

EXPLORING BEYOND DIVORCE

Coaching Guide • Journey 03 of 12

Transforming Loneliness

Loneliness after divorce can be painful. Small steps toward connection and comfort in your own company can help.

About This Journey

Loneliness is one of the most painful and least talked-about realities of divorce. It can arrive suddenly, linger quietly, or hit hardest in unexpected moments — when the house is too quiet, or a decision needs to be made and there is no one to talk it over with.

This Journey explores loneliness after divorce, ways to respond with care, and small steps toward meaningful connection and greater comfort in your own company.

What Is Loneliness?

Loneliness is a complex and usually unpleasant emotional response to isolation or a lack of companionship. It is not simply being alone — it is the painful awareness of a disconnection from others that feels unwanted or involuntary.

Loneliness and Grief

Loneliness is a difficult emotion to deal with while going through a divorce — and it often initiates a grief response. The loss of a significant person in one's life will typically trigger grief, and loneliness is frequently part of that grieving process.

Key Characteristics of Loneliness

- Includes anxious feelings about a lack of connectedness or sense of community
 - Extends beyond the present moment — into worry about the future
 - Can be felt even when surrounded by other people
 - Is not a sign of weakness — it is a normal human response to loss
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Ways of Coping With Loneliness

Some ways of coping offer lasting support; others may bring short-term relief but leave you feeling worse afterward. Notice what helps you, without judging yourself for finding this difficult.

Responses That May Help	Patterns That May Make Loneliness Harder
• Practice becoming comfortable in your own company while staying connected with others • Plan small, manageable ways to care for yourself during lonely moments • Develop new social contacts and friendships • Approach new connections at your own pace, with honest expectations and boundaries	• Rushing into a relationship mainly to avoid being alone • Relying on alcohol or other substances to avoid painful feelings • Repeatedly using food to avoid feelings in ways that leave you feeling worse • Withdrawing from others for long periods when you want or need connection • Using sleep to avoid feelings in ways that interfere with daily life

New Connections and Dating

New friendships and dating may offer companionship during this transition. Give yourself time to notice what you want, communicate honestly about expectations, and respect your own and the other person's boundaries. You do not have to rush into a relationship or decide immediately what it will become.

Learning to Be With Yourself

You can gently explore activities on your own while also making room for connection with others. Start with something manageable and notice how it feels. Becoming comfortable in your own company does not mean giving up your need for companionship.

Possible Activities to Explore Alone

- Reading — books that inspire, comfort, or simply absorb your attention
- Working on personal projects — creative, practical, or long-postponed
- Going to a movie on your own, if that feels enjoyable
- Enjoying a meal out on your own, if that feels comfortable
- Choosing movement you enjoy and that suits your abilities
- Journaling — giving your thoughts somewhere to go
- Spending time in nature — a quiet and reliable companion

Reflection Questions

These questions are an invitation to get honest with yourself about how loneliness is showing up in your life — and what it might be trying to tell you.

1. When does loneliness hit you hardest? What time of day, what situations, what triggers?

2. What are 3 or more positive activities you could choose — starting this week — to cope with loneliness in a healthy way?

3. Are any of your ways of coping leaving you feeling worse afterward? What small alternative might offer more support?

4. What does being comfortable in your own company look like for you? Have you experienced moments of this before?

5. What is one small step you could take this week toward connecting with someone or enjoying time on your own?

A Closing Thought

You do not have to learn to enjoy every moment alone. Over time, small acts of self-care and meaningful connection may help lonely moments feel more manageable. Becoming comfortable with yourself and seeking companionship can go hand in hand.

"Accept yourself, love yourself and keep moving forward. If you want to fly, you have to give up what weighs you down."

— Roy T. Bennett