



What Lessons Have You Learned in 2023?

LIFE IS ABOUT LESSONS: SOME PEOPLE LEARN THEM, AND some people don't. What I have seen in my practice and in my own life is the sooner one learns the lesson, the better your life becomes. Whether you are going through a divorce or are on the other side of one, this is an invaluable journal exercise to do so that you can see how you have grown and where growth is still needed.

Read through the list and highlight those you feel you have accomplished (I always like to start with the positives). Beneath each one, bullet point what you've done or why you think you have learned this lesson. Now go on to the ones you need to work on. Bullet point what you need to do to accomplish it. At the end of this exercise, you will have your plan for the coming year.

- » Divorce does not define you; how you get through it does.
 - » Being your best doesn't mean being perfect.
 - » Turn your divorce into a beacon, not an abyss.
 - » You learn to love yourself more than you care for or love the person who hurt you.
 - » People don't set your limits; you do.
 - » Get out of your own way.
 - » Rise each morning with hope and anticipation in your heart.
 - » Divorce can close you off. Stay open to see the miracles and remember that miracles don't always come with a marquee. They can be small but powerful.
 - » Trust your inner wisdom.
 - » Have your own purpose/passion.
 - » Do what makes you happy.
 - » Don't believe the naysayers and give up. Change does happen, but you create the change you want.
 - » Life is tough, but you're tougher.
 - » Get out of your comfort zone.
 - » Just because something worked five years ago doesn't mean it works now. Make room for new things.
 - » Focus on your strengths more than improving your weaknesses. As a man thinketh, don't get hung up on what you're not good at. Stand strong in what you are good at.
 - » Let go of the outcome and enjoy the moment!
 - » Divorce needs to be about healing, not just splitting assets.
 - » Write down your fears post-divorce and then their solutions.
 - » Work on being open to see others' point of view, including your children's.
 - » Use divorce to course correct the rest of your life.
 - » Being in the present moment was never more important than now.
 - » Don't respond to things based on your fears or hurts. Be nonjudgmental and don't take things personally.
 - » Don't be reactionary. Take a deep breath and look at the bigger picture before responding.
 - » Divorce is not black and white.
 - » If you write a story where all the blame goes on the other person, you are robbing yourself of tremendous growth.
 - » Divorce can become mindless if you let your ego take over. Stay in control.
 - » Make the most of the cards you were dealt. Don't be hard on yourself.
 - » All of this is time limited.
 - » Find ways to lessen your daily load. Perfection is out the window.
 - » Do the things you enjoy.
 - » Happiness is something we ourselves generate, not our circumstances.
 - » Let go of things. Let go of mindsets or a belief system that no longer serves you. Let go of all the "shoulds" you have encountered in your life.
 - » Mother's guilt is alive and well and living in your mind if you let it.
 - » Your children will always love you, and this is not a competition.
 - » Stop worrying about what people have to say. They are not living your life.
 - » Your family structure has changed, so redefine it and stop struggling to keep it the same. It has changed, so change with it.
- Every new beginning starts with commitment. Ask yourself, "Am I fully in?" Are you saying you have moved on but instead are still holding on? The key is being brutally honest with yourself and choosing to change your perspective. Your thoughts create your life—good, bad or indifferent—so strive for the good in 2024!

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.

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