

Freedom is the Reward of Letting Go

The ability to move on after your divorce entails the letting go of the past with its emotional baggage and negative emotions. If you can accomplish this feat then the heavy burdens you have been carrying will lift and you will experience the liberation of freedom: the ability to move unimpeded towards whatever goal you establish for yourself.

Think of slavery. Picture a person wrapped in chains. Now think of those chains as having specific labels attached: blame, resentment, resistance, anger, denial, sadness and confusion. Each of these labels is a chain in which we bind ourselves, keeping us stuck in our pain and regrets and unable to move forward towards a new life after divorce.

“Without freedom from the past, there is no freedom at all, because the mind is never new, fresh, innocent.”

Krishnamurti

I would add to Krishnamurti's wise words that without freedom from the past there is no present to experience and no future to look forward to. Without freedom from the past we are doomed to stay stuck in all our 'stuff' and render ourselves immobile, paralyzed. To move through this life transition of divorce demands an ending, a break from the past. In order to have a beginning, there must always be an ending. One door closes and another opens.

In order to let go of the past we must be in acceptance of our new reality, our life as it exists now that we are divorced. It is part of coming to terms with loss. To refuse to accept a loss keeps us mired in the fear of that loss. To live in fear is to live under a black cloud that once again keeps us stuck in the past. Loss is a part of life, it happens and there is no way around it. We must face loss and come to terms with it.

Ask yourself: what is the price I am paying in holding onto what no longer exists? What is the cost of being chained to my negative emotions and perspective? Is it costing me my health? My peace of mind? My relationship with my children? My happiness? My optimism and enthusiasm for life? I assure you that the price you pay is very, very high and it is you alone, not your ex, that pays that price.

How would you feel if you were free of all that negative stuff? Would you feel the world contains new possibilities and opportunities for you? Would you feel light? Would your body and heart stop aching? Would you be able to be happy again? Would you have renewed energy? How would freedom feel for you?

The choice seems fairly obvious, yes? So how to let go?

-Begin by making a list of the costs of holding on to the past. In writing it will reveal to you the real costs.

-Make another list of what life would look like with freedom from the pain of your past.

-Do the classic Ben Franklin close. Weight the pros against the cons and make a decision as to how you want to live your life.

-Now make a list of the things that you have to let go of in order to gain your freedom. Things like blame, resentment, bitterness, anger, sadness, denial...you get the idea.

-As you look at each of the items you need to let go of, once again, take a look at the cost involved in holding on. For instance, holding on to blame makes you a victim because you are saying that your life is what it is due to someone else, thereby giving that person control over you. To give up blame and victimhood, you need to take full responsibility for yourself, your life, and your feelings.

-Choose.

We each have the free will to choose for ourselves. Choosing life over enslavement to the past is a choice that will empower you, free you and move you forward. Forget about your ex, they have nothing to do with your future or your choices. This is all about you. Choose life. Choose to take back your life.

“You can't separate peace from freedom because no one can be at peace unless he has his freedom.”

Malcolm X (1925 - 1965), Malcolm X Speaks, 1965

Freedom from the past, from being a victim, from all the emotional baggage of your divorce will indeed give you the gift of peace of mind. When you realize the incredible gifts associated with freedom, this is a no-brainer. Remember that you alone can take back control of your life. This is all about you.

Shelley Stile is a professional Divorce Recovery Life Coach. She trained with the prestigious Coaches Training Institute and continued her studies in Divorce Recovery at the Ford Institute of Integrative Coaching. Shelley went through her own divorce so she knows first hand what you might be feeling and experiencing.