that people that understand how to grieve and experience sadness live happier lives? Science has shown us that it's important to grieve, feel sadness and to have all of the difficult emotions that we so often want to avoid. Feeling as many emotions as you can and letting ourselves experience them is very healthy and leads to an overall happier life.

Myth 23

I Need to Get Over It

There is a belief that the goal of grief is to “Move On” or “Get Over It”. The truth is there isn’t a goal around grief. Grief is simply an emotional reaction to your loss. This attitude and belief towards your grief will literally cause you to suffer for a longer period of time. You are at risk of suffering indefinitely, as I’ve witnessed many that have died with their divorce grief unresolved. Resisting your grief and trying to forget it or run from it has a surprising adverse effect. To move through your grief and to become curious about your grief is a powerful healing strategy. As you are grieving, you may decide to learn more about yourself. Any you may take a new look at your life and choose to make some changes, or you may not. Grieving forces you to slow down, self-reflect and to take inventory on your life. Causing you to ask very profound questions. The more you fight your grief and try and force an outcome or try and get over your grief, the longer you will find that you are stuck in it. If there is an end goal around grief it is to listen to your body, and learn more about yourself so you can heal. This is often referred to as mindfulness. This ancient yet very relevant practice is new for many people; as such people often find they require support with learning how to do this.

Myth 24

Going to Therapy or a Support Group is always Helpful

There are so many paths to healing and it's important to find the one that is right for you. Yes, I am biased in believing Divorce Recovery Coaching and Grief Coaching is amazing, but I also know that everyone has their own healing journey. It may be reading, meditation, connecting with nature, church, a good friend... find what works for you.

A red flag is if someone tells you that their way is the only way or the best way. It may be the best way that they know of or the only way you know of, but it is not the only way. Be curious, ask questions, be open and listen to your body and intuition. Try lots of different things, do your research and then do what is right for you.

Myth 25

I Need Closure

I hear my clients say this so often, “I just need to understand why it ended; I need closure.” There is a false belief that if you can just understand why then you can move on, but this is not true. This belief is an emotional trap. The why questions around the separations are unanswerable questions and the obsession with asking all of the why questions will prevent you from healing. The truth is, you will never answer the question of why. It is a trick question that will have you stuck for many years perhaps decades to come.

It is impossible to satisfy yourself with the why question. Because you won't believe the truth anyway. If you have noticed, your Ex has already told you why several times, but you don't believe him/her or you don't like the answer. You think that there is a better answer or more 'honest' reason. You do not trust your ex to give you the real reason. What you actually want from him or her is for them to confirm the reason that you believe is the truth, nothing else will do.

The answer to why is always just one version or interpretation of the question at that moment. It will be almost impossible to get the real answer or the absolute truth. Many of my clients will unfairly blame themselves, thinking they should have known better, fixed themselves, or in some way, they should have handled things differently. Learning to let go of the need to know why is such a relief. When you realize that you will never know why and that this is impossible to figure out, you may feel relief.

Myth 26

A Prescription Will Help My Grief?

Grief, in and of itself, is not a mental health issue. Healthy, happy, capable and successful people grieve. Grief is surprisingly normal and everyone will encounter grief in their lifetime, likely many times over. Many of our medical professionals are not trained properly in the grief process and as such they believe medicating with antidepressants is a good solution.

Divorce Grief is not the same as Major Depression Disorder yet on paper they look very similar, if you were to list their characteristics at a glance they could look identical, the difference is in the details. For example a depressed person may avoid social gatherings or isolate themselves, where as a grieving person will avoid places and people that remind them of the Ex. It is also important to note that if you are inclined to experience depression a divorce or separation may trigger depressive episode.

The key message is to ask lots of questions and do not turn to medication as your fix-all solution. Medication in and of itself is not enough. Also it's important to know that to heal through the divorce loss fully you must feel and process the grief, and there is a concern that some medications can numb this preventing the healing process to happen thoroughly. Remember, grief is not a mental health issue yet, unattended grief, can lead to greater physical and emotional complications. I am not a doctor and I am not you, I do not know your health history and ultimately you and your doctor will make the best decision for you. Ask lots of questions and make the choice that is best for you. If you choose medication do this with eyes wide open and with zero shame. Be the driver in your healthcare, taking ownership of your healing process. Making strong healthy choices for yourself.

Myth 27

A Few Drinks Can't Harm Me

Clients often ask, is it okay if I have a couple drinks when going through a tough time like grief? Yes and no. If you choose to have a beer at the end of a night to help you relax, I would quite frankly support that any day over prescription medication (in fact some research shows drinking a glass of wine a day is healthy). But remember you are in a state of grieving and this can turn into a slippery slope. If you feel that you need a drink to get through the day or the night this would be a good warning sign. Alcohol affects your brain chemistry and can increase your stress and anxiety. So stay very aware of your body and pay attention to what is right for you. Trying to numb the body and change the sad hurt feelings into something else is incredibly tempting and the unfortunate truth is that if you ever want to heal you will need to face the grief. Hiding from the emotions and avoiding them will only delay the healing process. If you are drinking too much acknowledge this, do not beat yourself up or judge yourself, you've done enough of that already. You are always doing your best, even if you have wished you could do differently. Make honouring healthy choices for yourself.

Myth 29

If I Start to Cry or Grieve I May Never Stop?

If you have ever experienced depression or severe, long-lasting sadness, this is a common fear. Many of my clients are afraid to release their emotions for fear of becoming stuck in their grief. They are worried that they will not be able to move past it. Many of my clients have shared this fear with me and it is a real fear; but it is only that, it is a fear.

Choosing to heal will require being vulnerable and you will have to take a personal risk in doing this. Feeling your emotions will not cause emotional problems, it is always what you say to yourself regarding your emotional experiences that cause the long-lasting problems. Although it may seem like your emotions are your greatest challenge the true obstacle is your internal dialogue, your judging disempowering voice. Learning to move through your emotions and giving yourself permission to feel and experience your emotions without a play by play of criticism and judgment will give you the platform to heal. If you are not doing this, you are simply bottling up your feelings and this makes it impossible to heal.

Myth 30

I Can Finally Move On Once My Divorce is Finalized

A common belief is that once (x) happens then I will feel better. For example, once the separation agreement is complete, once the divorce is finalized and/or once the financials are resolved I will feel better. The belief is that once your circumstances 'improve' then you will be happier. This sounds reasonable, and few would argue this. The challenge is, that you are now waiting for your circumstances to improve and there is no guarantee this will happen. For example, in divorce you may have less money, a loss of friends, a loss of family, emotional memories, less time with your children and the list goes on. Your circumstance may not be ideal. Stick with me this is sounding gloom...

What I'm attempting to express is that if you suffer because of the imperfections of life then this can equal a lot of suffering. We cannot always control what life throws at us, but we can control who we are in the face of this. Imagine being able to feel complete, happy and peaceful even if life isn't perfect. When you can feel inner satisfaction, joy and appreciation for your life, irrelevant of your circumstances this is the place to aspire to. Who will you be and how will you see yourself in the midst of life's often unpredictable whirlwind?

Conclusion

Thank you for taking the time to read through these divorce myths. There are plenty more myths so I encourage you to question the things you hear people say, or more importantly the things that you say. Often we say things that are untrue, and we don't stop to question the words that fall out of our mouths. As humans, we are masterful at making statements that are absolutes. For example, it is always this way; I know what to expect; she always does this; I never...you get my point. If these myths help you question things and to become more curious rather than stuck with an unhelpful certainty, this would be a huge leap forward.

Share these myths with your friends and family and start questioning the old disempowering beliefs that keep you stagnant and may your healing journey exceed all of your expectation.

Bio

More About Bonnie

Bonnie Duarte, is a Divorce Recovery Coach, Accredited Professional Certified Coach, and Registered Social Services Worker. She has been coaching and counseling individuals for over 15 years and is a pioneer in the divorce healing field. As a trained Energy Healer and certified Quantum Touch healer, she offers a powerful untapped access to healing. Bonnie offers a unique blend of Grief Recovery, The Science of Happiness, Mindfulness, Mindset Coaching, Bodywork, Shadow Work and Masculine and Feminine Energy Philosophies. It's from this blend of disciplines that she has cultivated a healing process that supports and expedite her clients through their divorce and separation grief. Bonnie has had her Private Coaching Practice since 2010 and has led over 100 workshops. Bonnie continues to train herself and others in the self-development/grief healing field, she is always adding to her repertoire of tools. She regularly uses over 30 tools and practices that support her clients in their healing journey. Bonnie has a lot on the 2018 horizon. She will also be launching her online Divorce Recovery Healing Program this summer of 2018 alongside her highly anticipated Healing Blueprint. Each person has a unique healing blueprint and knowing this will be a game changer.

Bonnie often teaches her clients about the dynamics between the feminine and the masculine energies. But perhaps even more interesting is learning how men heal differently than women. Bonnie's personal life experiences combined with her education, training, and spiritual journey has brought her to the perfect place from where she can now provide profound transformational coaching to people healing through loss. Her own journey through diversity has had her be no stranger to the hardships of loss and grief. Bonnie is a product of 5 divorces.

Her parents married, remarried and divorce a totally of 4 times, not to one another, but other partners. Her husband of 11 years is divorced and she has two stepdaughters. Bonnie has been in the face of divorce her whole life. Not to mention that she share of heartbreak. It took her 7-years to heal from a 3-year relationship. She learned first hand that to grieve requires a skill set, one that she didn't have. Learning how to grieve and how to process grief can be used over and over again in life, as many of the skills are transferable to any life circumstance resulting in a loss.

Bonnie has a resilient, light and fun way in which she approaches life and healing. She helps you find love, joy, and peace as you work through your own journey. Bonnie is a breath of fresh air offering real solutions with compassion and strength.

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