



Toolkit for Divorcing with Dignity

Tip Sheet #8: Working through sadness

For some, getting a divorce is often a grieving process. It is accompanied with big lifestyle and social changes, and that it can be a very upsetting time in one's life. Grief is often talked about in different stages, but it is important to know that those stages do not necessarily happen in order. Here are several tips for working through grief. The first important thing is to become aware of what might be going on for you, and give yourself permission to work through those things as you are able.

1. **Give yourself permission to cry.** There are certain times when sadness demands to be felt, and crying can be a way to release some of that. Plan some time for yourself and let it out. This is when you may feel the need to appear strong to others, but give yourself a break from that and allow yourself to feel those tears if needed.
2. **Give yourself permission to ask for help.** Again, this might feel like a time that you “should” or “need” to appear strong for or to others. It is OKAY to ask for help. Use your supports. Reach out to trusted friends and family members. You are not expected to handle this with absolute grace and poise, and having others to rely on can go a long way.
3. **Give yourself permission to be angry.** In the same way that sadness can demand to be felt, so can anger. It is okay to feel outrage and frustration and fury. Give yourself space to have an outlet for that anger, be it physical activity, loud music, or simply screaming in your car. Let it out.
4. **Give yourself permission to express yourself.** It is okay to experience a range of different emotions. If you need to communicate those feelings to someone else, brainstorm what might be helpful to share, and then consider ways you could go about sharing. Consider also nonverbal expression, like music or art.
5. **Give yourself permission to think about other things.** Some may feel guilty when they are able to get distracted by other things in life outside of their divorce. Being able to think about other things could possibly be one of your long-term goals, and if so, allow it to happen when it does. Let go of that guilt, and enjoy the mental break.