

Debbie Does Divorce: our new relationship advice column

By Debbie Martinez

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*Southfloridaqueenb.com is thrilled to introduce its new guest columnist: Divorce and relationship expert Debbie Martinez of **Thepowerofdivorcecoach.com**! Each month, Debbie will answer your most most pressing concerns about divorce and more. Please email questions to **jkcox@tribune.com** to be forwarded to Debbie.*

Q. I'm getting divorced and I can't stop looking at my soon-to-be-ex husband's Facebook page. How do I stop torturing myself with this?

A. Not to sound cruel but you need to get a life. Trust me, I mean that with all the love in my heart because once you get your own life, you will no longer be looking over the fence at your ex's.

You said it correctly when you said, "torturing yourself." No one else is doing this to you; you and you alone are making the choice to look on Facebook. Put your focus on what is ahead of you and not what has left you, that is wasted energy.

So, let's see, how are you going to accomplish getting your own life? This is an exercise I do with my clients and it works. Write a letter (you are not going to mail it) to a friend as if it is one year down the road. In detail, describe your life to that person: where you live, your activities, people you have met, your appearance, job, even the type of dog you have. As you are writing, really feel what it is you're saying. Be excited about that promotion, see yourself walking your new dog and feel sexy in your new wardrobe. Once you have finished the letter, take each thing that you have written about and break it down into workable steps towards that goal. You now have a plan and isn't that exciting?

Now comes the "challenge." It is going to take you telling yourself that you are worth having peace and that no way is this person going to control you any longer. How is that control you ask? By monitoring this person on Facebook, the emotions that it invokes are controlling you. It dictates how you feel about yourself and how you spend your day. That's control. Aren't

you worth more than that? The clock is ticking, my friend; don't waste it in front of a computer.

Q. I've been divorced for a few months and all my friends keep trying to set me up on dates. How do I tell them in a nice way that I don't need their help?

A. That's a great question but I always like to look a little bit deeper into things. As one progresses through the myriad of emotions and thoughts post divorce, it is imperative that you become very self-aware. My question to you would be, "What are the reasons you don't want their help?" Is it out of ego, misplaced anger or because you don't want to date right now? The important thing here is for you to understand why you don't want their help and then work from there on how to tell them.

If you don't want their help because your ego is bruised, then start working on self-acceptance. If it is because you are angry with your ex or the world and you just don't want anyone's help in anything, then you will need to explore your anger or perhaps you are not ready to date and then ask yourself why? Is it lack of confidence, body image, busy schedule, trust or any number of reasons? Whatever they are, start addressing them.

Now to the less superficial question on how to tell them. I know this will sound so simple but just tell them the truth. Don't over think or overcomplicate your life.

Sometimes we feel like we have to give long explanations to justify our feelings and we don't. Just tell them the truth and let them know that when you are ready, they will be first on your list to help you get a date.