

Parenting After Divorce:
Rebuilding Your Life and
Reaffirming the Relationships
that Matter

BY

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To my children Cassie, Sammy, Therese, and Valerie who make it look easy and provide endless entertainment, and to my love, Shannon, for always standing beside me.

What you leave behind is not what is engraved in stone monuments, but what is woven into the lives of others.

Greek Proverb

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Preface

A while ago, I too went through a divorce and although it wasn't a terribly nasty breakup, it wasn't a walk in the park either. No one really plans for a divorce, but it happens. I was lost and confused and, quite frankly, scared! I had no real direction of where I was going or of what I was going to do. I just knew that I had to keep moving.

I grew with the new challenges in my life and embraced change. Looking back, now that I'm empty-nesting, I realize this was a long, arduous task with many peaks and valleys, and that no one should do it alone.

And now, I'm changing again. My family, friends and other coaches have repeatedly told me that I should take the hard work I have done, together with my successes to help others who are coping with similar issues. They're right and now this is my new journey.

Bruce

My hope and wish is that the content within this book will help you to define significant moments in your life as you seek success with a healthier, new family. Utilizing the segments in the following twelve steps will facilitate a better lifestyle for you, while also promoting a prosperous future life for your child.

This series of steps provides concepts, strategies and philosophies that are also expressed in an optional supporting seminar program. As within this book, the program walks you through four phases of coping with divorce and rebuilding your life with your children: Inception, Elaboration, Construction, and Transition.

Start here if you are in a rut or have challenges, or if you are seeking wiser strategies/resolutions with regard to single- or co-parenting. This, in essence, is your program with comprehensive steps to become more knowledgeable in creating a new niche in life with your children.

The following is a compilation of what I learned and accomplished with my own children. Today, we share mutual understanding, trust, love, and respect. It was the points below that got us here.

Phase I: Inception – Adjusting and Validation

Preparing for Change in your Life

Many things may make you stare into open space, wishing and hoping – maybe praying – for renewed strength. Perhaps you feel stuck and unable to move, immobile against an imaginary tide that strikes you, as if standing in the ocean, waiting for a large wave to break, only to have it hit you and knock you over. But although life can sometimes feel this way, change is inevitable.

Preparing for a life change may simply mean becoming aware and accepting the fact that change is necessary. Have you or do you want to create changes? You may not even know what the change is or needs to be. You just know moving on would be easier if you could just release or sidestep the unavoidable fears and emotions.

Did you ever have that dream where you can't move? You try to move your arm or leg and it won't go! As if someone or something is pinning you down. Then you wake up confused to the weird and awkwardness as you display your moving part. I

hated that dream. I used to have that dream, but not anymore. I changed my life.

You may subconsciously know the change you need to make, but find yourself choosing not to confront or acknowledge the issue. Whether it's pending or post-divorce stress, complacency in your marriage or relationships, a lackluster career, or a determination to change your own personal image and outlook, something in your life is holding you back and it's time to turn over a new leaf.

Or perhaps you find yourself just going through the motions in your life and becoming increasingly disheartened. So if you already know this, why are you still doing it? It might be that the change you need to make is in improving what you already have, and giving yourself a new outlook on your existing surroundings. Change has many forms; the way you feel in the end is the desired outcome.

It may look challenging on the surface, but with some soul searching and closer examination, you can make that change. Change is an acceptable and necessary occurrence. Once upon a time I was an engineer, then made the leap to the more corporate side of things by providing business analysis until I gained the confidence to start my own company doing the same.

During this process I also got divorced, worked through the challenges of post-divorce life, primarily raised four beautiful little girls and maintained my own personal life with three lengthy and significant relationships (not including a quick marriage and prompt annulment) until my recent engagement to my beautiful fiancé.

Now, I'm sharing the wealth of knowledge I gained from my post-divorce life here in this book. I've changed my life again and I'm showing others how to rebuild and change theirs. Most importantly, I'm not waiting for life to tell me when to change.

Change

Nothing quite prepares us for change, except change itself; it helps to know that taking the first step is the beginning of something bigger. And small steps are always easier than large leaps into the unknown.

Challenge + Change = Growth

Challenge plus change is growth in my opinion. I want to grow and be a better man in all ways. Growth is good even when you feel it, rather than see it.

The things, which will undoubtedly force most of us to change, are the unfortunate events in life, commonly tragedy, divorce, loss, and unemployment. So why can't we instigate change in ourselves when we already know it's necessary, before life dictates or hands us this lesson and we are unprepared?

Often it's because change can be hard to accept unless we are forced into it. We may go through the motions knowing we are sinking, but until we dip below water level, we won't make a move to jump for air; to create change. Sometimes someone else makes the decision for us. In retrospect, you may not have realized you were suffocating before you went under. Breathe!

It's when you are forced to make decisions that you will accept change as I did with my divorce. But why wait for that disaster? Why wait for when sink or swim are your only options? If you know you are running on a flat surface or you see the ground coming up on you, it's time to take a renewed perspective on your situation.

Complacency

Coasting can be fun when you want to sit back, get a good view and enjoy the scenery. You may

justify this type of complacency to absorb and reap the benefits of your hard work, accomplishments, and rewards. But what happens when you have been viewing the same scenery for some time now?

If you let the road guide you or let the obstacles in your path steer you, then life is dictating to you instead of the other way around. Likewise, if you let the wind under your extended unflappable wings maintain your direction, you'll inevitably have to come down soon, right?

I'm not opposed to letting divine energy guide me. Sometimes I rely on letting things unfold in front of me when I don't know the answer and if I don't know the right direction at a crossroads, I'll wait to feel a push and go with it. It's what is *in between* the crossroads that is my responsibility. I create these crossroads by moving, improving, creating, and changing. When coming to a juncture, I may let destiny show me its course.

Always having options in my life is what's important. Change is inevitable and preparing for it means accepting that change is necessary and having the courage to move forward. If you do the work, you'll find your way. Opportunity will present itself; it does come knocking if you are listening. So don't wait for change to come to you. Take the steps now, today, to improve your life and the lives of those around you who matter the most.

