

The North Fulton Marriage Newsletter

Volume 3 – August 2009

Ain't Wastin' Time No More

I recently told a client of mine, who is facing a possible second divorce, that if he did not take responsibility for his behavior in relationships then he would likely continue a lifelong pattern of chaos. His life, up to this point, has been chaotic and unstable. I challenged him to take this moment in time to throw down the gauntlet and say “No more!” I challenged him to break the cycle of chaos, learn something about himself and take responsibility for his behavior. I told him that although the first part of his life has been pretty miserable if he makes changes now, he can look back on his life 30, 40 or 50 years from now and say “Wow, I really turned it around.” And, that furthermore he could face his later years with integrity rather than despair.¹

A colleague of mine contacted me a few weeks ago to ask me if I had any book recommendations for folks coping with the emotional toll of divorce. Surprisingly enough, I drew a blank. So, I told her that the focus of this month's newsletter would be on divorce recovery. I have a lot of thoughts about divorce recovery, and most of these thoughts relate to personal responsibility, as described above with my intervention of sorts with my client. My other thoughts relate to the grief process. Divorce is hell for most people. There is no way to sugarcoat it. And, in many ways, divorce is like a death. I will often tell clients that with a divorce or separation, the way of life as they have known it, has died. This is both bad and good. Bad because they have suffered a traumatic loss but good because when framed as a death, they can begin to grieve, begin a new life and ultimately recover. There is no doubt in my mind that the divorce process mirrors the grief process. Really, divorce is a grief process. And you must allow yourself time to grieve, just like we do when someone we love passes away. Research shows us that other than the death of a spouse, a divorce is the most difficult social readjustment a person can face.² So, cut yourself some slack! And remember, as with any grief process, you are going to be experiencing a myriad of emotions/stages including anger, depression, denial, guilt, negotiation, resolution and acceptance. These stages and emotions will not happen in a nice sequential order either; you are likely to bounce from one feeling to the other over a period of months or even years. If you have lost someone to death, then you are familiar with the phenomenon. A taste, a smell or sound years later can remind you of your loss. Momentarily you regress back to the beginning of the grief process when the emotions were raw.

So you need to grieve, but you also need to learn something about yourself. You need to take this tragedy (divorce) and turn it into something positive. As I told my client above, throw down the gauntlet, decide to change your life and live better. And, quite simply, there is no time to waste. Life is too short. It reminds me of a song by my favorite group of all-time, The Allman Brothers Band. Their song, “Ain't Wastin Time No More” describes someone who is suffering but has realized life has to move on: *Last Sunday morning, the sunshine felt like rain. The week before, they all seemed the same. With the help of God and true friends, I've come to realize, I still have two strong legs, and even wings to fly. So I, ain't a-wastin time no more. Cause time goes by like hurricanes, and faster things.....*

John H. Pruett, Jr., MS, EdS, NCC, LPC
Founder & Owner
Georgia Professional Counseling Center, Inc.



¹ <http://www.webster.edu/~woolfm/lrerikson.html>

² Holmes and Rahe, “The Social Readjustment Rating Scale,” Journal of Psychosomatic Research, 11, (1967), 213-218.

Georgia Professional Counseling Center, Inc.

602 Abbey Court, Alpharetta, GA 30004

www.licensedtherapy.com

Phone: 770-656-9711