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columns



the mindful divorcée

by Debbie Martinez, Divorce Coach

## Who Takes Custody of Your Friends?

**A**S IF DIVORCE ISN'T HARD ENOUGH WITH THE BREAKDOWN OF YOUR family but you also find that you are facing the loss of friendships. People that you considered long time friends or "friends" you made in your child's school have suddenly scattered like roaches when the lights are turned on. The group you were a part of has embraced your ex and his new love and your social calendar is bare.

What is this phenomenon that takes place as soon as the judge signs your divorce decree? Shedding some light on this all too common fall out will help you to stop taking it personally and move on to new friendships.



There are lots of divorce moments that are still vivid in my mind even after ten years post divorce but one of the most telling took place in an elevator as my attorney took me down to the lobby. How we got on the topic of friendships is unclear but her advice rocked me. "Be prepared to lose your friends," she said. As I stared in disbelief at her comment, her next statement was even more shocking, "Cut ties now and save yourself the pain of losing them in dribs and drabs." I found myself giving her a litany of reasons why MY friends wouldn't desert me. She listened and smiled, "You will have a few that will stay and they are your true friends, and the friends you make after your divorce you will have for the rest of your life." The elevator door shut as I stood there in anger at her curt suggestion that my friends would do such a thing.

Fast-forward ten years and true to her word, I have a few old friends left from "the group" and have made a bunch of new and amazing friends. Not that I got here unscathed. As the friendship fallout took place, I dealt with feelings of abandonment, anger, hurt and confusion. Why would they do this? Was it me? How could they add to my feelings of loss in a world that no longer looked familiar?

Here is the conclusion I came to. We were no longer on the same playing field. I was now a single woman and their own insecurities about themselves and their marriage didn't allow them to be able to deal with my divorce. Our worlds became different as did our conversations and they were uncomfortable with the change.

At the end of the day, many days to be exact, I found peace. I came to realize that I had had superficial friendships, that I had been the one to go through the divorce but they were the ones with much bigger issues. The handful of friends that remained in "my camp" made up for all the ones that deserted.

Life has a funny way of showing you what is important and when something is taken away, something better comes along, as in the case with my newfound friends.

So, back to the question of who gets custody of the friends? The answer isn't who gets custody but rather who cherishes your friendship enough to stay? Don't waste energy trying to hold onto people who don't want to embrace your new life but continue to cultivate those friendships that have proven their weight in gold.

*Debbie Martinez, MA is a certified, mindful life coach specializing in divorce (aka: heartbreak coach). She professionally coaches clients on how to avoid the breakup backlash and live better, not bitter. As a Florida Supreme Court Certified Family Mediator trained in collaborative divorce, Debbie gives clients the tools they need to successfully untie the knot and stand strong in the wake of adversity. She brings her formal training and life experience into her coaching practice to empower and educate clients through their divorce journey and onto new beginnings. You can contact Debbie at [debbie@transformationthrudivorce.com](mailto:debbie@transformationthrudivorce.com).*



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