

New Life Springs from Solitude

How to get back into life after divorce

By Sheila Fields

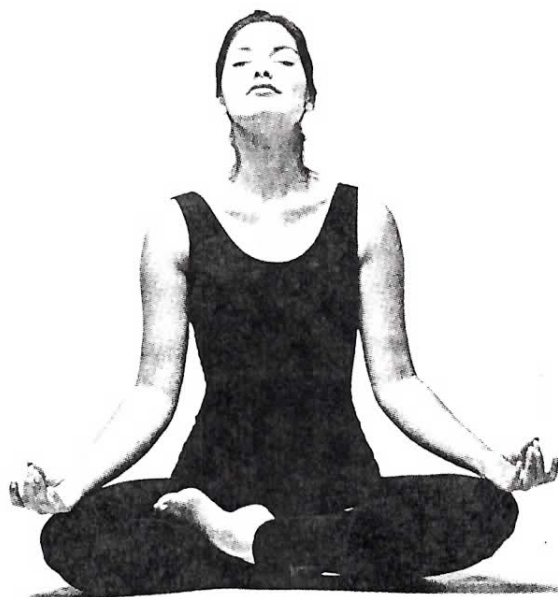
Hooray! Soon it will be spring! Do you know that on December 22 I start rejoicing over spring's inevitable return? That's when sunsets start being postponed a little more each day until spring finally arrives.

Ah ... to be single in the spring. It's been said that a young man's fancy turns to thoughts of love. Well, I'm single, it's nearly spring, and I have three sons to raise so I better get my head out of the clouds and put my nose back to the grindstone. Reality calls loud and

clear. When you're a woman recovering from divorce or loss, the last thing on your mind should be starting a new relationship.

First, you must focus on yourself.

The past few months have been a season of solitude for me. Winter is naturally a time when things lie dead before being reborn. Winter is still and quiet. During those days when a thick,



white blanket covers all, much of the world comes to a stop. When you've been through a life crisis, such as an unwanted divorce, it can seem as if your life has stopped.

There were times recently when I wasn't sure if I'd ever hear the sound of my own laughter again. An important relationship had died. My heart ached. The journey through the five stages of grief is pock marked with pain.

For several months, I curled up in a snow-covered cave of my own making. I needed a time out. I needed to be still.

I have discovered that if I am ever to birth a new life, I must first allow the old one to die. The pieces of my shattered dreams lie on the floor as I tiptoe over the broken shards en route to a better place. Counseling and crying, reading and remembering, journaling and finally finding joy in my circumstances are part and parcel during emotional recovery. Not until I chose to be still, however, did I stop stumbling on the path marked healing and finally start making progress toward my destination of internal restoration.

After my first divorce, I kept very busy. Chasing after toddlers, working part-time, and longing to be remarried filled my days and nights. I did counseling and read lots of books, but my focus

was shortsighted. I looked good on the outside, but inside I was still a mess. It took me two divorces to understand I needed a deep, inner healing.

The second time around I realized something was desperately wrong inside my own heart. If ever I was to have the life I was created for, I needed to get off my merry-go-round and just be still and sort it all out. And that is what I've done and am continuing to do. I am delving deep inside me.

Even though there is now a spring in my step and a twinkle in my eye, the memory of the shadows lingers. I am

more sober for having gone through these adverse situations. Grateful, also, because this sobriety has brought forth a deeper appreciation for people, my life and my purpose in the world. I've learned to count my blessings more too.

A new batch of seeds were planted in my heart during the winter of my discontent. Tentatively at first, and now with greater confidence, tender buds are emerging. Soon ... a garden of beautiful blooms.

Sheila Fields lives her new life in Wappingers Falls with her three sons.

Here's a list of inspiring titles you might want to check out:

Fool-Proofing Your Life, by Jan Silvious

The Angry Heart, by Joseph Santoro, Ph.D.

Healing for Damaged Emotions, by David A. Seamands

Lord, I Need a Hug: Surviving the Trauma of Divorce, by Donna Christensen

Sassy, Single and Satisfied: Secrets to Loving the Life You're Living, by Michelle McKinney Hammond.

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