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10 Common Challenges After a Separation

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Although divorce has become common over recent years, that doesn't make it any easier to deal with. Often people experience separation as a personal failure, despite the realization that this is an irrational thought, and that both partners are responsible.

Below you will find ten of the most common challenges, you'll likely face after a cohabitation has ended. Hopefully you will benefit from the strategies provided, and manage to overcome the separation. Of course there are other challenges as well, especially when keeping in mind that everyone's circumstances are unique, but the following ten can serve as a stable baseline for dealing with the rest.

The banner features the Explorable logo at the top center. Below it, the text "Quiz Time!" is written in a white, cursive font. Three quiz cards are displayed in a row, each with a different image and title:

- Card 1: Image of red roller skates on a wooden deck. Title: "Quiz: Psychology 101 Part 2".
- Card 2: Image of a fan of colorful pens. Title: "Quiz: Psychology 101 Part 2".
- Card 3: Image of a Ferris wheel at sunset. Title: "Quiz: Flags in Europe".

To the right of the cards, there is a link: "See all quizzes =>".

1. Heartbreak

You were in love, had dreams and hopes and were building a life together. And that dream turned out to be your worst nightmare. You should expect a period of time, where you would need to mourn your marriage, with mild signs of depression, including lack of motivation. You may find yourself indulging in the dysfunctional belief that everyone is the same and all future partners will keep disappointing you. However, it is important to realize those dysfunctional beliefs and behaviors for what they are, and allow them to pass.

2. Adjusting to a New Reality

You may have left your home, stopped living in the same house as your children, cut ties with family and friends, you may feel isolated and ostracized. At first, the new circumstances may feel surreal and you might need to take some time to realize that you have a different life now. For instance, you may find yourself driving in the direction of your old home, after work. You'll need to make new routines in your life and adjust to the necessary changes.

3. Developing a Sense of Self and Being Single

You used to be a part of a team and whether it was done consciously or subconsciously, you incorporated your partner into your identity. But now you have a new one: you're single. You may feel lost and not know who you are, which is why some introspection may be necessary to find your way and feel comfortable with being on your own again.

4. Doing Things on Your Own

You used to go places accompanied, someone else used to do things for you (such as the laundry or taking care of the bills, for instance) and now you find yourself doing all this by yourself. It's a process and you need to be patient, because it may take some getting used to, but you can do it. And if you are finding it too hard, you can always ask friends and family for help.

5. Dealing With Your Children

It's not easy being a single parent. It may feel overwhelming at times, and so there is nothing shameful in asking teachers, friends or your family for help. Consider seeing a psychologist as well, since a separation is a big adjustment for everyone.

6. Making New Friends

It is likely that many of your current friends are also your ex's friends. For a variety of personal reasons, you may experience the need to stay away from them and so it is important to start making new friends. For that to happen, you may need to go to new places and start a few hobbies, such as going to the gym, volunteering, taking theater or dance classes, or anything else you think you may enjoy. This is a wonderful opportunity to do all the things your ex didn't want to participate in, and find people with whom you have similar interests.

7. Financial Difficulties

Aside from adjusting to your new reality, you may find yourself needing to rethink your spending habits and financial situation. You'll need to control your spending and maybe ask your family for help during difficult times. Although this may take some getting used to, remember that it is always better to be happier, despite of having less money, rather than be unhappy and financially stable.

8. Breaking Ties With Your Ex's Family

You may feel as if your ex's family is your family as well, and if they take sides and shut you out you may end up feeling resentful or betrayed. However, you may need to accept that it's their prerogative, and keep your distance no matter how much it hurts.

9. Seeing Your Ex Move On

It may be painful to watch your ex move on. You might feel like they have forgotten all about you, as if your time together, your marriage/cohabitation, didn't mean anything. Nevertheless, it is crucial to understand and accept that once your life together has come to an end, the healthy choice for both of you is to move on. You too can be happy, and rediscover the joys of being single, or find another partner.

10. Finding a New Purpose

Cohabitation is a shared life project and now that you're on your own, you may need to adjust your life's perspective. You can find a way to live a life of purpose and meaning. Remember there's still a life for you to live and dreams to fulfill!

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