



How to Get Unstuck After Divorce

A COUPLE OF YEARS AFTER MY DIVORCE I CAME to the realization I was stuck. Figuring out why I was stuck was the next step and the hardest. It required me to dig deep and be brutally honest with myself. I see clients every week that utter the phrase, "I think I'm stuck." When I ask them why, a blank look comes across their faces. They have no idea why; they just want to get unstuck. I explain the first step to becoming unstuck is to clarify what is holding you in your current state. The following is a list of common issues that keep post-divorced people feeling stuck. You can have one or a combination of them. Total disclosure, I had them all!

- » **Unforgiveness** – this is not being able to forgive yourself or your ex
- » **It's Not Fair** – not being able to get past the break up, the settlement agreement, the injustice of it all and your change of lifestyle.
- » **Looking Over Your Ex's fence** – this goes right along with the previous one. This is all about what your ex is doing and comparing his/her new life to yours.
- » **Unanswered Questions** – becoming obsessed with getting answers to all your questions.
- » **Fear** – this can be financial fear, fear of being alone or generalized fear of the unknown.
- » **Low Self-Esteem or Low Self-Worth** – what we think and feel about ourselves or not feeling loveable, worthy or valuable.

As I mentioned earlier, getting clarity means you have to be totally honest with yourself and that is not easy. To admit we have unresolved "issues" is difficult but necessary to move forward and get unstuck. As I also mentioned, I had all of these. Long road ahead!

Next step. You have realized that you have these issues but how do you work through them. Let's look at each one.

Unforgiveness. This was my toughest battle. How do you forgive someone that has hurt you and crushed your dreams? Forgiveness is a choice and it takes work. There are several ways to work through this. You can lean on your faith, you can view the other person as having a sickness and they can't help their behavior, or you forgive for yourself so the anger and bitterness doesn't take away from your quality of life. This is one issue that requires patience and self-love. Don't allow your ex to take one more minute away from your life and when you don't forgive, he/she is definitely robbing you of your own life.

It's Not Fair. Here is where you have to put your Big Girl Panties on, straighten your tiara and move on. Life is not fair but it's harder to move forward when you view yourself as a victim. Ask yourself, "Is there anything I can do about this situation?" If the answer is yes, then do it. If the answer is no, then let it go. If you choose to see your divorce and life after divorce as unfair, then you will forever be stuck in the past. What's not fair is that you let a relationship that doesn't exist anymore affect your life as a totality. Work on acceptance.

Looking Over Your Ex's Fence. Comparisons never help



anyone. Start focusing on your life and what makes you happy instead of what your ex is doing. Understand this principle; two things cannot occupy the same space at the same time. As long as you are looking over his fence, you can't be spending time doing what you love. He/she is once again controlling your life.

Unanswered Questions. We all want closure; we all want the truth. However, the chances of getting all of our questions answered to our satisfaction from someone who hurt us are slim to none. Then what happens is we start to obsess. Here is where you need to make the choice to let it go. Acceptance is key because the reality is you will not have all the answers...ever. Accepting and letting it go will bring you peace.

Fear. There are so many types of fear I can't go into each one separately but in general fear will paralyze you. If you're a religious person, draw on your faith and trust that God will help you through this. Writing down your fears and then all solutions to them is very helpful. Somehow, being able to see the solutions and reflect on them diminishes the fear a bit.

Low Self-Esteem or Low Self-Worth. You can have good self-esteem, meaning you feel good about how you perform at work or playing the piano or a sport or even your capabilities as a parent and still have low self-worth, meaning you don't feel worthy or loveable. Don't let your divorce or your

ex dictate your self worth. An exercise I give my clients is to write down all their accomplishments, what they are good at and then all the good traits about themselves. I have them do mirror work where they have to look into their eyes in a mirror and tell themselves affirmations. Correcting low self-esteem or low self-worth takes time and patience but the return is astronomical.

Being stuck is a natural side effect of getting divorced and it looks different for each person. My advice is not to push it under the rug or play the distraction game because if you do, you will be cheating yourself out of a fulfilling, happy life. Take the time, do the work and put it behind you once and for all.

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.