



8 Questions Divorcees Ask A LOT!

If hearing them often is any guide, these are important...

1. I feel like such a failure. What does this say about ME?

Let's not insult you by diminishing the seriousness of your divorce. That wouldn't be a helpful starting place. But let's DO cut to the chase: you have suffered the death of a central relationship in your life. A lasting commitment fell short. Despite your best wishes, you and your spouse could not work out your shortcomings. However, let's focus on the question. What does this say about YOU? It says exactly what we've already expressed in this paragraph. This divorce suggests that you have a lot of work to do, a lot of renewed self-awareness to confront. What the divorce does not say is that YOU are a failure. In proper context, your marriage was a large and important part of who you are. But it was never all of who you are. Learn from the terrible experience. Work toward healthier understandings of how to relate. But know that this chapter isn't your final word!

2. If everything happens for a reason, why did God do this (divorce) to us?

Even though we speak to this in another title, I wanted to address this in the context of these questions again. Because this comes my way a lot! This way of believing is awfully popular these days. And, if the celebrities on *Entertainment Tonight* are your best substitute for theologians, then it at least sounds cool to hear them say it. Trouble is, this belief doesn't square with any theology I've ever taught or preached. And, you'll find it flimsy to stand on in your crisis. Because sooner or later, you're going to get around to asking "Well then why would a loving God do this (or cause this, or allow this) just to teach me something?" The bible makes a case that God not only isn't the author of evil, but isn't capable of causing evil or pain. Human causes are much more at the center of our difficulty than cosmic or spiritual ones much of the time. The better question might be, "Where will God BE in my divorce experience, since it did happen?"

3. How will I get confidence to love again?

I've set out to address some of the key questions that arise group after group. I never promised that I would have easy answers to all of them. For your unique life—this question will be a journey that will take some time. I do remain convinced that some of the healing is accomplished by getting reacquainted with yourself. Learning about what went wrong, on both sides, in your marriage. Learning about what really matters in life, and about what really is important for you to have/give in a loving relationship. Figuring out some of what makes a "healthy" relationship and what is un-healthy. I'm also convinced that in focusing on strengthening your non-romantic relationships, you learn more about love. To be clear, I'm referring to friends, family and co-workers here!

4. Is it just me, or is everybody staring at me?

No, everybody will not likely be staring at you. But the change in your life makes you feel as though you're under incredible scrutiny. Let's be candid: most people don't KNOW that you're divorced or separated. Fewer still actually care, if we're honest. You are feeling some of your own self-focus in the moment. That's not all bad. You are also feeling some distance because key family and friends don't know exactly how to relate to you in this painful time. Social alliances have been altered. The way out is the way through. Keep loving yourself, keep loving others and giving the people in your life permission to love you too. I think you'll find the spotlight will dim soon.

5. Isn't God pretty mad at us? I've heard that the bible says God "hates" divorce.

In my ministry, I find that there are those who don't want the church to talk about "sin". And, there are those who acknowledge wrong but insist that the church should only talk about God's grace. Let's admit that God clearly hates divorce. When you sealed your vows, divorce was not the desired outcome. But neither is staying in a dangerous or harmful relationship God's intent for you. I am confident that God hurts *with* you. I am confident that God *forgives* shortcomings when asked genuinely. I am confident that God wants you to move forward in life, renewed and matured. Lastly, I am confident that God is not mad at you. Confess. Cleanse. Ask forgiveness. Grow!

6. Sometimes I feel like there has been a death in my family, the pain is so intense. Is there hope for me?

There has been a death in your family. Your greatest marital hopes, dreams and commitments have passed. The love you shared let you down, and the partner you dreamed of is no longer your married partner. Under a separate title, we discuss the grief of divorce. For here, let's give a nod to the very real pain and grief you must work at. These will not just fade with time. Be fair to yourself, and do not diminish the importance of the pain.

7. What would a healthy relationship look like? How would I know if I were in one?

- Healthy relationships center on acceptance and understanding.
- Each party is free to express, to think and to do as they are gifted
- You know where each other's "buttons" are but care too much to push them!
- You can work together, problem-solve and dream together
- You want the best for your partner as much as for yourself. Maybe more.
- Healthy relationships share a common purpose
- In a healthy relationship, you are loved actively and noticeably
- In a healthy relationship, you can trust and depend on your partner

8. At this age, won't I be lonely the rest of my life? My clock's ticking!

Again, your journey will be your journey. For some, the fear of being alone could not be any less a concern. For others this is a real fear. Let me remind you of two things. First, you have proven once that you could get yourself married. You can probably do that again. So, second, why not free yourself from letting that urgency drive you more than it should? Rather than fear, why not be guided by getting to know yourself all over again. Maybe by learning how to invest in significant relationships that already exist in your life. It sounds like a gamble, but give yourself some time free of the distractions of a serious relationship. Rediscover the "you" that you'll want to offer someone down the road.

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