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COLUMNS

THE MINDFUL DIVORCÉE

Debbie Martinez, Divorce Coach



Start the New Year with a Bonfire

EVERY YEAR ABOUT THIS TIME WHEN THE OLD YEAR IS TRANSITIONING INTO the new year, I always take stock of where I am on my path and what I need to let go of. I ask the question, "What is holding me back?" Every year it's something different than the year before and this year proved to be no different.

I decided that before the kids made their way home for the holidays, I needed to organize my home office and clear out the closet. As I pulled out old phone and TV cords, remotes and file boxes, I came across one labeled Divorce Papers. It had been on the top shelf since I moved four years ago and I also realized I had this box tucked away in various places for the past 13 years. Every time I walked into my office closet, whether I realized it or not, I saw that box and my subconscious registered not only the words "Divorce Papers" but all the negativity that went along with those words.

I placed the box on the floor and looked at it. "Did I really want to go there?" I knew once I opened the lid, much like Pandora's Box, I wouldn't be able to contain what was lurking inside. The box sat in the middle of the floor for a couple of days, I think I even kicked it once for good measure, until one night I sat down next to it and opened it. Inside were folders and loose papers jumbled together, much like my divorce itself. A time of confusion, jumbled emotions and sheets and sheets and sheets of paper that represented 15 years of marriage, of my life.



Hours went by as I lifted each paper from the box, read it, relived the moment, the eternity and placed it in one of three piles. One pile I was keeping to remind me of certain things to include in a book not yet written, the other to throw in a bonfire and in the third pile, one solitary document, my final agreement. I went to bed that night with three piles of papers, an empty file box in the middle of the floor and feeling very unsettled. Why was I so unsettled?

The next morning, I grabbed some coffee and sat there looking at the piles and it hit me. My goal was to finally let go of these papers that symbolized so much pain and hurt and yet, I was keeping the one pile that contained all of those feelings. The bonfire pile was the formal legal papers, all the drafts, the complaints, and the back and forth between attorneys; all the non-personal stuff. The pile I had labeled for the book and keeping was all of the hurtful, personal stuff; the stuff that really mattered. I was unsettled because this was the pile that needed to go more than the other.

Sometimes we think we are letting go when we really aren't. We let go of part of the hurt but not the part that really counts, the part that will truly make us heal. Make 2020 the year of letting go, really letting go. Not ceremonial or lip service letting go but that true purging, it's been a part of me too long letting go. If getting rid of the whole wedding album will help you accomplish this, don't just take down the picture from the mantle. There is no right way to let go of a part of your past and doing it the way your friend did it might not work for you. Some people throw things away, others burn them and some, like myself, keep them in a box on a shelf until their shelf-life expires. Honestly, I wish I had done this sooner than later but I would have had to make a very conscious decision to let it go and that brings me to my final point.

Letting go is very much a conscious decision. By not letting go, you and only you, not your ex, but you, are deciding to stay in the past. Dismiss the past from your mind and put energy and attention into creating an amazing future. Here's to all the bonfires in 2020!

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.