

Experiment with happiness

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Note to reader: The opinions expressed in the article that follows are not necessarily those of Divorce Magazine and we acknowledge that some readers may not agree with the opinions expressed here but we are committed to letting all voices be heard.

Twice-married, twice-divorced Buddhist nun Pema Chodron says to treat life as an experiment.

That was a tough pill to swallow for me, a 36-year-old single-mother with not one but two failed marriages under her belt. If ever there was someone who has given themselves an enormous albatross, or scarlet letter, in terms of failed marriages it has certainly been me. So how does someone like me treat life like an experiment when surrounded by so much failure?

Well, you start all over again from square-one, whether that's as simple as needing a new beaker or as economically challenging as a whole new laboratory. You just start all over again.

What other choice do you have?

Sure, you could choose to be angry, bitter, and sulky about your failed marriage, or marriages, but what's the point? Life is too short to let failure impede us from starting over, moving on, and being happy. If we let all the tangibles that come with failure stop us what's the point of living?

Think about all that weighs down an individual in conjunction with a failed marriage.

Fear

Bitterness

Anger

Why?

Why do we allow fear, anger, and bitterness to overtake us after a divorce, especially bitterness?

If a person spends every waking moment of every day lost in their bitter feelings towards an ex-spouse and die tomorrow what will they have accomplished?

Zilch.

Are they bitter because an ex-spouse is happy without them, possibly happy with someone else, the very person behind the end of the marriage?

Why?

Being bitter over someone else's happiness will not bring you happiness and isn't that what you really want, happiness in your own life?

Then what's stopping you?

I've had two marriages end for the exact same reason. My former spouses both had an affair. The first walked out without looking back, the second was indecisive on which person he wanted more, so I made the decision for him. If anyone has a right to be bitter it is certainly me. Yet, I've never looked back, I've no regrets, not a single one, and while I went through all the pain and grievances that come with a divorce I knew one thing for certain, I would not be bitter, because I will not allow a single day, not a single minute, to be wasted on bitterness.

I've made the choice to be blissful.

I treat every day like an experiment, it's hard, believe me. I may have a moment or two of sadness but that's where experimentation comes in handy. I take time with my kids to talk about something new, something different. I take long walks alone through the park and think about what stories I'd like to write or places I'd love to visit that I've never been or even imagined visiting. I set time aside to chat with a friend over things we've never discussed before, such as world religions. Or we go to a restaurant and try amazing, new food I never would have thought to try before.

I try something new and completely outside my comfort zone every day.

I experiment until I find what will positively draw me out of the sadness.

I refuse to be bitter.

Life is too short; too precious to be spent wrapped up miserably with my failed marriages and to feel bitterness towards two former significant others who've failed me.

If you die tomorrow will you do so knowing you spent the time wisely? Or will you squander it with bitterness?

It's really up to you. No one can make you happy anymore than someone can force you to spend every day being bitter.

Why not make the decision to be happy?

I've no desire to waste a single moment. Not just for my sake but for my kids, too.

What about you?

Experiment with happiness — you may be surprised at the results.

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