

Divorce myths debunked

Are children of a divorced couple really doomed?
We debunk myths about divorce.

By: Deborah Moskovitch



While shopping one day with a friend, we came across a top we both loved - one size fits all. Could we both wear the same top and look fabulous? It sort of fit us both, but it didn't look quite right on either of us.

For most things in life, one size doesn't really fit all. Divorce is the same.

Divorce myth #1: Divorce is the end of a happy life. Divorce is certainly an end, but it can also be a beginning to a new and fulfilling life. It is possible to build a better life post-divorce than the one you had before. Figure out what it is that you want out of life, and what you need to do to get there.

Divorce myth #2: Divorce is bad for everyone involved. For many, divorce is a difficult experience. But there are those who are relieved that the marriage is over, and who relish the opportunity to start over. It does require strength and confidence. But if you were in a relationship that was destructive to you for a variety of reasons, then good for you: You can face life head on and take control of your future.

Divorce myth #3: Children of divorce are doomed to a life of trouble. Research indicates that children are resilient. It's the ways that their parents handle their divorce that affects the way that their children deal with divorce. It is possible for children to develop happy and

emotionally balanced lives. It's the way their parents manage divorce that determines how positive the outcome is.

Divorce myth #4: Communication becomes better once you leave your spouse. Many people think that things will improve between former spouses once the divorce is final, especially if they have children. If you had trouble communicating during the marriage, chances are high that you will continue to have trouble communicating. If you couldn't change him when you were married, you are not going to change him now. Accept that the only thing you have control over changing is yourself.

Linda Popielarczyk (www.connectionschildandfamily.com), a registered Social Worker in Toronto, sees many separating and divorcing clients in her private practice. She notes that those with children are sometimes surprised to realize that that divorce does not end the relationship. "It is never really over for divorcing parents...rather, their challenge is to redefine their relationship to create a stable parenting partnership, despite their difficulties as partners in marriage."

Popielarczyk sometimes finds parents will continue to argue with each other and complain about the same issues following separation as during their marriage. In these cases, they can be surprised to realize that they remain connected through these disagreements; and that they are not likely to change their former partners in separation, when they were unable to do so in marriage.

Divorce myth #5: The grass is greener on the other side. Often times people think that the problems behind their own unhappiness are somehow because of the marriage, and divorce will make the discontent go away, and all of a sudden sex and life will miraculously get better. There is a lot of self-work that needs to be done in order to find your own self happiness; another person can't do that for you.

Examine your experience of marriage, not just what wasn't good, but was great and what worked. Take some responsibility for your contribution, good and bad. Use this learning to point you in the direction of where you want to go, what you want to pursue and what you need in future relationships. Be introspective, and ensure you don't get trapped into falling into relationship patterns that didn't work previously.

Popielarczyk finds that divorce often represents a significant loss for adults, *even when children are not involved*. The longer the marriage, the greater the likelihood that 'the relationship' forms a significant part of one's identity. "People need to process what the separation means to them on

an emotional level; to consider the marriage/relationship in terms of what was good, what was not so good, and how they may have contributed; and, who they are and want to become, as individuals, separate from the relationship." It does one good to become conscious of lessons learned from the old relationship, or else risk a replay of the dynamics in subsequent relationships.

For more, see [our guide to separation and divorce](#), or jump right to [5 steps to post-divorce happiness](#).

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