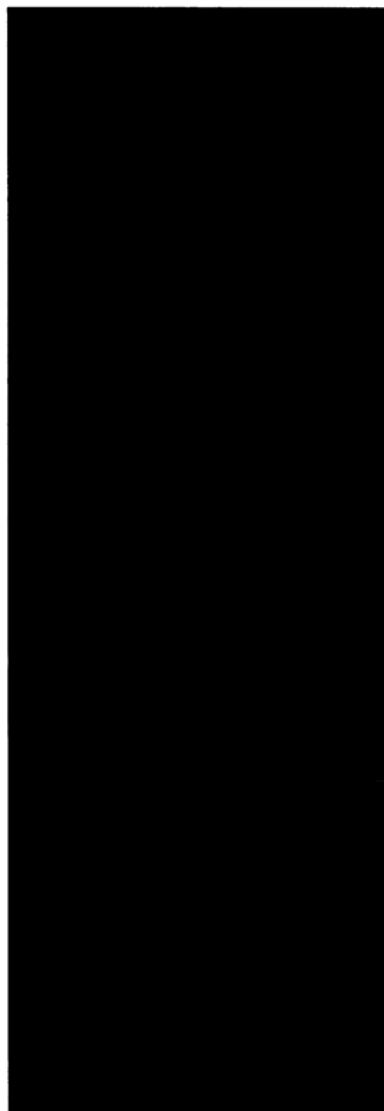


D e a l i n g
D i v o r c e

With

by
David White



About the author...

David White is presently a pastor in Barre, VT. Over the last several decades he has been in ministry at the local church level. His experience has also included work as a Chaplain and Family Life Programs Director at the Hacketstown Community Hospital in Hacketstown, NJ.

After pastoring in South Carolina, Indiana, New Jersey and Ontario, Canada, David pursued a Doctor of Ministry degree from Andrews University in Berrien Springs, MI. These materials were part of his D.Min. project.

David has conducted more than 50 divorce recovery seminars, and is now training other facilitators all over the United States and Canada. He believes that most marriages suffer similar problems and the only difference between those couples that divorce and those that don't is the way in which they deal with those problems. That means a facilitator, whether presently divorced or never divorced, can draw from his or her experience in presenting this seminar.

David and Mary-Alice enjoy working together in ministry and in divorce recovery seminars. They have three grown sons, Jeffrey, J. David, and Carl.



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Dealing
With
Divorce

All scripture references are from the New International Version.

Welcome to *Dealing With Divorce*

Each year, more than one million couples in North America decide to end their marriage. Divorce is profoundly painful, both for those who experience it and for the church.

It is also a very significant opportunity for ministry. A major cause of members who drop out of the church is a lack of support and ministry from their pastor and congregation at a time they most need it. A major reason why unchurched people look around for a church is their need for support and spiritual resources to help them with divorce.

Dealing With Divorce is published in the hope that it can be an effective resource for pastors, congregations, singles ministries, family life committees and other Adventist groups seeking to minister to those who hurt from marital break-ups.

David White developed this tool as a pastor and hospital chaplain seeking to reach out to men and women in pain. As part of his research toward the Doctor of Ministry degree from Andrews University, he tested these materials with 40 church and community groups.

Dealing With Divorce provides material for ten sessions. It can be presented as a seminar or a support group. The lecture-discussion approach works successfully in a seminar setting. In a support group setting, the leader may simply read key information to the group or list key ideas on a flip chart or chalk board, and then allow the group to discuss the material.

Maybe you are wondering if this is something to use in your church or home town. First, consider these suggestions. This seminar is best presented by someone who has experienced divorce him or herself. That person will have the greatest empathy, credibility and most personal stories to add to the outline in each chapter. If no one like that is available to you, then find someone who is a good listener and effective presenter.

The next step is to determine if there are people going through divorce who *really want a seminar or support group*. Please don't force it on them, "because it's good for them." The participants will be the most receptive to information and encouragement if they feel a need for it.

(Tools are available for conducting a simple survey to find out how many people might be interested in a divorce recovery seminar or support group. They have been published in a resource titled

**Dealing
With
Divorce**

Family Ministry Planbook, by the Pacific Union conference Church Ministries staff, and from the same publisher as this volume— Church Ministries Resource Center.)

If you are providing this seminar or support group at your church, you will want to include your members. Also make a concerted effort to invite people from your neighborhood and the work associates of church members. Current research indicates that people respond positively to genuine care no matter who provides it. They are not "brand loyal" to the denomination in which they were raised.

As the participants assemble, keep these suggestions in mind.

- Provide a non-threatening environment of trust and acceptance. Have the room warm, the seats comfortable and a friendly (but not intrusive) person or two mixing with the people before the program begins.
- Place the chairs in a circle, not in rows. Then everyone can see each other and there's a sense of equality. The facilitator should sit in the circle and talk in a conversational tone.
- The notes on the first few pages in each of the ten sections are for the group facilitator to use. Feel free to add your own experiences to the information included here. Use an overhead projector or writing board to list important one or two-word ideas for all to see. This helps everyone stay focused on what's being discussed.
- The handouts are to be copied and given to the participants in the group. By giving them out early in the session each time, they can take notes in the open spaces provided.
- Remember, tears are okay. So are honest disclosure and emotions. Have plenty of tissues available and be prepared to let the "tight agenda" be put aside at times when some quality listening is needed. Knowing someone understands their pain will heal some people far more quickly and effectively than lists of pertinent information.
- Because this is a Field Test Edition, we would like your feedback on this resource. Please write your suggestions, changes and observations to Monte Sahlin, Adult Ministries Coordinator, Church Ministries Department, North American Division of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, 12501 Old Columbia Pike, Silver Spring, MD 20904. Or FAX your comments to 301-680-6464.
- God be with you in this important ministry. We need more people like you who have the heart of Jesus for hurting people.

Dealing
With
Divorce

D e a l i n g
With
D i v o r c e

**"Understanding
My Divorce
Process"**



S e s s i o n

1

Introduction

A. Group Leader

As your leader, I am looking forward to sharing myself with you in this divorce recovery seminar we've called ***Dealing With Divorce***.

Important Note: (Introduce yourself and name your professional experience. If you are divorced, briefly tell your story so participants understand that you can truly empathize with them. If you are not divorced, please don't present yourself as the authority. Humbly present yourself as a facilitator of the participant's pain and a fellow Christian who wants to come alongside and offer hope and healing through group discussion, unconditional acceptance and insightful information).

B. Dealing With Divorce

The seminar consists of ten three-hour sessions which will meet weekly at the times announced. The format each time is lecture/discussion. Your input is greatly appreciated. At no time will you be asked to share any information which you do not wish to share.

C. Introduction of Participants

(Learn more than their name, home town and occupation if possible. Maybe some are ready to give a brief overview of their separation and subsequent divorce. Have them keep it short and to the point. This is a crucial time for setting a warm, accepting and healing environment).

Goals

A. Participants' Goals

It's important to clarify in your mind what you want to accomplish during the seminar. This will help you progress in the areas you want to work on. Also, when the seminar is over, you will know whether the seminar has been successful for you. (Handout 1). You may want to change or modify these goals during the course of the seminar.

B. Seminar Objectives

Discuss how the goals of the seminar and participant's goals fit into the overall purpose of the seminar. (Handout 2)

**Dealing
With
Divorce**

♦ Leader ♦

Break

Allow 15 minutes for light refreshments...fruit juices, hot drinks, possibly snack foods...whatever is appropriate. Then encourage participants to return to their chairs as the discussion continues.

Overview of Divorce Process

A. Divorce is a process, not an event.

It begins at the time of final separation and ends when you become a "whole person" and can find fulfillment and happiness in being single. An unsuccessful ending might be a premature remarriage—one occurring before you have successfully completed the seven stations of divorce or before the problems of the previous marriage have been resolved. An example of not dealing well with divorce is when one remains angry and bitter for years after the legal divorce is final.

B. Person Who Leaves (PWL) Person Left Behind (PLB) Concept.

The terms PWL & PLB are not to place judgement. One is not good and the other bad. They are simply ways to identify difference in attitude and response. (Handout 3)

C. Seven Stations of Divorce.

These seven stations are essential in helping you understand what it takes to heal from your divorce. (Handout 4)

D. A Ten-Week Request

We feel that it's best not to date other participants in this seminar during the ten sessions. This enables everyone to share his/her thoughts and feelings openly without any concern that another in the group may take advantage of this sharing. This frees you to work on the purpose and goals of the seminar.

E. Work on your own situation and find solutions to your own concerns.

In order to be the most effective, you will not be able to "solve" everyone else's "problems." Please give each other the freedom to find your own solutions. Of course, feel free to listen to others' stories—even share how you may be facing a similar situation—but don't try to "fix them."

Dealing
With
Divorce

♦ Leader ♦

Homework

A. Call two individuals in our group whom you have not met until this session. (see Handout 5—Participant Directory)

B. Fill in the "Seven Stations of Divorce" exercise (Handout 6).

Next Session

In our next session, we will be discussing the topic, "Understanding My Emotions." Thank you for coming. Our next session is _____ Please put that on your calendar so you won't miss the enjoyable time we will have when we get together again.



♦ Leader ♦

My Goals For Dealing With My Divorce During This Ten-Session Seminar

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

My Goals For Dealing With My Divorce During This Week

1.

2.

3.



The Goals Of This Seminar

We would like to assist you in:

1. Achieving an understanding of the separation/divorce process.
2. Achieving an understanding of the feelings which people experience during separation/divorce.
3. Achieving a good understanding of yourself, your strengths and weaknesses, and accepting yourself for who you are.
4. Achieving the sense of being a "whole person" which enables you to enjoy a happy and rewarding life.
5. Learning relationship skills which allows you to share yourself with others, trusting them, as well as yourself.
6. Building a support and friendship group.
7. Having a successful divorce recovery which empowers you to go on with the rest of your life to achieve fulfillment, vitality and happiness.



Defining the PWL & PLB Concept

Person Who Leaves (PWL) "The One Who Makes The Overt Decision to End the Marriage."

Characteristics

- A. May be frustrated over the lack of fulfillment in the marriage
- B. May have a boyfriend/girlfriend
- C. May be tired of the responsibilities of the marriage
- D. May be unable to cope with the problems at home
- E. May want to find his/her own separate identity or growth—a search for happiness

The PWL will often have worked through some of the emotional divorce before the actual separation.

Actions

- A. Will announce his/her decision that he/she wants "out" of the marriage
- B. Will resent efforts to work at saving the marriage (some will say they suggested addressing the problems in the past, but now it's too late)
- C. Will talk and often feel a sense of freedom and relief that the marriage is over
- D. Will also suffer many of the same feelings as the PLB, such as loneliness, depression, fear, anger, and guilt
- E. Will feel he/she made the right decision and attempt to maintain his/her position

Person Left Behind (PLB) "The One Who Gets Left"

Characteristics

- A. May also have been frustrated over the lack of fulfillment in the marriage but wants to save the marriage; in some cases actually wanted to end the marriage but wouldn't make the decision
- B. To some PLB's the announcement that the marriage is over comes as complete surprise. In many cases they felt they had a very happy marriage.

Dealing
With
Divorce

♦ Handout 3-A ♦

Actions

- A. Wants to save the marriage and spends much time initially thinking of any possible way to save it and get his/her mate back
- B. Feels depressed, lonely and angry
- C. Will soon seek out help and will often work on improving himself/herself through seminars such as this one
- D. May actually, in the end become the PWL if the other spouse at a later time wants to come back. The PLB at that time may say, "no thank you" and the situation is reversed. The original PWL is at this time the PLB—exhibiting the feelings and actions of the same.

Seven Stations of Divorce

*Paul Bohannon, in his book **Divorce and After** (Garden City, NY: Anchor Books, 1971), distinguishes six stages of divorce. These stages may overlap and come in a different order. In addition to Bohannon's six stations, a seventh station has been identified—the religious divorce.*

Emotional Divorce

The emotional divorce is the process of “growing apart,” really the process of falling out of love. It begins for one of the spouses, usually before the separation, but continues through the divorce process and in many cases lasts past the granting of the divorce decree. From observation of hundreds of people divorcing, this part of the process is the most difficult. What makes it so tough? In many cases it's the wrenching and tearing apart, of what was once a sense of togetherness.

Before you were married you went through (or should have gone through) the exciting process of “falling in love.” There was the dating, doing things you both enjoyed, saying things which made the other feel good about himself/herself and making that person happy. The emphasis was on the other's strengths.

Now in the emotional divorce, the process of “falling out of love;” is a series of events too. But this time, they are unhappy events. The emphasis is most often on the other's weaknesses, and the words spoken often wound the other. Negative feelings now substitute for the positive feelings which had been there. The healing work of the emotional divorce is to get beyond the point where either the positive or the negative feelings control you.

Legal Divorce

The legal divorce is the legal process of ending the marriage. It begins when one of the spouses sees a lawyer to end the marriage and continues until a judge declares the couple divorced. This can take a few months or perhaps several years. Unfortunately, this becomes a very frustrating experience, a time when partners feel they have very little or no control over what is happening to them.

The legal divorce involves what is called “grounds” for divorce. Historically, adults had the “right” to marry, so they had to prove they had the “right” to divorce. To divorce, one needed “grounds;” that is, there must be acts of “misbehavior” on the

Dealing
With
Divorce

♦ Handout 4-A ♦

part of the other spouse. Establishing the grounds for divorce may involve a lot of charges and counter charges by both spouses.

Two important aspects of a legal divorce are the concepts of punishment, and, what is fair or equitable. And it's difficult to determine what's fair or equitable. If the couple, with their attorneys, cannot work this out, then the court makes the decision. The legal divorce is complete when a legal decision has been made, all additional court appearances are over, and the decision of the court is fulfilled.

In short, a legal divorce is putting a legal end to a marriage which ceased to function as a happy, viable unit, long before the court appearance.

Economic Divorce

An economic divorce involves two major parts: (1) dividing the family assets and setting up separate households, and (2) making the adjustments necessary to live within new financial restraints.

The first part of this process, for some, is done without much anger or disagreement. For others, it is an almost impossible task. Some couples work from the premise, "I want what's fair." Other couples decide "I'm going to take just as much as I can." This second course creates many problems and adds a lot to the legal expenses.

There comes a time when the decision must be made, "Who gets what property and who is responsible for what payments?" But the major adjustment of an economic divorce is to a new financial lifestyle. Each individual has the same income, but the expenses are greater. Operating a household, plus the legal expenses, and in many cases, some counseling expenses are a lot different with one income instead of two. Making these adjustments takes time.

Often the woman has to make major changes in her lifestyle since her income is often less than the man's and her expenses are often higher than his. Some of the adjustment includes paying or living within the confines of child-support payments; paying higher taxes, mortgages and child care expenses.

Co-Parental Divorce

This is a very difficult problem for many couples to resolve. When mother and father separate/divorce, a custody battle



often arises. What do they do with the children? Even when there isn't a custody battle, there are other problems to work through. These problems include:

- Can the non-custodial parent best fulfill his/her parenting role?
- Can they maintain proper visitation time and still allow for the social and other needs of the child?

Unfortunately, in this aspect of the divorce, the ideal is not always achieved. In many cases, one parent will use the child/children as a way of "getting back at" or "punishing" the other spouse. Anger often blinds parents from seeing what is in the best interest of the child. It is not uncommon for one or both parents to try to get the child to sympathize with him/her and hold negative feelings toward the other parent.

The task of the co-parental divorce is to find the healthiest way for both mother and father to function in their roles as parents without doing it together. This task will most often begin when the child/children begins living in a one-parent household but then may need to adjust if one or both of the parents remarry. This is often complicated by the parenting style of mother vs. father—especially in a blended family situation. The child needs to receive love and care from *both* parents to the degree each adult is able to offer this love and care.

Community Divorce

Dealing with the changes in relationships with your friends and relatives is one aspect of the divorce process which may come as a surprise in community divorce. This involves being aware of the obvious shift which occurs with your in-laws.

What surprises many is how those you considered good friends before the separation change after the separation. Yes, some will remain and be supportive of you, but others will withdraw from both spouses. Some reasons for this are:

- Some will not want to get involved or take sides
- Your separation/divorce may create fears or doubts about the durability of their own marriage
- You may be perceived as a threat (rival) to their marriage.

Another part of the change will likely be on your part. Your interests and needs will be different now. You will likely find that you feel more comfortable with people who also share some of your new needs and interests. Many have expressed in seminars that they feel out of place or wonder if their married friends are just trying to be nice to them. Whatever the reason, most individuals who have attended previous seminars have expressed the need of finding new friends.

Dealing
With
Divorce

♦ Handout 4-C ♦

Two of the problems involved in making new friends include:

- A tendency to withdraw from meeting new people at this time because you have been emotionally hurt by your divorce.
- They have difficulty trusting people because your "ex" broke a trust relationship.

The goal of recovery in a community divorce is to find your place in a changing community, even though you may find it difficult.

Identity Divorce

Bohannon calls this the "psychic divorce" and defines it as "the separation of self from the personality and the influence of the ex-spouse--to wash that man right out of your hair" (p. 53).

The goal of the identity divorce is to become a "whole person"; to become autonomous. This is what Bruce Fisher calls understanding and accepting your "singleness." This is not to suggest that you will never remarry. It is saying that you will not have to remarry out of fears or an inability to be single.

Becoming a "whole person" involves the four areas of life: physical, mental/emotional, spiritual, and social. For most individuals, the separation/divorce process creates some problems (for some temporarily) in each of these areas.

- Physically—loss of sleep, under or overeating, and very little regular exercise.
- Emotionally—anger, bitterness, loneliness, or guilt.
- Spiritually—withdrawal from church and anger with God.
- Socially—an inability to make new friends because of the unresolved pressures.

When the person has achieved some degree of wholeness, he/she will be able to accept himself/herself, his/her strengths and weaknesses, and be able to pick up the pieces and go on with life.

The healing work of the identity divorce is to accept yourself as a single person and be able to function as a mature single person. For some it will be the first time in your life that you will be an adult single person responsible for yourself and not dependent on others. You can do it!



Religious Divorce

Most people who participate in divorce recovery groups express these concerns:

1. They feel a general lack of understanding from the clergy or the church (there have been some positive exceptions).
2. They often feel a decreased interest in church attendance or may even withdraw from membership.
3. They have difficulty with the church's remarriage policies.

Should these concerns be ignored? Are there answers to these concerns? *These are real concerns and deserve some answers and understanding.*

In a recent survey it was found that 87 percent of those surveyed said that religious values are a part of their life. It would seem then, that for these 87 percent, the religious aspects of divorce would be of some consequence.

Other divorce recovery groups have been asked, "How many of you were married by a pastor, priest, or rabbi who signed your legal marriage certificate?" The participants have always responded positively—between 90 and 100 percent of the time. But when the marriage ends, the same couple were divorced by a judge and the church and clergy didn't want to get involved.

For some, this creates a nagging question about their religious affiliation. They ask, "How can a church honestly say they care about each member, when in my hour of need during my divorce, that same church wants a hands off relationship and even feels free (in some cases) to pass judgement on me without knowing all the facts?"

The recovery task of the religious divorce is to:

- Deal with the religious issues that only you know.
- Find some resolution to any religious concerns you have.
- Not feel that the divorce process is complete until you are at peace and harmony with your God and religious value system.

Dealing
With
Divorce

♦ Handout 4-E ♦

Names of Individuals in My Group

Name: _____

Phone: _____

Something to remember him/her by: _____

Name: _____

Phone: _____

Something to remember him/her by: _____

Name: _____

Phone: _____

Something to remember him/her by: _____

Name: _____

Phone: _____

Something to remember him/her by: _____

Name: _____

Phone: _____

Something to remember him/her by: _____

Name: _____

Phone: _____

Something to remember him/her by: _____



Seven Stations of Divorce Worksheet

Directions

Read the handout on the *Seven Stations of Divorce*. Answer each of the questions as time and space permit.

The purpose of this exercise is to help you be aware of where you are in the separation/divorce process. It should not create any alarm in your mind. It is provided as a mirror so you know what you look like now and how you want to look when this seminar is over.

Emotional Divorce

1. List some things which have happened to you (both good and bad) at this station.

2. List the emotions you are feeling in this phase.

3. List the situations or feelings you want to work on to heal in your emotional divorce.

Legal Divorce

1. Where are you in the legal divorce process?

2. What problems are you experiencing in the legal divorce phase?

Dealing
With
Divorce

♦ Handout 6-A ♦

3. What do you need to do to heal in your legal divorce?

Economic Divorce

1. List your lifestyle changes since your earning power was altered when your spouse left.

2. What fears do you face with your present financial situation?

3. What financial arrangement or feeling do you need to address to heal in your economic divorce?

Co-Parental Divorce

1. What are your concerns in the co-parental divorce?

2. What do you need to do to heal in the co-parental divorce?

Community Divorce

1. How many of your friends have become closer to you during your separation/divorce? _____ How many have stayed about the same? _____ How many have withdrawn completely? _____

2. What problems are you facing with the community divorce?



3. What feeling and activities do you need to work on to heal in the community divorce?

Identity Divorce

1. Where do you see yourself in the identity divorce process?

2. Which of the four areas of life do you need to work on most to become a whole person? Why?

3. List the actions and feelings you need to address to heal in the identity divorce?

Religious Divorce

1. List any religious concerns you may have with your separation/divorce.

2. Where can you go for support and honest answers to your religious questions?

3. What do you need to work on or think through to heal in your religious divorce?

Dealing
With
Divorce

♦ Handout 6-C ♦

D e a l i n g
With
D i v o r c e

**"Understanding
My Emotions"**



S e s s i o n

2

Welcome

It is good to see that you have returned for our second session. For those here for the first time, we want to give you a special welcome.

A. Review

1. Your Goals

How do you feel about these goals? Did you begin to make a little progress toward one or more of these goals? Are there any new goals you want to add?

2. Person Who Leaves (PWL) Person Left Behind (PLB)

PWL: The one who takes the initiative to end the marriage and wants out.

PLB: The one who has his/her marriage ended—sometimes by surprise.

Remember, we are not judging the PWL as the “bad” guy and the PLB as the “good” guy. This concept helps us understand why the PWL acts as he/she does and the PLB acts as he/she does.

3. Seven Stations of Divorce

B. Report of Homework

1. Telephone calls:

Who did you call?

What response did you receive? Did anyone call you?

How did you feel when you received the call?

2. Seven Stations Worksheet

Let's look at your worksheet and see what insights you received as you worked through the first section, “Emotional Divorce.”

Dealing
With
Divorce

◆ L e a d e r ◆

Goals

A. Understand the concept of the emotional divorce

The emotional divorce is normal and very much a part of the divorce process. Pain is often very great, and traumatic during the emotional divorce.

- B. Understand the consequences of not dealing with an emotional divorce.*
- C. Become aware of how you and your "ex" became emotionally attached.*
- D. Become aware of how you and your "ex" began to emotionally detach from each other.*
- E. Learn about the Valley of Emotional Divorce and how to begin the climb out of the valley.*

Overview of Emotional Divorce

A. Understanding The Emotional Divorce

1. This is probably the most difficult and traumatic part of divorce.
2. This is the process of "falling out of love and letting go" or the "termination" of the whole emotional aspect of marriage.
3. This is the time to identify the positive feelings which you once felt in the marriage and then honestly admit the negative feelings which may now replace them. These waves of negative feelings come and go with varying intensity for months. That's okay. Here's a list of emotions to consider:

love	hate (for some)
trust	distrust
togetherness	loneliness
happiness/fulfillment	depression
compassion	anger
security	fears
feeling accepted	feeling rejected
friendship	antagonism/resentment

The healing of emotional divorce is being able to "let go" of the feelings listed in the left hand column. For a time you may replace them with the feeling on the right—which is normal, but to achieve full healing in an emotional divorce, you must get to the place where neither emotion controls you.

Dealing
With
Divorce

◆ Leader ◆

B. Consequences of Not Dealing With Emotional Divorce

1. The person is unable to let go of what used to be. Unfortunately, this is what Ray Charles romanticized when he sang "I Can't Stop Loving You." In the chorus are these words: "My life has stood still since losing you." The person who doesn't cope well with emotional divorce doesn't allow the other person to go on with his/her life.

An illustration is John, who had been divorced for five years. One day he said, "I am not about to accept my divorce for two reasons. First, I keep telling my wife that all we have to do to save this marriage is go to Florida for five days. Second, God doesn't accept the divorce, so I am not about to." John's life has been standing still for five years.

2. The second evidence that a person isn't coping well with an emotional divorce is when (s)he replaces the positive emotions of love and care with hate and anger and fixates there—refusing to give up negative feelings. This can ruin your life.

3. Another evidence is when a person wallows in self-pity. Some almost seem to enjoy the "pity pot." These individuals keep looking for sympathy from their friends for as long as anyone will listen. This poor coping practice often drives the people away that can help this person most.

The emotional hurt of divorce is a normal part of the process. So don't fight it, but in proper time, move on past these feelings.

BREAK

Seminar participants are invited to take a 15 minute break for refreshments and then return to their seats as the discussion of dealing with Emotional Divorce continues.

C. The Hourglass Exercise (Handout 1)

1. Take ten minutes to quietly answer the four questions at the top of the hourglass.
2. Discuss together one or two items from each person's hourglass—top part only.
3. Take ten minutes to quietly answer the bottom four questions.
4. Discuss together one or two items from each person's hourglass—bottom part only.

Dealing
With
Divorce

◆ L e a d e r ◆

Characteristics of the detachment process:

- grow apart more than grow together
- emphasis is on the weak points in the other's personality
- communication problems
- arguments do not resolve the issue in question
- PWL feels emotionally cramped or cheated
- the gulf between them keeps getting wider and wider until separation (at least for the PWL)

Detachment starts when a person allows an opening in the top part of the hourglass to let difficulties, conflicts, changes, disappointments, and negative feelings pile up in the bottom of the hourglass.

5. The emotional detachment happens over a period of time. Often the PWL has done a lot of that detachment before (s)he announces separation/divorce.

D. Overview of the Valley of Emotional Divorce (Handout No. 2)

E. Things I Need to Do To Deal With Emotional Divorce:

1. Be willing to experience the pain involved in emotional divorce. Realize that all the things I do to avoid this pain just prolongs the emotional divorce.
2. Stop investing emotional energy in the old relationship.
3. Reinvest my emotional energy in projects which will yield "a good return on my investment."
4. Accept the responsibility that it is up to me to find solutions to my problems and fears.
5. Begin the process out of the Valley of Emotional Divorce and picture myself as a "whole person," capable of being happy and fulfilled.

E. Detachment Illustrated

Joe told his divorce recovery group how he dreaded the next week because his son was getting married and he would be around his ex-wife whom he had not seen for nearly a year. The last encounters had been difficult for Joe (the PLB). He was afraid that his previous feelings of love would create problems for him. In the next session Joe was thrilled. He shared how the wedding had been a tremendous success. "When I saw my ex-wife, there were no feelings inside me for her any more. The emotional monkey is off my back." Joe had learned how to detach in emotional divorce. So can you!

**Dealing
With
Divorce**

◆ Leader ◆

Homework

A. Call one individual this week whom you did not call last week.

B. Read Handout 3, "Loneliness."

List the ways you have tried to handle loneliness.

C. During our discussion today, we talked about stopping our emotional energy investment in the old relationship.

List the ways, if any, that you are still investing in the old relationship. ◆ Instructor

Next Session

Next week we will learn "Getting Over My Heartache." Thank you for coming. See you next session. There may be some refreshments left. Feel free to stay by and visit with each other for awhile. Our network of support for each other is just as important here as the information we cover each session.

Dealing
With
Divorce

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Hourglass

• Things we enjoyed doing together...

• Qualities I admired in my former spouse...

• Significant places we went together...

• What was done on an on-going basis during the last year to strengthen this attachment?

• Conflicts in our marriage...

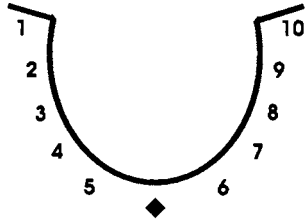
• Changes causing us to drift apart...

• Annoying characteristics in my former spouse...

• When did you begin to feel you and your spouse drifting apart?

Dealing
With
Divorce

♦ Handout 1 ♦



Valley of Emotional Divorce

1. *Low Self Esteem*

Failure of your marriage plus feelings of inadequacy in facing the future initially lowers self esteem.

2. *Fears*

Many fears surface because your future is uncertain. Will I be able to cope?

3. *Anger*

Feeling out of control with your "ex," and realizing all the losses you're sustaining, a normal response is anger.

4. *Loneliness*

With the absence of your "ex"—as much as you dislike them—you begin to miss the companionship, intimacy and emotional support.

5. *Depression*

Overwhelmed by fears and a lowered self-esteem, you sink into some level of depression. Keep in mind, this step will lead you to a positive recovery.

♦ Acceptance of Responsibility

6. *Hope*

On a day-to-day basis you will begin to realize there is a future for you beyond today's problems. Your daily motto is, "I can make it today. I will survive."

7. *Support Group*

You will begin to reach out and build new friendships—may even join a group such as this one. You identify individuals who can help you cope during this crisis: family, clergy, friends, therapist.

8. *Healthy Self-Concept*

When you realize you are valuable to others, this confirms your esteem of yourself and you begin to mend your inner pain and cope effectively with your divorce.

9. *Love*

You become aware of a more mature love than you knew in your last year of your previous marriage—and you are enriched in many areas of life.

10. *Wholeness*

You become a whole person, fully realizing who you are mentally, emotionally, socially, physically and spiritually.

Dealing
With
Divorce

♦ Handout 2 ♦

Loneliness

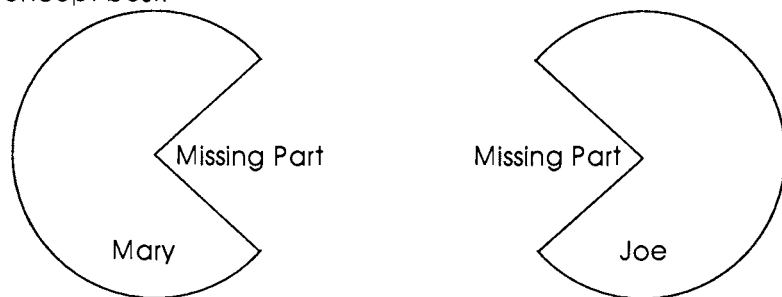
Loneliness is the most common feeling expressed by both the PWL or PLB. Of those who have attended previous seminars, 80 percent of the PLB, and 69 percent of the PWL say they have feelings of loneliness. The intensity of the loneliness varies from individual to individual. Each of you going through separation/divorce should expect these feelings. They are normal. You are in the process of detaching from a very significant relationship.

One definition of loneliness is "The discrepancy between the desired and the actual relationship." This helps explain why individuals can feel lonely within a marriage. It's a lack of depth in the desired relationship. So, after the separation, both spouses are confronted with the difference between the desired relationship they wanted, but for whatever reasons, were unable to attain. Loneliness is a part of the emotional divorce--falling out of love. Of course, there are other causes of loneliness which do not relate to our subject of separation/divorce.

An important factor, which affects the intensity of loneliness, is the degree to which you become dependent on your ex-spouse. Let's illustrate this point. Mary met Joe ten years ago. She had just turned twenty. She was very undecided about what she wanted out of life. It lacked real direction. Mary did have a strong concern for people's feelings. She was a very caring and empathetic person.

Joe was twenty-two when they met. He had a good job. In fact, he was well on his way to achieving his goal of success. He had the drive and determination to achieve these goals. In fact, he wasn't about to let anything or anyone deter him. When Joe and Mary met, it was only a short time before they were "in love" and married. You should also know one more thing about Joe. He didn't have much concern for people's feelings. He really didn't have time to worry about such things because he was too busy achieving the goals he had set for himself.

Both Mary and Joe had what we call the "missing part"; an area in the personality that is missing. Maybe this diagram explains this concept best:



Dealing
With
Divorce

♦ Handout 3-A ♦

Joe lacked a healthy care and concern for other people's feelings. For Mary it was a lack of direction in her life. These were their missing parts. Then why were Mary and Joe were attracted to each other? They were almost opposites in personality.

Mary was attracted to Joe because of his strengths—the goals, direction, drive and determination in his life. It filled her "missing part." In the same way, Mary's strengths in caring and concern for people's feelings filled the void in Joe's personality. They filled each other's missing part. Neither was a "whole person."

Ten years later, Mary and Joe are in the counselor's office yelling and screaming at each other. Mary yells, "I'm leaving! I'm not spending one more day here. Joe is so bullheaded you wouldn't believe it. He won't listen to anyone—not to me or the children. He is concerned only about himself, not for anyone else."

Joe retorts, "That's just fine with me! No way am I living with her anymore. All she is concerned about is her feelings or the children's. She is so dependent on me, I just can't take it any more. It is time she learns to stand on her own two feet."

How have Mary and Joe changed? Really, they haven't. Joe was always bullheaded. Mary just called it drive and determination—which she admired and really wanted in her life. Mary was dependent and caring ten years ago. Joe appreciated that about her then.

When Mary and Joe separate, both will be lonely because they still have their "missing part." Mary will not have Joe to lean on for her support or direction. Joe will miss her caring and concern for others and him. The intensity of that loneliness will be determined by the size of their unresolved "missing part."

Loneliness itself won't kill you, but you may think it will! You will soon look for ways to alleviate this loneliness. An appealing solution is a "rebound relationship." But realize your motives in this new relationship will be based on your selfish and dependent needs. Remember, you will be trying to fill that "missing part." But it's that "missing part" that you must work through and heal before you are a whole person—ready to give yourself to a new relationship.

Here are other unhealthy solutions to loneliness which many people try before they work on that "missing part:"

1. They turn to the abuse of alcohol or other drugs.
2. They engage in multiple sexual encounters (as opposed to a single relationship).

Dealing
With
Divorce

♦ Handout 3-B ♦

3. They become "busyholics"--just running around doing a lot of things so they don't have to be alone.

Andrea Miller shares in her book, *The Single Experience*, the feelings she had after sixteen months of separation: "I am either going to die or I am going to survive, but I am going to feel lonely." She spent several hours one Thanksgiving afternoon alone, feeling terribly lonely. She found that she could survive loneliness—she didn't have to run any longer from the fear of loneliness. She knew from then on that she could handle it.

There are benefits to loneliness which Keith Miller suggests in *The Single Experience*. They are as follows:

1. It provides a time for self-evaluation.
2. It's a time when you can dream creatively.
3. It is a time to spend with God in a special way.

Keith also suggests that while you are really suffering loneliness you should form no lasting conclusions. Do not make big decisions or big changes in your life course. He suggests that you be gentle with yourself. It is like experiencing a terrible storm, such as a hurricane. You board up the windows, fasten down anything which may blow away, come inside and wait until the storm is over and it is safe to go back outside. The same is true when going through the storm known as "loneliness." Don't panic. Don't do anything crazy. Take this opportunity for self-examination. Work at becoming a "whole person."

Many individuals are only concerned about avoiding the loneliness which is a very real and unavoidable part of separation/divorce. Unfortunately, trying to escape only brings temporary release for your pain and is short lived. So why not try to determine the real cause of your loneliness and work at finding a lasting solution?

Frank Minirth, M.D. and Paul Meier, M.D., suggest three basic causes for the pain of loneliness in their book, *Happiness Is a Choice*:

- lack of self-worth.
- lack of intimacy with others.
- lack of intimacy with God.

Dealing
With
Divorce

◆ Handout 3-C ◆

Ten Commandments For Overcoming Loneliness

- I. I will accept myself as a worthwhile individual and realize that God loves me.
- II. I will use my strengths and uniqueness in making new friendships.
- III. I will accept the strengths and uniquenesses of others, be happy in their success, and learn how to love others in a deeper way.
- IV. I will learn how to forgive myself when I fail and will forgive others when they fail me or hurt my feelings. I will lay aside all grudges I may have toward my friends, parents, children, and enemies.
- V. I will forget those things which are behind me, those past hurts and failures, and only use them as stepping stones to my future success.
- VI. I will visualize myself as happy, able to relate well with others, but also able to enjoy my own company.
- VII. I will not look to overcome loneliness by superficial means.
- VIII. I will look for the best things in life and take time to enjoy what life has to offer me.
- IX. I will accept responsibility for my happiness. I will take each day as it comes and enjoy it to its fullest by doing something nice for someone else and for myself. I will learn that if I am given a lemon today, I must make lemonade out of it.
- X. I will spend time with God, the one who created me, loves me, and will give me knowledge and power to succeed in finding fulfillment in my life. I will develop a meaningful relationship with Him.



D e a l i n g
D i v o r c e

With

"Getting Over
My Heartache"



S e s s i o n

3

Welcome

This evening, it's time for a weather report—not the weather outside, but the weather inside. You may feel rather warm inside and happy to be here. You may feel like you are being bounced around by a terrible storm. Would you like to share with the group, your weather conditions?

A. Review

1. Understanding the Emotional Divorce
2. Consequences of Not Dealing With a Emotional Divorce
3. Attachment and Detachment (Hourglass Exercise)
4. Valley of Emotional Divorce
5. Agenda for Dealing With An Emotional Divorce

B. Report of Homework

1. Telephone calls
2. What insights did you receive from the handout on "Loneliness"?
3. What items did you recognize in your behavior which are still an "investment" in the old relationship?

Goals

- A. *To understand the grief process.*
- B. *To understand the magnitude of the losses you have experienced during your separation/divorce.*
- C. *To begin the process of "letting go" of each loss.*
- D. *To begin work on the task of grief recovery.*

Overview of Grief Process

A. Introduction

1. Grief is normal.

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With
Divorce

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2. Grief encompasses a broad spectrum of feelings and behaviors.
3. Grief is expected when a spouse dies but is overlooked by many (neighbors, friends, and churches) when one loses a spouse by a separation/divorce.
4. The dynamics of grief have been understood only in recent years.
5. The grief process for the PWL often happens before separation.
6. The process of grief used in this chapter was written by Elizabeth Kubler Ross in her book ***On Death and Dying***. Her focus is on dying patients, so the emphasis is a little different. There is no recognized definitive process for grief as it relates to separation/divorce.

B. Denial

1. Two types of denial:
 - a. Intellectual
 - b. Emotional—which is the most prevalent. Most individuals know intellectually that the marriage is breaking up but have difficulty accepting it emotionally.
2. Reasons why acceptance of the separation/divorce is difficult:
 - a. The negative impact on your self-concept
 - b. Society's attitudes toward divorce
 - c. Your commitment to this relationship
 - d. A sense of failure
 - e. The attitude of your parents
 - f. The attitude of your churches
 - g. Because of the effect on your children
3. Positive consequences of denial—which are often limited to the first months after separation.
 - a. It cushions the emotional blow of separation/divorce and allows the reality and pain to sink in slowly.
 - b. It gives you time to adjust to the many changes which are happening to you.

Dealing
With
Divorce

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4. Negative consequences of denial:

- a. You are unable to face the reality of the situation and therefore unable to even consider meaningful, positive actions which could improve the situation. One example: for someone to conclude that there is no need for counseling.
- b. Meaningful communication with family, friends, and other potential supporters is blocked.

5. Stories illustrating denial:

- a. Brooke came to a seminar and related how she and her husband had been separated for two years but at Christmas went together to both sets of parents because they were not able to tell the parents they had separated.
- b. Susan stated that her ex-husband maintained co-ownership of the farm as part of the divorce settlement. She agreed to this intellectually, but over and over with indignation she told how his new wife was living in "her" house. Susan was unable at that time to accept that the farm house was no longer hers.

6. The amount and intensity of denial may be proportionate to the amount of problem-denial which existed in your marriage before the separation.

C. Anger

1. Anger during the grief process is normal and healthy. (Anger will be covered in greater detail in chapter five.)

2. There are positive consequences to anger:

- a. It gets you in touch with your feelings and potential emotional dangers.
- b. It helps motivate you to confront the problems you face.

3. Negative consequences of anger:

- a. It ties you to your past relationship.
- b. It could lead to inappropriate behavior.
- c. It could lead to unrealistic conclusions, such as: (1) you can't trust any men, or (2) all women are out to take advantage of men.

D. Bargaining

1. Bargaining is an emotional level response in the grief proc-



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ess. It's an attempt to keep that which you may lose. For instance, the PLB may agree to more visitation rights of the children when it would be a hardship to do so—simply in an attempt to get her/his spouse back.

2. The PWL may have done his/her bargaining before the separation and will have nothing more to do with bargaining when the PLB begins to bargain.

4. "Bargaining" in the grief process is different than "negotiating," which takes place during the legal process. However, a total separation of the concepts of "bargaining" and "negotiating" may be difficult. What one agrees to in the legal negotiations will probably be influenced by the emotional feelings involved in the bargaining of grief.

5. "There always enters into every conflict a terrible, vicious circle: he who does not stand up in time is carried forward into ceaseless compromise right on to final capitulation. Conversely, he who does not offer a compromise, in time, is forced to harden his attitude even more, often even against his own convictions. Instead of asking, 'Shall I resist or shall I give in?' We should sometimes ask ourselves a much more penetrating question. If I give in, is it willingly or against my desires? If I hold out, is it out of conviction or not?" (*To Resist or To Surrender*, by Paul Tournier, p. 16).

6. Positive consequences of bargaining:

- a. It is one more attempt to salvage the situation. You can say, "I did all that I could have done."
- b. It helps you to think through the situation and possibly clarify some of the issues.
- c. At the very least, you are doing something. It keeps your mind active on something positive.

7. Negative consequences of bargaining:

- a. Some may find it humiliating, which lowers your self-esteem.
- b. When couples are still trying to hold the marriage together by bargaining, they may make unwise agreements about the children or property if they enter into legal negotiations during this time.
- c. One spouse may "give" in hopes of winning the other one, only to realize that one wins through strength, not from weakness.

Dealing
With
Divorce

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E. Depression

1. Depression during the grief process is normal and healthy.
2. Depression is the period of "sadness and crying associated with giving up that which has been a meaningful part of your life."
3. Many, during this depression, have trouble sleeping or want to sleep all the time. They may overeat or not want to eat at all. And some feel that life is not worth living.
4. Positive consequences of depression:
 - a. It is another step away from denial (Step I).
 - b. It is important to feel the pain of loss.
 - c. It gives you time to cry.
 - d. Depression is the leading cause of people seeking help. This may be the beginning of the next and very important step of acceptance and saying to yourself, "What can I do to solve my problems?"
5. Negative consequences of depression:
 - a. It distorts the perception you have of yourself, the world about you, and your future.
 - b. It keeps you locked into the past and unable to use your strengths to face the present.

F. Acceptance

1. Acceptance is the part of grief when you are able to give up the way things used to be and begin facing life as it is now.
2. Acceptance is when you begin to formulate new arrangements for yourself.
3. Acceptance is the end of denial.

Break

Seminar participants are invited to take 15 minutes for refreshments and then return to their seats for the continuation of the discussion on Getting Over My Heartache.

G. Your Losses

1. Loss causes grief.

**Dealing
With
Divorce**

♦ Leader ♦

2. On the blackboard, list the losses you may experience during the separation/divorce process.
3. Discuss each of these losses and how each one affects you.
4. Understand that each of the losses causes grief, which means that when it may appear to you that you are regressing, it may just mean that you are facing a new loss.

H. *Tasks of Mourning*

1. To accept the reality of the loss
2. To experience the pain of grief
3. To adjust to an environment in which the "ex" is missing
4. To withdraw emotional energy and reinvest it in another relationship

(From J. William Worden, Ph.D., *Grief Counseling and Grief Therapy*, Chapter 1.)

Homework

A. *Handout 1*

Check the losses you have already or are presently facing in your separation/divorce. Add any losses you are experiencing which are not on the list. You may take Handout No. 4 from lesson one, "Seven Stations of Divorce," and make a list of your losses for each of these seven stations as a format.

B. *Put an X by the five losses which are causing you the greatest amount of grief at the present time.*

Next Session!

Next week we will learn how to begin your climb out of the Valley of Emotional Divorce. Thanks for coming this week and for keeping up with the homework.

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With
Divorce

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Losses You've Experienced in Separation/Divorce

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Spouse | <input type="checkbox"/> Emotional Security |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Work Production | <input type="checkbox"/> Self-Esteem |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Lover | <input type="checkbox"/> Confidence |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Attachment | <input type="checkbox"/> Role |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Friend | <input type="checkbox"/> Identity |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Routine | <input type="checkbox"/> Family Traditions |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Companion | <input type="checkbox"/> Future Dreams |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Years Invested In Marriage | <input type="checkbox"/> Pets |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Confidante | <input type="checkbox"/> Friends |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Involvement | <input type="checkbox"/> In-Laws |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cook | <input type="checkbox"/> Status |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Motivation | <input type="checkbox"/> Control |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Homemaker | <input type="checkbox"/> Sleep |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Fix-It-Person | <input type="checkbox"/> Purpose/Direction |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Mechanic | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Advisor | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Intact Family | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Child/Children | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> House | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Neighborhood | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Neighbors | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Financial Security | _____ |



D e a l i n g
D i v o r c e

With

"Accepting My
Responsibility"



S e s s i o n

4

Welcome

Let's see how the weather is this evening. How is your internal weather report? Would you like to share with the group whether it is calm and peaceful, or perhaps a little stormy?

A. Review

1. Grief Process
2. Your Losses
3. Tasks of Mourning

B. Report of Homework

1. What losses did you add to your list of losses?
2. Who would like to share with us one or two of the losses which are causing you the greatest amount of grief now?

Goals

A. *Understand the importance that accepting responsibility plays in the divorce recovery process.*

B. *Give an overview of transactional analysis.*

Overview of Accepting Responsibility

A. Problems

1. When going through the stages of grief, how does one move from "depression" to "acceptance"?
2. When going down into the Valley of Emotional Divorce (lesson two), how does one stop going farther down into the valley, and start up the other side of the valley?

B. *Concept of accepting responsibility for one's problems. M. Scott Peck, M.D., in his book, **The Road Less Traveled**, p. 32, wrote:*

"We cannot solve life's problems except by solving them. This statement may seem idiotically tautological or self-evident, yet it is seemingly beyond the comprehension of much of the human race. This is because we must accept responsibility for a problem before we can solve it. We cannot solve a problem by saying, 'it's not my problem.'"

Dealing
With
Divorce

◆ L e a d e r ◆

C. Possible responses to separation/divorce

1. "It's not my problem:" Many individuals going through divorce do not solve their problems because they first say, "I didn't cause the problem; so, it's not up to me to solve it."
2. "Someone, please solve my problem:" Many feel they did not cause the problem, so they wait for their "ex," the lawyer, or the counselor to solve the problem for them. Thus the problem is not solved, and all the while the individual is getting more frustrated.
3. Blaming and Defending: While people "blame" their "ex" for causing this mess, they "defend" their behavior which does little to solve the problem.
4. Accepting Responsibility: When people are able to say, "I may not have caused the problem, but it's now my problem," then some "how-to" resolution can begin.
5. Positive Use of Energy: When individuals accept the responsibility for solving their problem, the emotional energy which once went into "blaming" and "defending" can now be directed toward finding a solution to the problem.

D. Benefits of accepting responsibility

1. When you decide on a possible solution to a problem, you will work to accomplish that solution.
2. It will improve your self-concept.
3. You will be working toward personal autonomy.
4. It will lead you to reach out to a support group for positive help.
5. It gets you off the "pity pot" and ends the need to keep telling your story.
6. Your emotional energy can now be used for working on solutions—directed upon the present instead of the past.
7. You begin mobilizing your strengths to help solve the problem.

Break

Seminar participants are invited to take a 15 minute break for

**Dealing
With
Divorce**

♦ L e a d e r ♦

refreshments and then return to their seats as the discussion of Accepting My Responsibility continues.

Transactional Analysis

A. Introduction

1. Transactional analysis is a concept developed by Eric Berne to better understand interactions between people.
2. Transactional analysis can help you better understand how to accept responsibility for your problems without accepting responsibility for your "ex' s" problems.
3. For additional study of transactional analysis as it pertains to separation/divorce and accepting responsibility, read Chapter 3, "T.A. for Lovers," in ***When Your Relationship Ends***, by Bruce Fisher.

B. Definition of terms in transactional analysis

1. Parent
 - a. Nurturing parent
 - b. Critical parent
2. Child
 - a. Natural
 - b. Adaptive or manipulative
3. Adult
4. Transactions

C. Applications of these roles in separation/divorce

1. The parent
 - a. Nurturing parent

When one spouse assumes the role of the nurturing parent in a marriage, there is a possibility that he or she will over-nurture the mate. When a mother over-nurtures her child, she tends to over-protect, to smother and stifle the child's natural development. She may become over-responsible for the child, and the child will either become dependent on the mother or will, in time, rebel because of the over-responsibility. The same happens in marriages. The task for the over-responsible person is to allow others to be responsible for themselves and their problems—to allow them the freedom to work through their own problems even if it is not

Dealing
With
Divorce

♦ Leader ♦

the way (s)he would do it. In a marriage either the husband, the wife, or both could be over-responsible.

b. Critical parent

Critical parents tend to be compulsive—to feel that if things are going to be done right, they must do it themselves. Critical parents often are perfectionists. They expect others, as well as themselves, to do things right. In a marriage, when one spouse becomes a critical parent, the other spouse will come to feel that no matter how hard (s)he tries to please the other, (s)he will always come up a little short. The critical spouse often has something derogatory to say. In time the other person gives up, emotionally backs off, or finds other means of support.

2. The child

a. Natural child

Natural children, in their endeavor to have fun and enjoy life, tend to be under-responsible. By the time they get married, they should have matured enough to realize that in order for life to continue to be enjoyable there is at least a minimal amount of responsibility they must accept. A spouse who is a “natural child” should realize that the other spouse will in time get tired of his/her sloughing off.

b. Adaptive child

Adaptive children are very difficult persons to live with because they must have their own way. They are a lot like natural children in that they do not carry their share of responsibility. They want to have fun and enjoy life to the hilt. The added problem with adaptive children is that they will play emotional games to get their way. These games include pouting, silence, or any method they can think of to manipulate the other spouse into giving in.

3. The adult

The adult is the desired place in transactional analysis. Every individual needs to have a strong adult in his/her personality, one that is able to listen to the parent part of the personality, listen to the child part of the personality, and keep a good and proper balance in the life. A person with a strong adult will be neither over- or under-responsible.

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Homework

A. *Determining Responsibility (Handout 1)*

B. *Accepting Responsibility (Handout 2)*

Next Session

Next week we will learn about "Handling My Anger."

Determining Responsibility

A. *Think of the day in any week which is the worst for you.*

1. List the problems you face, especially problems related to the separation/divorce.

2. Pick one of the problems you listed above. List the reason(s) which have kept you from solving this problem.

3. List as many possible solutions you can think of which may help you solve this problem.

4. Begin a plan of action to solve this problem.

B. *Call one or more individuals in our group and discuss with them the concepts of determining and accepting responsibility for your problems. If you choose, discuss how you plan to accept more responsibility for your life and the problems you face.*

Dealing
With
Divorce

♦ Handout 1 ♦

Accepting Responsibility

Positive Results

1. When you decide on a possible solution to a problem, you will work to accomplish it.
2. Accepting responsibility fosters improved self-esteem.
3. You will be working toward personal autonomy.
4. Accepting responsibility will lead you to reach out to a support group for positive help.
5. Accepting responsibility gets you off the "pity pot" and ends the need to keep telling your story.
6. As you accept responsibility, your emotional energy can be used to work on solutions. The energy is directed on the present and not on the past.
7. Accepting responsibility allows you to begin mobilizing your strengths to help solve your present problems.

Negative Results

1. When a possible solution to a problem is imposed on you, you are likely to resist it.
2. Not accepting responsibility will lower your self-esteem.
3. You will remain dependent on others if you do not accept responsibility.
4. Not accepting responsibility will lead you to blame your "ex," defend your behavior, and continue feeling sorry for yourself.
5. Not accepting responsibility will prompt you to keep telling your story in hopes that someone will feel sorry for you and solve your problems. You will tend to drive friends away.
6. Not accepting responsibility leaves you rehearsing past problems which is very emotionally draining.
7. Not accepting responsibility leaves you concentrating on your weaknesses and telling yourself why you are incapable of solving your problems. You immobilize yourself.

D e a l i n g
D i v o r c e

With

"Handling
My Anger"



S e s s i o n

5

Welcome

Did anything happen this week for someone that made him/her feel especially good? Would you share it with the rest of us? It sure is good to have you all returning so faithfully for time together here as we Deal With Divorce.

A. Review

1. Accepting Responsibility for Your Problems
2. Benefits of Accepting Responsibility for Yourself
3. Transactional Analysis

B. Report of Homework

1. Who would like to share with us this evening the problem you chose to work on and what course of action you chose?
2. Did anything happen during one of the telephone calls which was important or interesting to you which you would like to tell us about?

Goals

- A. Give Overview of Anger in the Separation/Divorce Process
- B. Understand Importance of Handling Anger in Constructive Ways
- C. Understand Positive and Negative Consequences of Anger
- D. Learn to Handle Anger in Positive, Constructive Ways

Overview of Anger

- A. Anger is a feeling, neither good or bad in itself.
- B. It is okay and appropriate to feel anger.
- C. Of the 455 times anger is mentioned in the Old Testament, 375 of these refer to the anger of God.
- D. There are, however, appropriate and inappropriate ways of expressing or acting out anger.
- E. The anger expressed during separation/divorce is often anger

Dealing
With
Divorce

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which has been stockpiled throughout the marriage because the couple has not successfully handled conflict.

F. Anger expressed during the separation/divorce process may have revenge connected with it.

Learning to Handle Your Anger

A. Anger vital in dealing with an emotional divorce

1. Being angry at the "ex" does not guarantee that you are emotionally disentangling.

2. Anger, for many, is just as strong in binding a couple together emotionally as is love.

3. Illustration:



Arrows represent "I love you's" and the positive things which bind a couple together.

Arrows represent the mean and hurtful things a couple does and says to to each other that keeps them bound together.

4. Linda lived with her husband, an alcoholic who drank heavily, for six years. Jim said he could not remember one sober day in those six years. For the past two years Jim has not had a drink. He has held a good job and functioned well as a husband.

Now Linda wants to leave Jim. Why now? It's understandable if she wanted to leave during his six years of drinking, but for the past two years he has held a good job and been sober. Her reply was, "It has taken me two years to get over my anger and now there is nothing left."

B. Anger vital in dealing with a legal divorce

1. When there is a high intensity of anger, one will often be unreasonable in his/her requests for a financial settlement.

2. A high level of anger makes compromise difficult.

C. Anger vital in dealing with a co-parental divorce

Dealing
With
Divorce

◆ Leader ◆

1. When there is a high level of anger, it may cause a father to be late in child support payments to a custodial mother, or a mother to withhold visitation rights.
2. Both parents, when angry at the "ex," may use the children as pawns in their attempt to hurt the other spouse.
3. Anger gets in the way of creating a favorable environment for working through difficulties which arise that may not be covered in the legal decision concerning the children.

D. Anger vital in dealing with an economic divorce

1. When there is a high level of anger, the emphasis will not be on finding positive solutions to financial problems, which should be primary for a successful economic divorce.
2. Anger may cloud your mind and cause unwise economic decisions for yourself.

E. Anger vital in dealing with a community divorce

1. Feeling a lot of anger can affect your relationships with those in your friendship group. Instead of expressing anger directly to your "ex," the anger may be directed at a friend—causing hard feelings or misunderstandings.
2. Anger at your "ex" will tie you to him or her instead of reaching out to meet new friends who will be able to help meet your new social needs.

Break

Seminar participants are invited to take a 15 minute break for refreshments and then return to their seats as the discussion continues on dealing with your anger.

F. Anger vital in dealing with an identity divorce

Anger not only ties you in an emotional way to the past relationship, but it hinders your ability to make the identity transition from being married to being single.

G. Anger vital in dealing with a religious divorce

1. Anger can lead to inappropriate behavior, which leads to a deteriorating religious experience.

**Dealing
With
Divorce**

◆ Leader ◆

2. A general attitude of anger could lead to anger at your church, pastor, or God—which complicates your religious or spiritual problems.

3. Inappropriate outbursts of anger often lead to guilt. That impedes good coping skills in religious divorce.

Consequences of Anger

A. Positive

1. Anger helps get you in touch with your feelings and what is going on emotionally inside of you. It is like a car temperature gauge reaching the boiling point: the temperature gauge does not cause the water to boil but only lets the driver know that the car is overheating. Covering the gauge does not solve the overheating problem. Likewise, if you become aware that your anger level is rising, you know that something is wrong and needs to be looked after. Denial of the anger is like covering over the temperature gauge. It doesn't work!

2. Anger provides the energy to take positive actions in solving your problems and continuing with life.

3. To some degree, anger may provide a little emotional distance between you and your "ex." It may allow some time for healing to begin. However, if the anger is intense or prolonged, it may have the reverse effect of keeping the two of you tied together in a negative way.

4. Anger could lead you on a search for answers. And, in that search for answers or for justice, anger may help you get better in touch with yourself. Examples of this search could be through counseling or a spiritual encounter.

B. Destructive

1. A partial list of ways anger can be expressed in a destructive manner includes:

- a. Yelling
- b. Destroying things
- c. Physical abuse
- d. Revengeful acts
- e. Involving the children in ways detrimental to their recovery

Dealing
With
Divorce

♦ Leader ♦

2. This may lead to a worse situation.

- a. More legal fees
- b. More health risks
- c. Close ties to the past

3. Anger can be compared to the fuel booster rockets in the United States space program. The fuel is necessary to power the rocket into Space. However, these same fuel booster rockets have the capacity to destroy the rockets and astronauts on board. Anger can propel you into taking positive action in solving your problems, or, it can destroy you.

4. Detachment is often the result of anger not dealt with well. When a person experiences many stressors at one time which (s)he cannot handle all at once, this leads to internal anger, noticeable cries for help, and then detachment.

The sequence of events goes something like this:

- a. Life is going okay. You are able to cope with the daily tasks of life.
- b. Then a group of stressors hits you and you feel overwhelmed. The problems can either be ones beyond our control or ones we caused.
- c. We cry for help when we begin to feel overwhelmed. This cry will often be very subtle; e.g., "I don't know how much more I can take," or "I need more..."
- d. When this cry is not heard, it leads to anger, which leads to detachment or outlandish acts to attract attention.

Ways to Handle Your Anger

The following list is from Dwight L. Carlson, M.D., *Overcoming Hurts and Anger*, Chapter 6, "Handling Your Anger," pp. 89-123.

- A. Recognize your feelings of displeasure
- B. Suppress taking any action
- C. Pray
- D. Identify the causes of your anger
- E. Is your anger legitimate?
- F. Determine a course of action
- G. Confront when necessary
- H. Establish limits of behavior
- I. Talk things out
- J. Compromise when appropriate
- K. Pass over the issue

Dealing
◆ *With* ◆
Divorce

◆ L e a d e r ◆

Homework

- A. *Make a list of things that are making you angry at the present time.*
- B. *List the positive and destructive consequences of these angry feelings.*
- C. *List twenty things you like about yourself.*

Next Session

The next session is probably the most important session of the entire seminar. It is entitled, "Improving My Self-Concept."

Dealing
With
Divorce

♦ L e a d e r ♦

Notes

Dealing
With
Divorce

♦ Handout 1 ♦

D e a l i n g
With
D i v o r c e

**"Improving My
Self-Concept"**



S e s s i o n

6

Welcome

Welcome to our sixth session. Let's have everyone answer this question: "What compliment did you receive in this past week that you'd share with the rest of the group? How did it make you feel?"

A. Review

1. The Positive and Negative Consequences of Anger
2. Constructive Ways of Handling Anger
3. The Drop-Out Tract

B. Report of Homework

1. Share one of the things which makes you angry.
2. Share three things you like about yourself.

Goals

- A. Give reasons for lack of self-concept.
- B. Discover how separation/divorce affects self-concept.
- C. Discover ways to improve self-concept.
- D. Share appreciation with each one by writing a card to them.

Overview of Low Self-Concept

A. Reasons for Low Self-Esteem

1. Home background

Your home background does have an influence on your self-concept. The following list is not an indictment against parents, for parents are human and will make mistakes. Mistakes are often made out of ignorance—"That's what I grew up with," maybe an adult response to a child when (s)he has no good reason for the thought or action in question. And the cycle repeats itself for generations. It's also true that children can distort the actions and attitudes of their parents. Here are a list of thoughts and actions that erode a healthy self-concept:

Dealing
With
Divorce

◆ Leader ◆

- a. Critical parent
 - b. Lack of acceptance by parents
 - c. Unreasonable demands or goals placed by parents
 - d. Guilt placed upon us by family
 - e. Extreme competition within the family structure
 - f. Lack of love, acceptance, and appreciation by parents
2. Criteria by which society judges the worth of a person
- a. Physical appearance; e.g., in school the teachers often expect more and offer more to the attractive student
 - b. Intelligence
 - c. Financial standing
 - d. Social standing
3. Religious issues
- a. Some churches equate pride with a healthy self-concept.
 - b. On the other hand, some other churches teach that feeling good about yourself is pride which the Bible condemns.
 - c. Some church music seems to downgrade the self as inherently evil and therefore unworthy. For example, in the gospel song, "At the Cross," are the words "such a worm as I." Can I feel good about myself if I am nothing more than a worm or compare myself to a worm?
4. Personal expectations and attitudes
- a. You may make negative comparisons of yourself with others whom you consider more talented and perhaps more intelligent.
 - b. You let past failures discourage you instead of help you toward future success.
 - c. You set unrealistic goals which you are unable to reach.

Dealing
With
Divorce

♦ L e a d e r ♦

d. You pick up feelings of rejection from significant others in your life.

B. Separation/Divorce Affects Your Self-Concept (Narcissistic Injury)

1. Your "ex." failed to value you, and your separation/divorce confirms what you thought all along. "I'm not worth much."

On the front of a card are the words of a five-year-old girl to her boyfriend: "My dream is that one day you will love me as much as you do (on the inside of the card) chocolate."

a. List all the things you feel meant more to your "ex" than you did.

b. In what ways did (s)he make you feel that you were in second, third, or even lower place?

2. Rejection

After the separation the PLB feels that "If I were a capable and worthwhile individual, my spouse would not have left me."

3. Feelings of personal failure

Your self-concept often takes a real beating at this time because you say, "I failed in what meant most to me--my marriage."

4. Self invested in the spouse

During the marriage you invested time, energy and your own ego into your spouse. Now, when your spouse is gone, it is like losing part of your own identity and it lowers your self-concept. For example, the wife of a Duke University basketball coach said, "My husband's career is basketball, and my career is my husband. He keeps his, but I lose mine."

BREAK

Seminar participants are invited to take a 15 minute break for refreshments and then return to their seats as the discussion continues on dealing with a wounded self-concept.

**Dealing
With
Divorce**

♦ Leader ♦

C. Sixteen Ways to Improve Your Self-Concept

1. Do not accept at face value the put-downs your "ex" has laid on you.
2. Know what your strengths are, accept them, and use them.
3. Set yourself up for success by:
 - Setting realistic goals
 - Using your strengths, not your weaknesses
 - Working at achieving your goal and celebrating.
4. Make a list of your successes. Highlight your successes, not your failures.
5. Turn problems into challenges, find a solution to the problem and celebrate.
6. Stop over-generalizing. When you make a mistake, view it as a mistake in that situation, not a personal failure.
7. Treat yourself with respect.
8. Accept responsibility for yourself.
9. Develop effective decision-making skills.
10. Practice relationship-building skills (next session).
11. Exercise daily (outside if possible).
12. Practice other good health habits—proper diet and rest.
13. Recognize that God created you in His own image.
14. Recognize that God gave you special talents and skills.
15. Develop a strong relationship with God.
16. Have a purpose in life.

Homework

A. Choose two of the people from this seminar group that you've called in the past few weeks and write them a note of appreciation. Let them know why you value them.

**Dealing
With
Divorce**

♦ L e a d e r ♦

B. Review the section, "Reasons for Low Self-Concept," and list the ones which apply to you.

C. Review the "Sixteen Ways to Improve Your Self-Concept."

1. Make a list of your successes.
2. Choose one of the choices and put it into practice this week.

Next Session

Our next session is about "My New Friendships"

Session ten is the highlight of our time together. Don't miss next week for more details.

Dealing
With
Divorce

♦ L e a d e r ♦

Notes

Dealing
With
Divorce

♦ Handout 1 ♦

D e a l i n g
D i v o r c e

With

**"My New
Friendships"**



S e s s i o n

7

Welcome

A. Review

1. How separation/divorce affects your self-concept
2. Fifteen ways to improve your self-concept

B. Report of Homework

1. Discussion list of your successes
2. Discussion of what you did this week to improve your self-concept

Goals

A. An overview of the social divorce and the importance of making new friends and developing meaningful relationships

B. An understanding of the Friendship Scale

C. An understanding of the Johari Window and how the concept can help you in making new friends

D. An understanding of the qualities which enhance meaningful friendships

E. An understanding of the Pinch Theory

Overview of Forming Meaningful Relationships

A. Dealing well with social divorce

You may notice some of the friends which you and your "ex" shared may draw away. This is common for many in separation/divorce. The reasons for this are varied:

1. They don't want to take sides.
2. Your divorce may threaten the security of their own marriage. (If it can happen to you, it could also happen to them.)
3. You become "available" and some of your friends may become uncomfortable with this.
4. You may withdraw from your friends because you have new needs and interests now. You may begin to feel more comfortable around single people than married people.
5. They don't know what to say, so they pretend that everything is okay when they are around you.

Dealing
With
Divorce

♦ Leader ♦

B. Loneliness

A lack of intimacy with others is one of the leading causes of loneliness. This session will help you develop more understanding and skills necessary for a close relationship with others. (You may want to reread the handout "Loneliness" from session two.)

C. Valley of Emotional Divorce

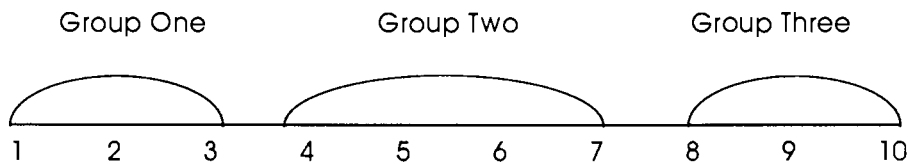
Developing new friendships and strengthening existing friendships is one of the steps on your climb out of the Valley of Emotional Divorce (see handout from session two).

Developing Friendships

A. Friendship Scale

The friendship scale is a way to describe the level or degree of friendships on a scale of 1 to 10—with 1 being the most casual and 10 the most intimate. The scale is divided into three groups:

- Group One—Acquaintances
- Group Two—Good Friends
- Group Three—Close Intimate Friendships



B. Points of importance

1. It takes time to develop close, intimate relationships.
2. A person is usually limited to two or three from Group Three because of the investment of time and energy involved in this kind of friendship.
3. You can have an unlimited number of acquaintances (Group One).



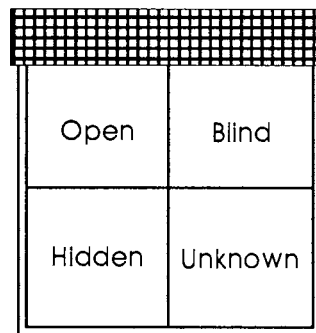
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4. You may want to concentrate during the next several months on making many new acquaintances and letting meaningful friendships develop from these individuals.
5. To fully recover from your divorce, you may want to develop lots of friendships instead of finding a new lover.
6. If you feel you need someone in the area of an eight, you cannot make a one into an eight overnight. A one must become a two before (s)he becomes a three, etc.
7. You share yourself with others depending on the level of friendship which you have developed.
8. This concept will help you begin to build up a trust with those of the opposite sex (for those who have trouble with trusting). Trusting others is developed over time as they show they are trustworthy.
9. If you realize that you don't want a friendship to become any more intense, then you can choose to keep that person at that level or perhaps move them back a little.

Break

Seminar participants are invited to take a 15 minute break for refreshments and then return to their seats as the discussion continues about building new friendships.

Johari's Window



An insightful model for understanding yourself and others.

A. *Open Area*

The open area represents that which you are aware of and others are aware of. Effect: There is sharing of information and free discussion.

B. *Blind Area*

The blind area represents what others are aware of about you but of which you are unaware. Effect: Since others are aware that you are unaware of this information and they choose not to share this information with you, there is no discussion.

C. *Hidden Area*

This represents the things which you are aware of but will not share with others. Effect: You feel uncomfortable about others knowing this about you so there can be no sharing in this area; therefore, there is closed communication.

D. *Unknown Area*

This is the area of feelings, fears, or inhibitions which you, as well as others, are unaware of. Effect: No discussion.

E. *Exercise*

1. Fill in Handout 1, "Johari Window."
2. Discuss the handout.

Qualities of Friendship

A. *Building Quality Relationships*

From the book ***Loving Each Other*** by Leo Buscaglia.

1. Communication

Communication is the desire to be open, to share, and to relate with others and listen actively to them.

2. Affection

Affection includes the traits of caring, understanding, showing respect, and physical and psychological closeness.

3. Compassion

Compassion is the ability to have empathy, to forgive, and to be supportive of others.

4. Honesty

Honesty is being able to reveal your true feelings at the

Dealing
With
Divorce

♦ Leader ♦

moment, to verbalize your feelings, such as fears, angers, and expectations. This means working at reducing the hidden area of the Johari Window.

5. Acceptance

Acceptance is the ability to accept others, even though their ideas may differ from yours.

6. Dependability

Dependability is being able to take each other at his/her word.

7. Sense of Humor

Having a sense of humor means being able to laugh, unwind, enjoy each other and share the lighter side of life.

B. *The Pinch Theory*

1. Explanation of the Pinch Theory (Handout 2)

2. Discussion of the concept

a. How was it pertinent to your marriage?

b. How can applying this model help you develop better relationships in the future?

Homework

Complete Handout 3.

Next Session

In our next session we will discuss "On My Way To Wholeness."

Session ten will be the highlight of the seminar. Let's start planning for it this week! The main part of this session will be sharing a gift with each person. Think of a gift which in some way will express your feeling or admiration for that person. The gift may be something you write, sing, buy, hand make, or say—let your imagination take over here. If it's something you purchase, please limit the amount to \$3, or less. The purpose here is the meaning that's shared, not the extravagance of the gift.

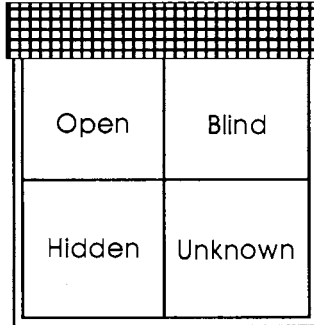


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Johari's Window

Draw one circle around the part of the window where you find yourself today.

Then draw two circles around the part of the window where you would like to be.



Open—Free flow of information between you and others.

Blind—Information known to others but not you.

Hidden—Information known to you but not others.

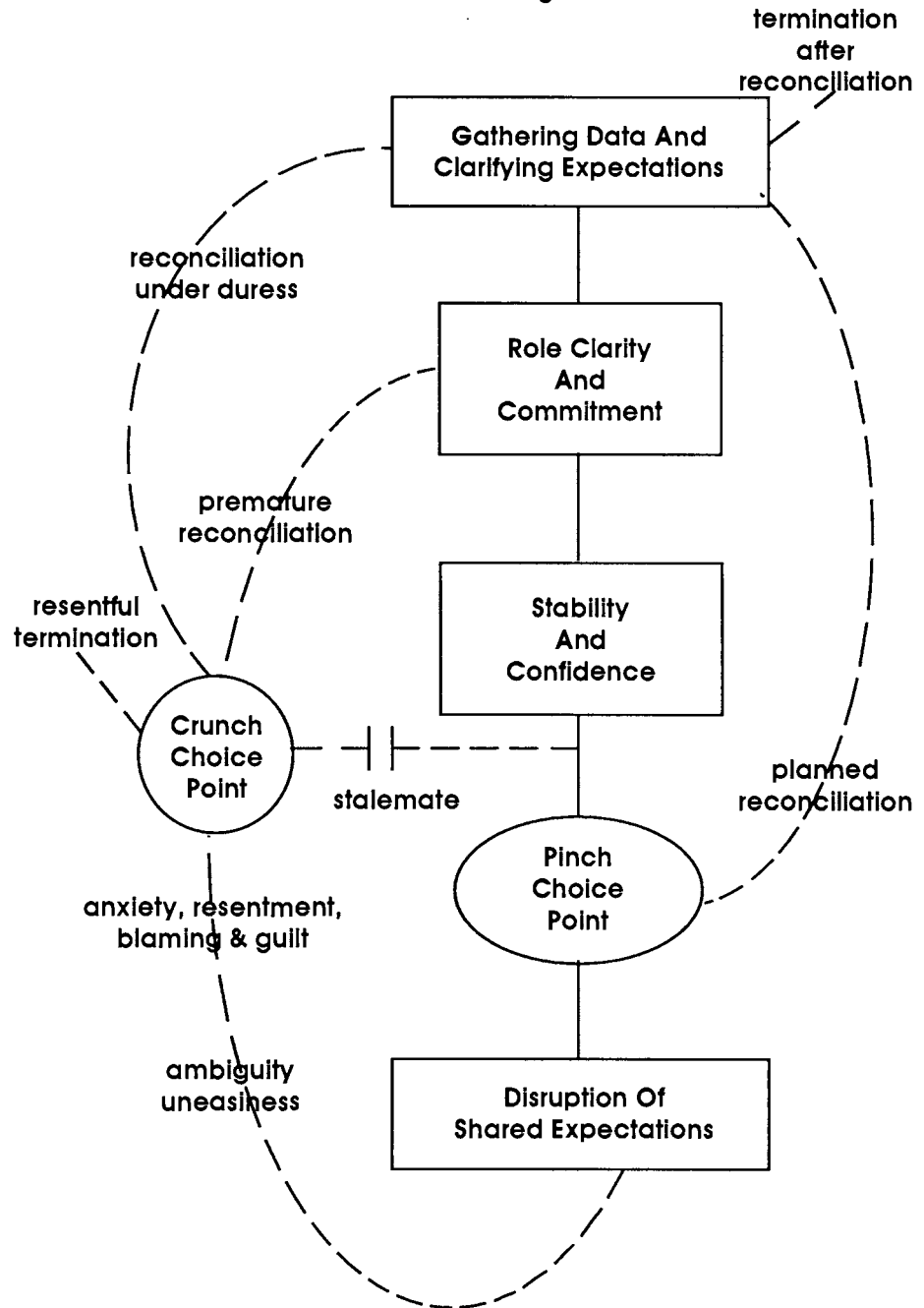
Unknown—Information not known to you or others.

Dealing
With
Divorce

♦ Handout 1 ♦

The Pinch Theory

A Model for Role Clarification and Negotiation



Dealing
With
Divorce

♦ Handout 2 ♦

From "A Model for Couples: How Two Can Grow Together," by J.J. Sherwood and J.J. Scherer, *Journal for Small Group Behavior*, February, 1975.

Evaluating Your Friendships

A. Make a list of your acquaintances and friends in each of the three friendship groups.

Group One:

Group Two:

Group Three:

B. As you look over this list, do you have adequate numbers in each category? Are these people meeting your needs for friendship? Are you giving of yourself so they are having their needs met?

C. Think through the following concepts as they relate to your list of friends listed above. How do they help you develop more friendships and improve your relationship skills?

1. Johari's Window
2. Buscaglia's qualities of meaningful relationships
3. Pinch's Theory

D. Call one of the members in the class and discuss what you learned about making and improving friendships.

Dealing
With
Divorce

◆ Handout 3 ◆

D e a l i n g
D i v o r c e

With

"Acting On
My Decisions"



S e s s i o n

8

Welcome

What's one thing that happened this week that really gives you hope that you're getting somewhere? Who will share that with us?

A. Review

1. Johari's Window
2. Buscaglia's qualities which enhance meaningful friendships
3. Pinch's Theory

B. Report of Homework

1. Share Handout 3 from Session Seven
2. Share Telephone Calls

Goals

A. Overview of the Identity Divorce

B. The "Whole Person" Concept

C. Dependency/Identity Search/Autonomous Stages of a Relationship

D. "The Old You"

E. "The New You"

F. Values Clarification

Overview of the Identity Divorce

A. A Most Difficult Task

For some, this is the most difficult task of healing from a divorce—yet, it is the most rewarding.

B. Recognize Past Roles

The task of the identity divorce is to recognize that the roles relating to your marriage are now in the past.

Dealing
With
Divorce

♦ Leader ♦

C. Change of Identity

Now your identity is not the "physican's spouse" or the "business executive's spouse," but you are you. Some women take back their maiden names to identify more with their heritage than their past marriage.

D. Crisis/Transition/Wholeness Concept

1. Crisis (when things seem to be falling apart)
2. Transition (when you are in the process of finding solutions to the problems caused by your separation/divorce)
3. Wholeness (when you have become a "whole person" and have dealt well with divorce)



E. Goal

The goal of the identity divorce is to become a "whole person" who is autonomous. Place an "x" above where you think you find yourself today.

"Whole Person" Concept

A. Holon

From the Greek word "holos" (whole) and "on" (which suggests a particle or part). You need to be a "whole person" yet realize that you are only a "part" of many communities larger than yourself, such as your family, neighborhood, nation, and perhaps a church or synagogue.

B. Maturity Areas

There are four areas of life in which you need to be mature:

1. Physical
2. Mental/emotional
3. Spiritual
4. Social



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C. Identify "Missing Part"

When you work toward being a "whole person," you need to identify and work on the "missing part." (See Handout 3, Session Two, entitled "Loneliness.")

Stages of Relationships

A. Dependency Stage

1. Dependent on parent
 - a. For survival
 - b. For belief or value system
 - c. For approval
2. Dependent on spouse: Some move from a dependency on parents to a dependency on a spouse. So, when going through a separation/divorce, some individuals are learning to be a single adult for the first time in their lives.
3. A person in the dependency stage will often have a vocabulary like, "What should I do?" or "What would Mother, Dad, or my spouse want me to do in this situation?"
4. A person who gets married before reaching the autonomous stage will marry a person to fill their "missing part."

B. Identity Search Stage

1. Individuals need to find their own identity separate from their parents' identity in order to become their own selves.
2. Behavior during the identity search stage can either be positive or negative.
3. The identity stage should reach a peak during the teen years. If you do not find your own identity before getting married, you may discover that finding your identity while married can cause some real problems.

C. Autonomous Stage

When you are in the autonomous stage, you are free to live within your value system. Your relationships are based on sharing yourself rather than on meeting your own needs.



Break

Seminar participants are invited to take a 15 minute break for refreshments and then return to their seats as the discussion continues about acting on my decisions.

The Old You

A. *Work on Handout 1. (Discussion to Follow)*

B. *Body Sculptures*

1. Types of body sculptures
 - a. A-frame
 - b. Smothering
 - c. Pedestal
 - d. Martyr
 - e. Boardinghouse back-to-back

2. Think about your previous marriage from the sculpture's model point of view. Share with the group how you see yourself and your "ex."

The New You

A. *Making Progress*

Realize that you are already making progress. Since you began the seminar, you are:

1. Improving your self-concept
2. Relating more like an adult in transactional analysis
3. Becoming more autonomous
4. Making new friends
5. Accepting more responsibility for yourself.

B. *Work on Handout 2 and Discuss*

C. *Put the Past in the Past ... "forgetting those things which are behind." (Phil 3:13).*

D. *Reach Out for God's Help ... "I can do all things through Christ who gives me strength." (Phil 4:13).*

Dealing
With
Divorce

♦ Leader ♦

Values Clarification

When going through the identity stage of separation/divorce, you may ask yourself, "Who am I? What part of the 'old me' remains? What do I want to change about myself?"

Working through the values clarification process will help you define your own identity--the real you. There are eight steps in the Christian values clarification process.

To help bring greater understanding to how the values clarification works, illustrations are included as we proceed through the eight steps. The purpose of values clarification is to help you determine what you value, not for you to adopt the values of your parents, your friends, your siblings, or your church.

A. A Free Choice

For something to be a value, you must have a choice. Do your friends allow you free choice?

B. Choosing from Alternatives

Your alternatives should include those whom you choose for your friends. You may also choose alternative behaviors and activities.

C. Choosing after Consideration of Consequences

It is important in the value clarification process to consider carefully the consequences of the alternatives you have picked.

D. Prizing and Cherishing

You must be happy with the choices you make. If you aren't happy with your choices, your actions will probably not be consistent with your initial decisions.

E. Publicly Affirming When Appropriate

F. Acting Upon Your Decisions

When something is of value, you act in harmony with that value. It is not a fake act.

G. Acting with Consistency and Repetition

When something is of value to you, you practice it with regularity and consistency. There are times though, when you do act contrary to your values—which produces stress.

Dealing
With
Divorce

♦ Leader ♦

H. *Choosing In Harmony with God's Will*

A Christian's value system will not only be based on the seven steps named above, but they will also include the final step which asks, "Is my value system in harmony with God's principles?"

Homework

A. *Complete "My Strengths & Weaknesses" three-part handout.*

B. *Concerns*

Choose one concern you have about your life or behavior from the "Traits and Qualities" sheet. Work through each of the eight steps of the value clarification process on that area of concern.

C. *Highlight of Session*

Remember, session ten is the seminar highlight. Are you making progress selecting what you will give each one in our group?

Next Session

In our next session we will be celebrating together on how you have come through the valley of divorce and are working your way toward bright horizons! The title of our session will be, "The New You." Hope you're still working on your gifts for session ten.

**Dealing
With
Divorce**

♦ L e a d e r ♦

My Strengths and Weaknesses - Past

Directions: Take an honest look at yourself during the last year of your marriage. Rate your strengths and weaknesses during that time. Circle the number that best represents the way you were:

Low self- concept									High self- concept
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Dependent								Independent	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Rigid								Spontaneous/ flexible	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Critical								Accepting	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Submissive								Dominant	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Jealous								Trusting	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Holding grudges								Forgiving	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Angry								Tolerant	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10



Session Eight ♦ Acting On My Decisions

Selfish								Giving/ thoughtful	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Bitter/ hateful								Loving	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Dishonest with spouse								Honest with spouse	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Poor communi- cation skills								Good commu- nication skills	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Not spiritual or religious								Spiritual/ religious	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Poor sense of humor								Good sense of humor	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Indifferent								Sympathetic	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

**Dealing
With
Divorce**

♦ Handout 1-B ♦

My Strengths and Weaknesses - Present

Directions: Take an honest look at yourself during this divorce recovery seminar. Rate your strengths and weaknesses during this time. Circle the number that best represents the way you are:

Low self- concept									High self- concept
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Dependent									Independent
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Rigid									Spontaneous/ flexible
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Critical									Accepting
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Submissive									Dominant
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Jealous									Trusting
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Holding grudges									Forgiving
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Angry									Tolerant
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10



Session Eight ♦ Acting On My Decisions

Selfish									Giving/ thoughtful
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Bitter/ hateful									Loving
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Dishonest with spouse									Honest with spouse
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Poor communi- cation skills									Good commu- nication skills
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Not spiritual or religious									Spiritual/ religious
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Poor sense of humor									Good sense of humor
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Indifferent									Sympathetic
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10



♦ Handout 2-B ♦

My Strengths and Weaknesses - Future

Directions: Project into the future for a few minutes. Honestly rate where you believe your strengths and weaknesses will remain. Circle the number that best represents the way you want to be:

Low self- concept									High self- concept
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Dependent									Independent
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Rigid									Spontaneous/ flexible
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Critical									Accepting
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Submissive									Dominant
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Jealous									Trusting
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Holding grudges									Forgiving
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Angry									Tolerant
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10



Session Eight ♦ Acting On My Decisions

Selfish									Giving/ thoughtful
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Bitter/ hateful									Loving
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Dishonest with spouse									Honest with spouse
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Poor communi- cation skills									Good commu- nication skills
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Not spiritual or religious									Spiritual/ religious
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Poor sense of humor									Good sense of humor
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Indifferent									Sympathetic
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

**Dealing
With
Divorce**

♦ Handout 3-B ♦

D e a l i n g
D i v o r c e

With

"Becoming A
New Me"



S e s s i o n

9

Welcome

A. Review

1. The New You
2. Value Clarification

B. Report of Homework

Did you see any comparisons or contrasts between your three "Strengths & Weaknesses" inventories? Would anyone like to share what it was like to fill those out? Any insights gained from doing this exercise?

Goals

A. Show Film

B. Film's Principles

1. Everyone is afraid of something.
2. You are responsible for your behavior and attitudes.
3. Assumptions determine behavior.
4. You need to visualize what you want to accomplish before it will become a reality.

Show & Discuss Film

"You Pack Your Own Chute." (28 minutes) You can rent this film and have it delivered to you by calling 1-800-548-8700.

A. Fear

Everyone is afraid of something. Discuss the fears you may be facing as you go through the separation/divorce process, especially any fears that will hinder you from healing from your divorce.

B. Accepting Responsibility

You are responsible for your behavior and attitudes. Discuss the progress you are making in accepting responsibility for your problems since our session on accepting responsibility (see session four).

Dealing
With
Divorce

◆ Leader ◆

C. Assumptions Determining Behavior

1. Discuss the assumptions you have been making about your separation/divorce that is affecting your behavior.
2. Discuss ways you can change negative assumptions into positive ones and how they will effect your behavior.

D. Visualize Accomplishments

You need to visualize what you want to accomplish before it becomes a reality.

1. Review your future Strengths and Weaknesses exercise (See handout 3, session eight)
2. Discuss visualizing yourself as the person you want to be.
3. "Think you can; think you can't. Either way you will probably be right" (Robert Schuller).

Homework

A. List of Assumptions

Make a list of some of the assumptions you have been making about yourself or your future. For any of the negative assumptions on the list, work at turning them into positive assumptions and then believe in them!

B. Choosing Gifts

Choose a gift for each member of the class. Try to choose a gift which reflects a quality in them that you admire.

C. Handout

Read Handout 1 which suggests ways to heal your religious divorce. It's entitled, "God--The Answer to the Divorce Dilemma."

Next Session

The next session is our final one. We will have supper and share gifts. Feel free to dress up, bring cameras, or whatever will make this a memorable time together.

**Dealing
With
Divorce**

◆ Leader ◆

God—The Answer to Your Divorce Dilemma

How do people relate to church during a divorce? There are individuals who say the church was what brought them through their divorce. They were somehow drawn closer to God and the church during this time.

Others say they haven't been back to church since their separation/divorce. They either feel rejected by the members or by the policies administered against them. Individuals in this group often feel that the pastor either didn't understand their situation or didn't care to help them, and they turn away from the church.

The ones who receive help and encouragement see God and the church as a source of support and guidance which not only helps them spiritually but assists them in the other aspects of their divorce recovery.

The others suffer feelings of rejection, lack of understanding and usually stop coming to church. Some churches have such strong teachings against divorce that when a church member goes through a divorce, other church members either consciously or unconsciously exclude him/her.

One of the important steps for Christians to address is the religious considerations of divorce and find solutions to each of them. For a few minutes, consider these Bible comments. After you read them, you may join other individuals who find the Bible and the church to be a source of strength and help. Whatever you've been told in the past, remember that God loves you, accepts you, and I want you to experience His love and care.

A. How can I know that God loves and accepts me?

1. John 3:16 "For God so loved the world, that He gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have eternal life."

Verse 17 "For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world; but to save the world through Him."

2. 1 Peter 5:7 "Casting all your anxiety on Him, because He cares for you."

B. If people from the church reject me, does that mean that God has rejected me?

Dealing
With
Divorce

◆ Handout 1-A ◆

John 6:37 "All that the Father gives Me will come to Me; and whoever comes to me, I will never drive away." The Bible assures us that when we come to Jesus He will not shun us. Jesus really does love, care, and accept us.

C. How does the Bible help me through my divorce?

1. It gives me HOPE.

Romans 8:28 --"And we know that in all things, God works for the good of those who love Him—ones who have been called according to His purpose." The Bible does not say that your divorce is good. But, the promise is that even through this divorce—as you continue in God's love—you will heal nicely. Where else can you find such assurance!

Philippians 4:13 "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me." This verse gives you hope, even assurance, that you will be able to cope and handle all the problems you face.

2. It gives me WISDOM.

James 1:5 "If any of you lack wisdom, ask God who gives liberally." The Bible shares with us where we can go for reassurance and insights into our questions and problems.

John 14:6 "Jesus said to them, 'I am the way, the truth and the life.'" Jesus is willing to guide you through all the hurdles of your divorce.

3. It gives me STRENGTH.

Psalms 46:1 "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble."

1 Peter 5:10 "And after you have suffered for a little while, the God of all grace, who called you to His eternal glory in Christ, will Himself perfect, confirm, strengthen and establish you" (NAS). Both of these verses promise to strengthen you during this time of stress and problems.

D. Is divorce God's plan?

Matthew 19:5 & 8 "For this reason a man will leave father and mother and be united with his wife, and the two

Dealing
With
Divorce

♦ Handout 1-B ♦

will become one flesh. ... Moses permitted you to divorce your wives because your hearts are hard. But it was not this way from the beginning." God's plan was for a man to unite with a woman. Jesus said that in God's original plan there was no divorce.

E. *Why is there divorce today?*

1. Jesus said in the verses quoted above that Moses permitted divorce because of the hardness of people's hearts. That made reconciliation to one's spouse very difficult. Our attitude is still the major problem in divorce today--an unwillingness to compromise, an unwillingness to change, a non-accepting attitude toward our spouses.

2. Galatians 5:17 "For the flesh sets its desire against the Spirit, and the Spirit against flesh. These are in opposition to one another, so that you may not do the things that you please." We are living in a world where there is war between what is good (the Spirit) and what is bad (the flesh). Because of this condition, we give in to things we don't want to do or fall victim to events we didn't create.

F. *How do we identify these bad (flesh) traits?*

Galatians 5:19-21 "Now the acts of the flesh are evident, which are: sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality, idolatry, hatred, discord, jealousy, outbursts of anger, disputes, dissensions, factions, envyings, drunkenness, carousings, and things like these." These "deeds of the flesh" can so easily get in the way of a happy marriage. Our human weaknesses keep us from being the spouses we really want to be.

G. *What are the New Testament texts which speak about divorce?*

Matthew 5:31 & 32, Matthew 19:3-9, Mark 10:2-12, Luke 16:18, and I Corinthians 7:10-16.

H. *If divorce is not God's plan (question 4), does God accept divorce today?*

1. Matthew 19: 9 "I tell you that anyone who divorces his wife, except for marital unfaithfulness, and marries another woman commits adultery." One situation in which God says divorce is permissible is when fornication has occurred.

2. I Corinthians 7:15 "But if the unbeliever leaves, let him

**Dealing
With
Divorce**

◆ Handout 1-C ◆

do so. A believing man or woman is not bound in such circumstances; God has called us to live in peace." The Apostle Paul in this verse gives another situation when divorce is sanctioned. Paul says that when an unbeliever does not want to stay with the spouse who is a believer, let him go, and the other spouse is not obligated to remain single.

I. If God doesn't want divorce and I am divorced, how can I be right with God?

1 John 1:9 "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." It is very important for you to realize that no matter what you have done which is wrong in God's sight, when you confess your sins, God will do two things: (1) He will forgive your past, and (2) He will offer you a new start.

John 4:5-42 In the story of the Samaritan woman, Jesus offered this woman "living water" (verse 10), which represents eternal life. This woman had had five husbands and was living with a man who was not her husband at the time Jesus was speaking to her (verse 18). This story shows that Jesus didn't come to condemn but to save individuals who had difficulty in their lives. (John 3:16 & 17)

Remember John 6:37 "All that the Father gives Me will come to Me; and whoever comes to me, I will never drive away." When we come to Jesus; He will accept each of us. We need to confess to Him our wrongs, receive His forgiveness, and let Him give us a new start.

J. What is the obligation of the church when a church member goes through a divorce?

Galatians 6:1 & 2 "If someone is caught in a sin, you who are spiritual should restore him gently. ... Carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ." The Apostle Paul says that the church is to restore a member who is in difficulty (which includes divorce). The word meaning "restore" is the same word used to refer to fishermen in Christ's time who "mended" their fishing nets to restore them to their former condition. That former condition may or may not include marriage, but to be sure it does include a state of personal wholeness.

K. What is my part?

Galatians 5:16 "Live by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the

Dealing
With
Divorce

♦ Handout 1-D ♦

desires of the sinful nature." (Review question 9.) We are to come to Jesus, not making excuses for our faults, but realizing the mistakes we made in the marriage and confessing these faults to God, accepting His forgiveness, and allowing Him to give us a new start.

L. *What else will God do for me?*

1. Philippians 1:6 "Being confident of this very thing, that He who began a good work in you will carry it to completion until the day of Christ Jesus." God does not give up on us, just as He did not give up on the Samaritan woman who had five husbands.

2. Philippians 3:13 "This one thing I do. I forget what is behind and strain toward what is ahead." At this point one is able, with God's help, to put the pain, grief and bitterness of the divorce behind and look forward to the life which lies ahead.

3. I Corinthians 2:9 "But as it is written, no eye has seen, no ear has heard, no mind has conceived what God has prepared for those who love Him."

4. John 14:1-3 "Do not let your heart be troubled. Trust in God, trust also in Me. In My father's house are many rooms; if it were not so, I would have told you. I am going there to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am."

You may have lost the home you once loved, but God is preparing a home for you. And the beauty of this home is far beyond what you can imagine. And the best part is, Jesus will be there! He offers to be your friend, your companion, and He will never let you down. May you find God to be your source of strength as you recover from your divorce.



D e a l i n g
D i v o r c e

With

**"Giving Myself
To Others"**



S e s s i o n

10

Welcome

This is the time we have been anticipating for weeks. We have spent some valuable hours together. Hopefully you are dealing well with your divorce. You will probably have to refer to your handouts often over the next few months—but that's part of the healing process that you are in now.

Don't forget this network of friends. You have bonded with several in this group through the phone calls and group exercises that we have done here. And tonight will really bring us even closer. So let the fun begin!

Supper Together

Discussion

A. What have been your thoughts since the discussion last time on healing your religious divorce?

B. What was the most meaningful part of this seminar?

C. Let's share our gifts with each other. While this is happening, list your feelings on paper as you receive each gift: Photocopy these pages as needed.

Name _____ Gift _____
"How I felt..."

Name _____ Gift _____
"How I felt..."

Name _____ Gift _____
"How I felt..."



S e s s i o n T e n ♦ G i v i n g M y s e l f T o O t h e r s

Name _____ Gift _____
"How I felt..."

Name _____ Gift _____
"How I felt..."

Name _____ Gift _____
"How I felt..."

Name _____ Gift _____
"How I felt..."

Name _____ Gift _____
"How I felt..."

Name _____ Gift _____
"How I felt..."



♦ Handout 1-B ♦