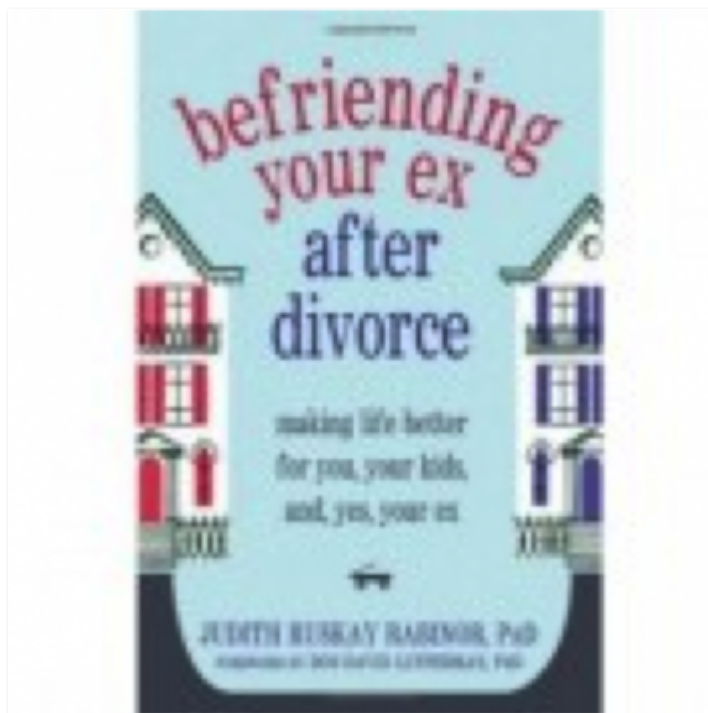


Relationship Author Judith Ruskay Rabinor Chats About 'Befriending Your Ex After Divorce'



By Jessica Conigliaro and Michelle Danzig

It's no secret that over 50 percent of all marriages end in divorce. But does it mean that the relationship is completely over? After spending years devoted to a spouse and family, it's nearly impossible to remove your ex from your life

entirely. If you have children, it's even harder. There will be graduations, weddings and other family events that will bring you both together again. After the unpredictable aftermath of a divorce, it's hard to believe that remaining friends with your ex is even an option but it could be the best choice when you've been with someone for a long time. ❌

In her new book, *Befriending Your Ex After Divorce: Making Life Better for You, Your Kids, and, Yes, Your Ex*, Judith Ruskay Rabinor, a psychologist, author, speaker, relationship expert and divorcee, explores her personal journey and shares how relationships can continue to grow and change once a marriage ends and a new family structure begins. In this exclusive interview with Rabinor, she shares her advice on how to develop and maintain a friendship with an ex –especially when there are kids involved.

In your book, you seem to really know how to manage relationships with your exes. How did you accumulate this knowledge?

My knowledge primarily accumulated through my ex-husband. I was also in a group of divorcees back in the 80's, and I learned a lot from their experiences. Plus, I interviewed a lot of people going through similar situations specifically for my book.

Marriages usually don't end on the best of terms. How long would you recommend waiting to develop a friendship after a messy divorce? How can a person know when the time is right?

It's rare that a divorce is friendly. You have a lot of negative feelings towards the other person: hurt, loss, anger and grief, to name a few.

As for how long to wait to become friends again, most data indicates two years. That amount of time is needed to create distance and boundaries and slowly inch your way back into a

more comfortable relationship. That's just a statistic, and there are certainly exceptions. Some people never get past it, while others move forward within months. Remember that befriending you ex is a new relationship, not a continuation of your marriage.

What advice can you give to divorced women when their ex-husbands have no interest in being friends?

That's tough. I would advise them to recognize that it may take a long time, and it may never happen. Try to focus on being good parents and keep the best interest of your children in mind. Divorce is forever, so make the best of it. You have to see your ex at all types of family events; having him as an enemy would be horrible. Be generous and optimistic and realize your ex may feel a certain way now, but he won't feel that way forever.

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You mention that certain obstacles, like anger or resentment, can prevent people from staying close after a divorce. What was the biggest challenge for you, and how did you overcome it?

In the beginning, just acting civilized felt awkward and even phony, especially during legal proceedings. Money was definitely the hardest obstacle for us; getting over the financial battle took the longest.

How do you develop a friendship after a split? What are some benefits of maintaining a positive relationship with an ex-husband?

First, create a vision of what becoming friends with your ex really means to you. Do it for your children, especially during school events; avoiding public arguments with your ex makes it easier on them. Next, you should take a risk. For

instance, a friend of mine invited her ex-husband and his new wife to Thanksgiving dinner. They declined the invitation but then turned around and invited my friend to *their* next holiday dinner. As it turns out, her ex just needed some time to digest the idea.

Obviously, there will still be some touchy subjects, even when befriending an ex. What topics would you recommend avoiding?

To develop a healthy friendship, the best thing to do is talk about the children. Don't rehash why the marriage was a failure. Leave your ex's new love life and money situations out of the conversation.

RelatedLink: [Dating After Divorce: How Soon is Too Soon?](#)

What advice would you give to divorced women who are starting to date again?

Once the relationship gets serious, it'd be nice to give your ex a heads up before you introduce him to your new partner. You may have a new boyfriend, but your ex will be your ex forever. You have to respect their feelings. You would want the same in return, right?

What about divorced people without kids?

Believe it or not, I've been interviewed by several people who told me they never had children but got divorced after 15 years. Since there were no kids involved, they didn't have much motivation to stay friends; nothing was tying them together. Even so, they wanted to stay friends because they had developed so many years of family connection. They had nieces and nephews, mother-in-laws and sister in-laws, who were important to them.

For women who have been divorced for a long time, is it ever too late to become friends?

It's never too late to become friends. In fact, the whole last

chapter of my book discusses that.

And lastly, what projects are you currently working on? Any plans for another book?

I'm doing workshops in Manhattan and have been talking about my new book. No plans for another one just yet.

You can purchase a copy of [Befriending Your Ex After Divorce: Making Life Better for You, Your Kids, and, Yes, Your Ex](#) in bookstores and online from Amazon. For more information about Rabinor, please visit JudithRuskayRabinorPhD.com.