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COLUMNS



THE MINDFUL DIVORCÉE

Debbie Martinez, Divorce Coach

Lessons I Have Learned as a Divorce Coach

AS A DIVORCE COACH, I SPEND MY TIME EDUCATING PEOPLE ON THE PROCESS OF divorce, teaching them communication and co-parenting skills, dealing with the tsunami of emotion that come along with it and learning to be strong again. I have never stopped to think of the lessons my clients are teaching me. Well, as they say, there is a first time for everything.

This past week, a couple walked into my office wanting help getting divorced. It struck me that the wife was driving the bus on this divorce but the husband's demeanor was one I hadn't experienced before. As is often the case, one spouse has wanted it for a while, proposed it and come to terms with it while the other spouse is floundering to grasp what is going on; the proverbial microwave versus conventional oven scenario.

What's typical in my world as a divorce coach is the wife comes in scared, bitter and revengeful. She wants blood because the husband wants out. He has cut off her funds, threatening her with a future life of destitution, and is, at times, using the kids to get back at her. Or the husband comes in resentful he has to pay alimony, threatening to bring her back to court and jaded to the point it is affecting romantic relationships. In the case of the couple that walked into my office most recently, I saw two people who were hurting for different reasons but wanted the best for both of them and most definitely their children.

Through this couple I learned that even though two people want different things they can navigate divorce with compassion and respect and wanting what's best for each other not just themselves. I saw where they accepted their part in the demise of the marriage. I saw patience and understanding from the wife because the husband was grappling with the reality of the divorce. I saw communication even when it was difficult to speak and caring in their eyes towards each other. They both voiced they wanted to move through this with dignity, respect for each other and mindfulness of their children. Their goal was to make this the best transition possible. There was no name calling, rolling of the eyes or storming out when one disagreed with the other.

I was so moved by what I saw unfolding in front of me as I had never seen this side of divorce. The burning question long after they left was why was this couple different than the many before them? I sat and thought and then thought some more. I came up with eight things:

1. They respect each other for being the father and mother of their children.
2. Their main focus is the children's wellbeing, not only through this process but in the future.
3. They honor the years they had together even though they were ending.
4. They have a history of good, respectful communication.
5. They truly care about the other even though the love between husband and wife is gone.
6. They acknowledge this is uncharted waters for them and want help to navigate this together.
7. They acknowledge their part in all of this.
8. They have a strong faith in God.

I stand in awe and applaud them. None of the above is easy and I recognize that all couples won't be able to do this but if only they could aspire to. Because of this one couple put on my path (I believe nothing is a coincidence) I have made a list to give to every client who walks through my door in the hopes that it will make them sit and think.

Divorce does not have to be nasty and worse yet, have after effects that permeate your future. How you handle your divorce today will determine your future romantic relationships, your friendships, your working environment, your physical and mental health and whether you live the rest of your days happy and with purpose being all you were created to be.

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.



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