

Hope Is Never Lost, Just Transforming



HOPE. NOW THAT SEEMS LIKE A DIAMETRICALLY OPPOSING word to use during a divorce. “What hope? Everything I had hoped for is gone.” Or so it appears. It’s funny how what’s in our mind at times doesn’t match reality. What had you hoped for? A good marriage? In reality, was it good? A happy family? When you are honest with yourself, were you really happy? A satisfying sex life? Were you really satisfied? A loving spouse? Did you feel loved?

In coaching people through divorce, there is a running theme I work on with my clients: separating the spouse from the dream. I hear, “I miss him/her.” My response is, “Do you miss the actual person or the dream?” There is a pause, I see the wheels turning and then, without fail, they look straight at me and say, “The dream.” They miss, perhaps, how the marriage started out or the dream they built around it but not their present reality. Chances are, and I’d say with 99.99% accuracy, that if you are going through a divorce, the questions posed to you earlier would be answered, “No.”

Clients will say, “All I wanted” or “I had hoped,” always in a past tense. Yes, that was then, and this is now. Just because you had hoped for something that didn’t last or maybe didn’t happen at all doesn’t mean that hope has exited stage left. It is there, shrouded in the darkness that has overtaken your present life but still on the sidelines, waiting patiently for you to call it back into the game.

So, how do you reclaim that spark called hope? As tough and ludicrous as it sounds, being grateful is the answer. Look at this divorce through a different lens. Be grateful that you are now in a position to find someone who will love you the way that you need and want to be loved. Be grateful that you are free to explore happiness and new adventures. Start looking for the small, daily wonders that we so carelessly overlook and be grateful for those.

I don’t mean to imply or make this sound so easy, because it’s not. Let’s be completely candid here: You are brimming with hurt and anger, and it’s hard to feel grateful. I know, I’ve walked (OK, trudged) that path and cursed while I did it; but I can tell you that gratefulness is one of the keys that will unlock that prison door. And it is a prison and one of your own choosing, but that is a topic for another day.

As bad as it seems, it will be worse if you lose hope. Hope will make you resilient, a warrior. Believe things will get better. Wake up with a strong sense of expectation and remember gratefulness is the seed for hope — so start planting your garden.

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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