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The Voices of Divorce



THERE ARE SO MANY VOICES ONE HEARS WHEN IN THE throes of a divorce, each with their own opinions and directives. Your lawyer is telling you what you should do legally, your financial person is advising you on your bottom line, your friends are giving you words of encouragement, your pastor is offering biblical instruction and your therapist telling you the best way to heal. All these voices trying to help you, yet the one voice that you listen to and is the loudest is the one that does the most harm: your own.

This is the voice that threatens to tear you down, the one that makes you feel bad about yourself and your choices. It keeps you dwelling on the past, with all the negative thoughts and feelings; and consequently, you become frozen. This voice tells you all the bad and none of the good. You might hear it tell you that you have to "do it all" or else appear weak, that you weren't good enough and that is why he/she left you, that you will have nothing after this divorce, that no one will love you again, that you will be alone and so on. The list can be exhausting, but only if you let it. You have a choice as to what voices you let be heard.



Yes, it is imperative to reflect so you learn and to be realistic; but more important is not to confuse that with chronic self-criticism and fear. How many times during the day do you criticize yourself? How many times do you give yourself praise? I guarantee you spend most of the day beating yourself up for past mistakes, the should've/could'ves, and for things that ultimately were out of your control anyway. How fair is that of you? Would you allow your friend or child to do that to themselves? The answer is probably no, so give yourself the same grace you would give someone else. Remember the oxygen mask instructions on the plane to put it on yourself first? Breathe.

A lot of my clients come into my office feeling like they don't have choices in their divorce, and I help them see that they have many, starting with how they treat and speak to themselves. It's hard not to focus on the negatives when you are getting divorced, but it's not impossible. This one shift will be a game changer. Start by making a list of all the things/people that are not helping you move forward. Then next to that item, write how you can change that and put it into action. The next thing I want you to do is get a ceramic frog or even a picture of one and put it where you will continually see it. Here is the reason: Frogs cannot hop backward. It is impossible. They are not made that way, so I imagine they can't even contemplate that behavior. I want you to be the frog. Moving backward, looking backward, anything that involves the word *backward* is no longer a possibility for you. Hop forward into your future.

DEBBIE MARTINEZ, MA, is a certified life coach specializing in divorce. 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. You can reach Debbie at 305.984.5121, transformationthrudivorce.com or debbie@transformationthrudivorce.com.