

Episode 17 ~ Divorce and Moving On

I. Intro

Welcome back to another episode of our podcast. I'm your host Eva, and today, we're diving into a topic that's close to my heart – divorce and the journey of rediscovering love.

But before we jump into today's discussion, I want to share a bit of my own story because, well, it's where this journey began for me.

You see, I was married for a solid 11 years, with a beautiful child to show for it. The thing is, my ex-partner and I had reached a point where we had both emotionally checked out of the marriage. We were at that crossroads where I think we were contemplating potential relationships outside of our marriage, but there was one thing that held us back - the commitment we made to one another. It didn't help that he came from a deeply Catholic family either.

We didn't want to cheat; we didn't want to break the promises we had once held so dear. So, I stayed in that marriage, perhaps longer than I should have, primarily for the sake of our daughter. Now, you might be wondering, "Why would you do that? Isn't it better to find happiness outside of a failing marriage?" And you're absolutely right. But sometimes, we make choices we believe are for the best, even when they might not be.

Staying in that marriage for the sake of my daughter, well, it seemed like the noble thing to do at the time. But looking back, I can't help but wonder if it was the right move. It's a decision that potentially damaged my relationship with her for quite some time, and it's something of a cautionary tale of sorts.

So, as we explore the intricate web of divorce, rebuilding trust, navigating new relationships, and all the ups and downs that come with it, keep in mind that my own experiences have shaped my perspective. So, my friends, grab a cup of tea, find a comfy spot, and let's embark on this journey of rediscovering love after divorce. Remember, you're not alone on this path!

Stay tuned for some insightful conversations and stories that I hope will inspire, comfort, and guide you on your own unique journey.

II. The Emotional Roller Coaster of Divorce

This is where we unravel the emotional rollercoaster that often accompanies divorce.

Let's begin with an eye-opening statistics. Did you know that divorce rates in the United States hover around 40-50%? That's a significant number of couples navigating the turbulent waters of separation.

But behind those statistics are real people with real emotions. I want to share a personal anecdote that I believe many of you can relate to.

I remember the day when my ex-partner and I finally admitted to ourselves that the love we once shared had dwindled to a flicker. It was like looking at a painting that had faded over time, and neither of us knew how to restore its vibrancy. We weren't alone in this experience; countless couples face the same heartbreaking realization.

Now, let's talk about the emotions that come crashing in when you're going through a divorce. It's a whirlwind of feelings - sadness, anger, confusion, guilt, and even relief. Yes, relief! Because sometimes, letting go is the only way to find yourself again.

According to studies, emotional trauma from divorce can be as intense as grieving a loved one's death. It's no wonder that this process can feel like an emotional minefield.

But here's the thing, dear listeners, acknowledging these emotions is the first step to healing. And trust me, I've been there. It's not easy, but it's essential.

I recall nights when I'd lay in bed, staring at the ceiling, wondering if I had made the right choice for my daughter. The guilt was overwhelming, but I knew I couldn't continue in a loveless marriage just for the sake of appearances. Add in the idea of being single after over a decade and there were so many emotions swirling around that sometimes I felt like I was drowning.

Divorce can sometimes feel like you're trapped between a rock and a hard place, but it's often a necessary path to rediscovering yourself and, eventually, love.

So, if you're going through this emotional rollercoaster, know that you're not alone. Many of us have ridden these tumultuous waves and emerged stronger on the other side.

III. Rebuilding Trust & Self-Esteem

We've talked about the emotional rollercoaster of divorce, and now, it's time to delve into the essential aspect of rebuilding trust and self-esteem.

Studies show that self-esteem often takes a hit during and after divorce. It's no surprise, considering the self-doubt and questioning that can come with the end of a long-term relationship. Maybe you have been part of “we” for so long, you don’t know how to be a “me”... Or maybe you are dealing with a partner who cheated on you.

Now, let me share some of my experiences that might resonate with some of you.

After my divorce, my self-esteem was at an all-time low. I questioned my worth as a partner, as a parent, and as an individual. It was as if the foundation of my self-identity had crumbled. I got married pretty much right out of high school, and I was four months pregnant when we got married. We had never lived together before the wedding, so my entire 20s and early 30s were as a wife and mother... a time when I probably should have been learning who I was and what I wanted out of life.

But here's the thing about self-esteem: it can be rebuilt, brick by brick. And that's exactly what we're going to talk about today.

One key step in this process is learning to trust yourself again. Divorce can shake your confidence in your judgment and decision-making. It's crucial to acknowledge those doubts and work on regaining trust in your own instincts. You might be questioning if the entire relationship was a lie, but the reality is that most relationships were good for a long time, and it ending doesn’t mean that there wasn’t something real there.

According to psychological research, building self-trust is essential for post-divorce healing. It's linked to increased resilience and a more positive outlook on

life. Don't be afraid to talk to a professional - the end of a marriage can feel a lot like a death, and there is no shame in seeking some help navigating that.

I started by setting small goals for myself and celebrating even the tiniest achievements. It could be as simple as finishing a book or taking a solo day trip. The day that I moved into my first apartment living by myself was an incredible (and a bit scary) feeling. These victories reminded me that I was capable of making choices that were in my best interest.

Next, let's talk about trusting others. After the pain of divorce, it's natural to be cautious about opening up to new people. But remember, not everyone is the same as your ex-partner. So often I see women in my work that are measuring everyone by the yardstick of their ex partner. They expect to be hurt, and they expect to be left, so they don't even let people get close.

Surveys suggest that many people who have been through divorce are initially hesitant to enter new relationships due to trust issues. However, the majority do find love again when they're ready.

I'll never forget the first time I went on a date after my divorce. It helped that he and I were good friends, and we knew a bit about each other already. The anxiety was palpable, but it was also a moment of empowerment. It was a step toward trusting others and myself to make choices aligned with my happiness. So, whether you're in the midst of post-divorce self-discovery or you're supporting someone on this journey, remember that trust and self-esteem can be rebuilt. It takes time, patience, and sometimes a little bit of professional guidance, but it's absolutely possible.

IV. Dating Again and Navigating New Relationships

We've explored the emotional journey of divorce and discussed the importance of rebuilding trust and self-esteem. Now, it's time to dive into the exciting but often challenging world of dating again and navigating new relationships.

Did you know that approximately 60% of divorced individuals eventually consider dating again within two years of their divorce? That's right; many of us take the plunge once more into the world of romance.

After my divorce, the thought of dating again felt like stepping into uncharted territory. It was a mix of excitement and apprehension. I worried about how I'd be perceived, especially with the baggage of a failed marriage. I worried about my daughter and how she would cope, and I worried about if it was too soon, if I was making the same mistakes, etc. But here's the thing, dear listeners, dating after divorce is a chance for a fresh start, a new chapter, and sometimes, a better love story. It's a chance to rewrite your narrative.

Research indicates that divorcees often experience a boost in self-confidence as they reenter the dating scene. It's like rediscovering their desirability and realizing they deserve happiness.

I remember my first date post-divorce vividly. I was nervous, unsure, and honestly, a bit rusty when it came to flirting and connecting with someone new. But it was also liberating to be out there, meeting people who were interested in getting to know me for who I am now, not who I used to be in my past relationship.

Now, let's talk about a crucial aspect of post-divorce dating - communication and setting healthy boundaries. This is where the lessons learned from your previous marriage can come in handy.

Studies show that individuals who communicate openly and set clear boundaries in their new relationships tend to have more successful and fulfilling experiences.

During my dating journey, I realized the importance of being transparent about my past and my intentions. It's okay to say, "I've been through a divorce, and I'm looking for something meaningful." This honesty can filter out potential partners who might not be a good match for your current life stage.

But remember, not every relationship post-divorce is meant to be a long-term commitment. Some may be casual, while others could lead to something deeper. It's about finding what works for you.

According to relationship experts, individuals who take their time and don't rush into serious commitments post-divorce tend to have more successful and lasting relationships in the long run. If you have been married for a long time this is the time to sample the buffet so to speak. Explore what you like and what you don't.

I've had friends who found beautiful love stories after divorce, and I've had my own share of adventures that led to valuable life lessons. Each experience, whether it was a lasting relationship or a brief connection, taught me something about myself and what I was truly looking for in a partner. And for me, learning about what was important to me led to my husband. He is everything that I never knew I always wanted, as cheesy as that sounds. Sure, sometimes we butt heads, but the connection between us is so strong that we have weathered a LOT of issues (losing a house to a natural disaster, moving across country, etc..) and come out the other side so much stronger. We often joke with people that if you REALLY want to know if the two of you are compatible, travel together. In our case, cross country in a 32 ft RV taught us a lot!

So, dear listeners, if you're navigating the world of dating again after divorce, remember that it's a journey filled with growth, discovery, and sometimes, surprises. Be open to the possibilities, trust your instincts, and most importantly, enjoy the ride. Sometimes you might stumble, and sometimes you might soar - but I encourage you to remember what is my favorite saying "You grow through what you go through".

V. Blending Families and Coping with Children

But before we dive in, did you know that over 50% of remarriages involve children from previous relationships? That's a significant number of families navigating the complexities of blending.

When I started dating my now-husband, he had four boys, ranging from the adorable age of 4 to the complex teenage years of 16. On my side, I had my 11-year-old daughter. We were already a diverse crew, but our story didn't stop there. Within a year of being together, I got pregnant with my second daughter, adding another layer to our beautifully chaotic family dynamic. Throw in his ex wife and my ex husband and it made for some interesting experiences.

Blending families can be like putting together a complex puzzle where every piece has its unique shape and personality. It can be challenging, but it can also create a beautiful picture when all those pieces fit together.

Research suggests that successful blending often depends on open communication, establishing clear roles and boundaries, and creating a sense of unity among family members.

In our journey, communication has been our lifeline. We've made a conscious effort to ensure that every child feels heard, respected, and loved. It hasn't always been easy, especially with the varying ages and needs, but it's been incredibly rewarding. One of the key lessons we've learned is the importance of patience and empathy. The kids didn't ask for the changes in their family structure, and it's our responsibility to provide them with a safe and loving environment.

Studies also show that children from blended families often face unique emotional challenges, including adjusting to new family dynamics and loyalty conflicts.

My 11-year-old daughter, in particular, struggled with the changes. She was incredibly upset about my pregnancy. For her, it was cementing the idea that me and her dad were not getting back together, as well as feeding into some fears that she would get replaced. Her and I spent almost a year with her not wanting to come over from her dad's house when it was my time with her - and it hurt a lot that she didn't want anything to do with the changes that were going on. She's come around since, but things are nowhere near as close as we used to be. That's something that I have to live with.

Blending our family has taught us that love can expand, grow, and adapt. It's a beautiful reminder that family is not solely defined by blood but by the bonds we create.

Studies also highlight the importance of co-parenting in blended families, emphasizing collaboration between biological and step-parents for the well-being of the children.

Our co-parenting journey hasn't always been smooth sailing, but it's been worth every effort. My husband and I have learned to be a united front (well, most of the time anyways), supporting each other in parenting decisions and ensuring consistency for the kids.

And we've added a little extra sprinkle of joy to our family with the birth of my second daughter. She's a testament to the love that can flourish even in the midst of blending.

Remember that blending families is a journey of patience, love, and growth. It's not always easy, but it's a beautiful adventure worth embarking on.

VI. Finding Love Again / Wrapping Up

Now, it's time to talk about finding love again and the inspiring stories that show it's never too late for a fresh start.

Studies reveal that around 60% of divorced individuals eventually find love again and remarry. It's a testament to the resilience of the human spirit and the capacity for love to bloom anew.

Now, let me share an example that embodies the spirit of finding love after divorce.

Meet Rachel and Jason. They both went through emotionally challenging divorces, leaving them skeptical about the possibility of finding happiness in love again. Sarah, an artist from New York, and David, a kind-hearted man with four amazing boys, met under unique circumstances.

Their story began with a chance encounter at a local art gallery. David, an avid art enthusiast, attended one of Sarah's exhibitions. Drawn to her talent and charisma, he struck up a conversation with her, leading to a blossoming friendship.

As they spent more time together, they discovered that they shared similar values and a deep appreciation for life's beauty. They connected over their love for their children and their desire to create a nurturing and loving family environment.

Their love story was not without its challenges. They had to navigate the complexities of blending their families, and at times, it was a real rollercoaster ride. But their commitment to open communication, mutual respect, and unwavering support for each other and their children allowed their love to flourish.

Studies also show that successful relationships after divorce often involve individuals who have taken the time to heal, grow, and understand themselves

better. It can be scary sometimes to be alone, but don't rush into something before you have given yourself a chance to work through those complex emotions.

Rachel and Jason both embarked on journeys of self-discovery and personal growth before they met. Sarah embraced her role as an artist, finding fulfillment in her creative pursuits. David focused on being the best father he could be to his four boys, emphasizing the values of love, empathy, and understanding.

Their individual journeys of healing and self-improvement allowed them to come together as stronger, more self-aware individuals, ready to embrace the love they truly deserved.

And the most beautiful part of their story? Within two years they were married and creating a happy home with their children.

Their journey is a testament to the fact that love can bloom in unexpected places, and it can be even more profound the second time around. Their story is a reminder that with patience, self-discovery, and a willingness to open your heart, finding love again after divorce is not just a possibility; it's a beautiful reality.

As we conclude our journey today, I want you to remember that love knows no bounds, and it's never too late to start a new chapter filled with love, happiness, and beautiful possibilities.

Thank you for joining me on this heartfelt exploration of divorce, rediscovery, and love. Until next time, stay open to the magic of life, and may love find you when you least expect it.