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14
16
30



THE MINDFUL DIVORCÉE

I Want My White Knight (and the Horse Too)

BY DEBBIE MARTINEZ, DIVORCE COACH



LADIES, LADIES... WE HAVE SOME TALKING TO DO. A white knight and the horse? That's quite a bit of pressure to put on a man. Unfortunately, it's pretty common for a woman going through a divorce to be looking for just that. The truth is that no one can save you but yourself. So, let's address this Cinderella Complex.

First coined by Colette Dowling, a woman with a Cinderella Complex has repressed fears and attitudes towards independence, which causes them to deny their own abilities. They are women who are always looking for external events to transform their lives, and want to be saved from real or imagined hardships. In essence, searching for her Prince Charming.

To rely on another for your financial and or emotional security is only an illusion. If you feel that you need a white knight, then you are in effect telling yourself you are a damsel in distress. Come on, Ladies... That might look romantic in Disney, but have you ever asked yourself what happens to the damsel he "rescued" when he leaves to rescue another one? She's right back where she started; waiting for someone to ride up on a horse. And so the pattern continues.

You are the only one that can save and complete yourself, and independence is the key. This is not something that can be gleaned from others, but can only be developed from within. Facing the fears of your new single life, learning to be your new best friend, becoming self-reliant, modeling the meaning of resiliency to your children, and experiencing new things on your own will lead you down the path to independence. Your divorce experience, if you allow it, will teach you how to complete yourself, and thus become your own knight in shining armor.

Another angle to look at in the Cinderella Complex is your criteria for relationships.

If your sole criteria are based on how this person is going to rescue you, then you are potentially selling yourself short. Women mostly want to be rescued for emotional or financial reasons, as they see those synonymous with feeling safe and secure. If that is all that you are looking at, then your version of an "ideal" man is skewed. What about the guy who doesn't meet your financial expectations but is great with your kids, works around the house and is true blue? He is worth a second look. But you are focused on the guy who lavishes you with presents, choosing not to take into account the fact that he can't take the time to meet your kids, and flirts with every woman he meets, only because he can rescue you financially.

The lesson here is simple; lose the damsel in distress mentality by becoming independent. Once independent, your criteria for your Prince Charming will change. Divorce did not rob you of your life because it took away your sense of safety and security. It just might have saved it by forcing you to face your fears of independence, and opening up the way for you to find someone who you are truly compatible with.

If you don't get out there and make your life happen as an independent woman, instead of getting the white knight on a horse, you just might be getting a horse thief.

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@thepowerofdivorcecoach.com.

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