

“Who am I and where did I go?”

A woman's guide to finding oneself again after divorce
By Patti Handy, Life Coach

I remember it vividly. It was shortly after my divorce was final and the highly emotional state had calmed a bit. Although it did not happen suddenly, the realization hit me like a slap in the face. I didn't know who *I* was.

The *I* that I was looking for had been pushed aside for years, by me. I take total responsibility for it, I own it. That was the good part, because I knew it was in my power to get it back and so can you.

Like most women, we tend to put our husband and family's needs ahead of our own needs. Sometimes we actually think we are being *selfish* if we do something for ourselves. I won't speak for all women, but I would imagine that most women feel this way. We are caretakers, peacemakers, planners, organizers, chauffeurs, chefs and the list goes on. I must admit that I loved being all those things, but what I didn't realize was that I neglected my own needs in the process. I was at the point where I couldn't define 'my needs'.

So, what do you do if you are in this same, or similar, state? You take back your life, one day at a time. You love and adore yourself the way you adore others. You feed your physical body with attention; you start exercising, eating better, getting massages, facials, manicures or whatever pampering you enjoy. You feed your emotions by being gentle with yourself, making lunch dates with friends, finding a new hobby or getting back to an old hobby or sport. Read motivational books that fill your mind and heart with inspiration and hope. Feed your spirit by praying, meditating or finding a higher power that touches you. Find quiet time to just listen to your heart and calm the busy, racing mind. Each day do something just for you, even if for 10 minutes. I encourage you to take some time and write down *your needs*. What feeds you emotionally, physically, financially and spiritually?

At first, you may feel guilty by doing this because it takes time away from the kids or other obligations. Please realize that you can't give to others what you don't have yourself. *You* must be happy, at peace and leading the life you deserve to be whom you want to be. If you need to, look at it this way...you aren't being fair to your children or family if you don't take good care of yourself. Ouch, did that one hurt? Sorry, but some of us (me included) can get stuck in our old ways.

This will come slowly, but if you do something *daily* that feeds *you*, a wonderful transformation will happen. You will radiate a sense of calm, happiness and fulfillment. What better gift to give yourself and to the ones you love!

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Patti Handy, Life Coach, is the founder of Wisdom Within You, a company dedicated to “*guiding divorced women and single moms in rebuilding their lives... financially, physically, emotionally and spiritually*”. As a Life Coach, Certified Personal Trainer and with 25 years experience in the financial services industry, Patti brings a unique combination of experiences to her coaching clients. Being a divorced, single mom herself, she understands the fears, challenges and overwhelm faced by others. Visit her website at www.wisdomwithinyou.com to download your FREE special report and sign up for her FREE monthly newsletter.