

Introduction:

My Flawed Fairy Tale

*"It's better to be alone,
than lonely with someone."*

—DAD

In 2007, I was married in *The New York Times*.

In 2012, I was divorced in the *New York Post*.

Not exactly a Cinderella story, but it is my story. In this flawed fairy tale, Prince Charming and I ran a matchmaking business. A young couple, married and in love, helping other people find love. What could be more perfect? To top off the romance, we wrote two books together teaching women how to date. *Why Hasn't He Called?* was the first, followed by *Why Hasn't He Proposed?* When the story of our divorce hit the papers, the joke was that our third title should be *Why Didn't I Leave Sooner?* There were many nights that I asked myself that very question—but I wasn't laughing.

There are many things I learned from co-running a matchmaking business. *Everyone* wants to find *the one*. Everyone thinks about it, talks about it, dreams about it, and even pays for it—both literally and metaphorically. Most people are also willing to do just about whatever it takes to find and hold on to *the one*. If and when things go wrong, no one seems to know what to do next. You're not supposed to want to start over in your thirties,

forties, or fifties, so the marriage experts don't usually put that part in the manual. I know we didn't.

Because my divorce played out in an embarrassingly, mortifyingly, nauseatingly public spectacle, I found that I had to take control of my suddenly single new life in a hurry. I had to learn that being a newly divorced woman brought out all sorts of craziness in myself, my friends, and in the men I eventually started dating. *Everyone* had advice for me. Some of it was quite good and some of it was simply dreadful. It was up to me to sift through endless, and sometimes hurtful, "suggestions" about how to live my new life and decide what made sense for me. I've written this book to share what I learned from others and my own experiences about starting over in the twenty-first century. I wrote this book especially because I came to understand the importance of regaining your emotional, intellectual, and physical wholeness if you want to successfully recover from a divorce.

Think about it. You were one-half of a couple before you were divorced. You saw yourself as a part of a larger whole, but that whole no longer exists. Who you become now is up to you. Will it be your own true fully actualized self, or a diminished version of the person you could and should be? I hope you will choose the former path, as I did. This book is here to help you along the way. I didn't tell most of my friends or any of my coworkers about my separation. I lost weight. I never slept. I wasn't myself. I cried a lot. I kept to myself. People thought I was upset because I was over forty and trying to have a baby. Little did they know the reason for my private anguish: the end of my marriage.

Then, I got Page Sixed.

In May 2012, the *New York Post* printed the first details of my divorce. Then came one article after another. If the first one was bad, the next few were rock bottom: details about our

bickering and our blowups, my ex-husband's other alleged woman and, as Page Six put it, his other, other woman.

On one particularly painful night, I was master of ceremonies at a star-studded event. In between my hosting duties, and conversations with celebs I was bringing onstage that night, I was fielding e-mails and phone calls from the press while bawling my eyes out in the corner because I knew that more lurid, personal details were about to be made public. The next morning at the television station people were gathered around the newly delivered newspaper, reading about the lowest point of my life. It was understandable. It was shocking and unexpected to them. And because I had done such a good job of keeping my private life hidden, the details made public were that much more exciting to people, and devastating to me.

That's when I realized my marriage was not going to avoid being a statistic. After a lot of tears, fake smiles to cover the pain, rude questions from curious parties, and bank accounts that weren't nearly as balanced as they used to be—from mediators to separate apartments to the slashing in half of a once-shared business—I realized I had to face the fact that I was no longer a “we,” and I was back to being just “me.”

But who was I?

There hadn't been a “me” in a very long time. It had been years since I had functioned as a singular unit. Dinners, parties, holidays, even nights alone on the couch hadn't actually been nights alone. He had been there, even when I didn't necessarily want him to be. But having someone seemed easier than having no one. I had no idea how to be by myself. If only I had had an experienced, honest, and impartial voice to offer up advice about surviving this emotional train wreck.

Because I ran a matchmaking business in New York City,

I had no shortage of opinions about the single life, from both the male and female perspectives. I had clear proof that there were available guys out there, but in my post-divorce personal apocalypse, I had absolutely no interest in dating any of them. Instead, I chose to do what many women do following a breakup or divorce: I went back to an old flame. My first love, to be exact, and the polar opposite of my ex-husband: Professor Henry Higgins to my Eliza Doolittle. The man who taught me how to travel, cook, enjoy fine wine, and experience the world. The one that I thought “got away.” The one that wouldn’t commit to me when I was younger. And, as it turned out, the one who wouldn’t commit to me later, either. Of course, Eliza outgrows Higgins, too. So, there I was, going to extremes, repeating one toxic pattern in order to avoid repeating another. This was not progress.

When I did finally start to date “new” men, because of my years in the matchmaking business, you would think that I would go out with nothing but Manhattan’s most amazing bachelors. You would think. But, you would be wrong. For all the matches I had made, I knew what most of the people sitting across the table from me were made of, but I wasn’t certain what *I* was made of anymore. Since then, I have spoken with countless women who felt the same way after their separations: disillusioned, and lost.

You name a twisted marriage scenario or dating nightmare, I’ve lived it. But haven’t we all? From the stay-at-home mom who lost her husband to a younger woman, to Gwyneth Paltrow’s “conscious uncoupling,” whether we were publicly shamed or privately embarrassed, all of our stories are the same, even when all of our stories are unique. There are plenty of books out there about dating. I wrote a couple of them. This is not another one of those books.

When I was twenty-three years old, packing up my car and heading off to my first job in television news in Oak Hill, West Virginia, my father gave me some love advice. He told me, “It’s better to be alone than lonely with someone.” Quite frankly, the sentence made no sense to me. It wasn’t until I was coming out of my divorce did I realize exactly what my father was talking about. I had been lonely with someone, but I had refused to see it. This book is about learning the difference and learning to cherish your own company. Only then do you even have a chance at being happy with someone else.

A breakup or a divorce changes you forever. You may wonder if holidays will ever be the same again. You hate the idea of dinner parties and being the odd woman out. You feel as though nobody enjoys your company—because *you* don’t. The end result: another desperate night.

The New Single is everything you need to know about preparing yourself to be single again and getting ready for a new life, as well as a new relationship, should you decide you want one. These are the actions and attitudes that worked for me, day in and day out, and I want to share them with you. Maybe one or two sentences of this book will touch you; maybe you will sleep with it next to your bed stand and reread it over and over again. My hope is that you will understand that the worst is behind you, and that the future you create will be better than anything you experienced before.

Building a new future is a process, though, and, like any quality product, building it can take time. You will experience change in phases. Expect some rough patches early on, and some bumps in the road along the way. I never thought I would be successful at anything again after my breakup. In fact, despite my professional successes, I had never felt more like a failure. But with a

lot of solid advice, a game plan and a change of mind and heart, I realized that this “ending” was a new beginning for the person I am really supposed to be. I want to help you find the same place. The only way you will fail is if you don’t move forward from here. It doesn’t mean you didn’t have great memories or amazing moments that no one could ever understand or replace. It simply means you are in a new place in your life.

It used to be about him. Then it was about us. Now it’s about YOU, and it’s about time. Time to embrace your life immediately as the New Single.

This book is a road map for the journey from your breakup or divorce to your arrival at the place where you have become the person you are supposed to be. Or perhaps the person you were all along. What is contained between these covers is a pretty raw look at how I turned the end of my marriage into the life I was supposed to be living. I want the same for you. I’ve even put together a group of heavy hitters—experts on happiness, finance, organization, career, health, and more—to share their advice and insight on these and other important topics. Think of them as your personal A-Team, ready to help you through your rough patches and celebrate your successes.

Your personal journey to becoming the New Single will take about a year. Everyone heals and grows at a different pace. Which is why I’m not saying you have to do everything at once, but eventually you do have to do it. A year is not such a long time; make the most of it by not wasting precious minutes lamenting the past and worrying about the future. “Be here now,” as Ram Dass would say. Do what you need to do when it feels right. I have set this book up in a progression, starting from what I think you need to do first, moving toward the culmination of you as a New Single: a secure, happy woman who dates but doesn’t

get caught up in the need to have a partner unless it's really right.

Some of my favorite books, the ones that I cherish year after year, have been the ones that I don't have to read from cover to cover. They are the ones that allow me to pick them up and open them at the times and moments that I need them most. I wrote *The New Single* so that you can pick it up and use it as encouragement to move forward. Or, break glass in case of emergency. I wrote *The New Single* so that you can grab it when you're asked the dreaded and inevitable question about why your relationship ended, or when you don't have a plus one for the party, or when you can't seem to lose that last ten pounds, especially before a hot first date. Thumb to the "You Are the Prize" section for a quick refresher course on how to make it the best date ever. This is truly the beginning. Embrace it. It only gets better from here, if you will let it.