

## **IS THERE LIFE AFTER LOVE?**

By Rose L. Hubbard

Going through a divorce is generally regarded as one of the most difficult times in a person's life, even more so than the death of a spouse. In death, there is finality. In divorce, there are all kinds of ties and loose ends that linger and boundaries that have to be redefined in relationship to kids, extended family and financial ties. The divorce may not have been your idea, and divorce, even for the person initiating the divorce, is not how he or she wanted their lives to go.

Yet the divorce process and figuring out how you want your life to be separate than that of a spouse can be a personal growth experience. I have been very privileged to be a part of people's lives from their deepest pain in the divorce, to their own personal growth success stories. I value my clients who call me and leave a message telling me about what happened in their lives one, two, five, ten years after the divorce, that they were able to move through the pain and like their lives after the divorce.

The difficulty comes in getting through that process. There is no quick fix. Telling everyone that you really didn't love that person anyway, and covering up the hurt, doesn't allow you to skip over the hurt. Allow yourself time to grieve and to process your losses. Divorce is the loss of the familiar family structure, of the spousal relationship, and often times the trust that goes into an emotionally intimate relationship. Also recognize when you are stuck, and you are in a cycle that keeps repeating. Even if your feelings are justified, repeating the cycle does not allow you to process and move through the pain. Acknowledging the feelings allow you to find positive energy within yourself to begin rebuilding who you are and what you want in a future relationship.

It's not unusual to feel the need for revenge against the person who caused the pain. Revenge doesn't make the pain go away, it only harms those people around you, most often your children, who still need you to be an adult and to help guide them through their development, even as you are in the process of going through your own adult development. The best revenge as a spouse is to live a life in which you are happy and able to like who you are after the divorce. It is also the best gift that you can give to your children.

I don't have any magic ten steps to process faster or get to that post divorce stability with less pain. I do find that looking for "the one good thing" even in the worst situation allows you to focus on one positive thing, and it changes your thinking patterns so that you are looking for good things and letting the old issues go. I was at a networking meeting a few years ago, and talked about this as a positive way for change. We were discussing problems in running a business. I started by saying one good thing about my divorce practice. The group of about twelve people immediately scoffed, but as the conversation went around the table, most of the people found themselves saying "but the one good thing is" and the focus shifted to solutions.

What's the one good thing in your life right now?