

Dating After Leaving an Abusive Marriage

I am a Visions Anew Class of '33 Graduate. I was in an emotionally and verbally abusive marriage. While I am capable and successful in my professional career, I'm a great example of how anyone with unresolved childhood issues can end up in a destructive relationship. Over the period of time I was with my husband, the continual subtle "jabbing" and putdowns were a constant assault on my soul. Over time, I became a shell of a person, walking on eggshells, trying harder and harder to please this person who was not even polite to me, much less loving. I thank God for the day I had the strength to leave that destructive marriage, and start on a self discovery journey that has been difficult and scary, yet fulfilling and exciting.

It has been 2.5 years since my divorce and I wanted to share my views on dating. First, I don't think it is wise to date unless and until you know who you are and what you want. I spent 1.5 years getting steady on my own two feet. Until you are steady on your own, you are a haven for a controlling, insecure man who will try to define you to meet his own needs. These guys are often charming, but normally incapable of love. While I know it sounds corny, I truly believe that until you can love yourself you are incapable of giving or receiving true love with a grown-up, mature man.

I have been dating for a year now. I have not slept with anyone as I believe that women sleep with men too quickly and then ignore red flags. I have met number of guys, but had few second dates. I expect to be treated like a lady, including the concept of courting etc. I will be honest and say that is not an easy ideal to live up to. However, if a man really wants me, he will work for me.

I could not have gotten to this point without all of the wonderful women in my life, started with those friends I made at our Visions Anew retreat. It is so important to get support through the difficult journey of divorce. It doesn't just all go away after the divorce is final.

Today, I'm happy. I do believe there is a man out there who will treat me with respect and dignity. I had a very nice first date Saturday night with a guy who seems to fit that bill. I'm not holding my breath though because dating does tend to be a numbers game. But one thing is for sure: I can look myself in the mirror with pride and self love, knowing that I have found true love in my life. It may not yet be with a man, but I have a good foundation for that to happen because I do love and respect myself.

Best wishes in your journey. Always remember, you are not alone.

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Graduate of '33