

Moving  
Forward  
After  
Divorce

*Advice for the newly divorced*

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# ADVICE FOR THE NEWLY DIVORCED

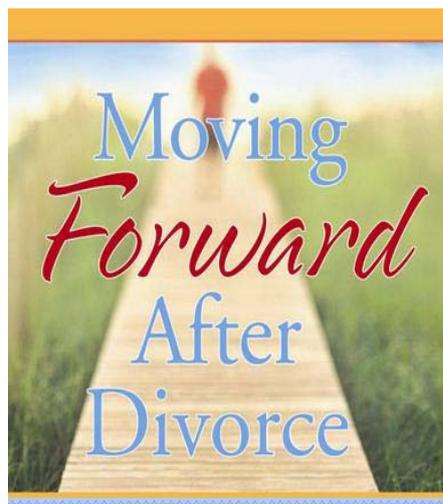
1. *Don't deny or suppress your feelings.* You will need to do "grief work". Keep in mind that mourning the death of a relationship is a process that leads to healing. Give yourself time to heal.
2. *Keep busy.* Force yourself back into the mainstream of living. Start getting involved in church activities.
3. *Refrain from rushing into another intimate relationship on the rebound.* The break-up of another relationship before you have worked through your divorce can be doubly devastating.
4. *Pray for your former spouse and pray for strength each time you may encounter him or her.* Encounters may thus become less painful for you if tempered by God's love in you heart.
5. *Seek counselling.* If you or your children are experiencing pain so great you can't live with it, seek out a pastor or professional counselor to help you deal with it.
6. *Surrender to God the anger and resentment you feel.* These emotions are devastating if harboured continually. Ask God's forgiveness.
7. *Ask God's guidance as you redefine your personhood.* As you pick up the pieces of your shattered life, God alone can lead you from the valley of despair to a new sense of self and give purpose and meaning to your life as a single person. Growth is not only possible but also exciting.
8. *Plan new activities for the painful holidays.* Perhaps family gatherings will not be the same as they were before the divorce. Planning new experiences will create memories unrelated to former celebrations.
9. *Reach out and help other people.* By helping others, you learn to love yourself and live again.
10. *Stay close to your children.* Communicate; be attentive to their grief.

11. *Suggested devotional readings:* Jeremiah 29:11-13; 2 Corinthians 1:3-5; Ephesians 4:23-24; Ephesians 4:30-32; 1 Peter 5:7

## **HOW TO HELP YOUR CHILD WITH DIVORCE**

1. *Tell your child how you feel even if you can't fully explain the feeling.* It's okay to let your child see you cry. Say, "I'll talk about it when I'm able".
2. *Give gentle explanations, but tell the truth.* When children are not given facts about the divorce, their imaginations will fill in the missing pieces and they may blame themselves for the divorce.
3. *Don't weaken the child's relationship with the other parent.* Don't use your child as a go-between or a means of getting even with your former spouse. Parents shoot an arrow through a child's heart when they talk negatively about each other.
4. *Don't try to make the child open up.* Be available, accepting and non-judgmental. Most importantly, LISTEN. Love is the most important healing factor.
5. *Be open to your child's need for physical warmth.* Touching will comfort and reassure the child of your love.
6. *Encourage the child to talk about his or her feelings with a trusted adult.* Don't tell the child what these feelings should be. Their confusion and pain are real.
7. *Keep the lines of communication open with your children.* They are working through some of the same intense feelings you are.
8. *Encourage the family to accept God's love and yours.* Divorce in a family does not necessarily mean the parents do not love God.
9. *Don't assume that a child who has experienced divorce in the family is destined to have emotional problems later.* Be attentive, however, to your child's spiritual life and mental health.

10. *Expect the feeling in a divorce to be similar to those when there is a death in the family.* Realise though, that a family often receives more support after a loss by death.
11. *Seek professional help if the child is highly upset.* For most young children, healing after a divorce takes about one year. Time doesn't necessarily heal all wounds.



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