

Relationship Advice: The EX Word



By Monique Honaman for Hope After Divorce

I recall speaking to a divorce support group a few years ago. Whenever someone referenced their EX-husband or EX-wife, each person was careful to use the phrase “my former husband” or “my former wife.” This wasn’t just something that one person used but rather everyone in the group. I thought it was interesting. After all, using the term “EX-husband” seems pretty common. When I asked what this was all about, I was informed that they believed that EX- implied a negative connotation, and they preferred to approach the word a bit more positively. OK! To each his and her own!

But I would like to stand up for EX- words and suggest that there are a number of EX-traordinary EX-words that should be fully embraced post-divorce. One can wallow in EX-cuses and get stuck in the EX-crement of what they just went through, or one can focus EX-clusively on moving forward and on the EX-citement and EX-cesses that this new life will bring!

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Whether your divorce was your idea or not, it is now a part of your story and part of the journey that defines your life. Someone made an EX-it, which EX-empted you from EX-tending your commitment to your marriage. I speak with countless people who are stuck in the EX-istence of “what was” as opposed to eagerly anticipating the EX-pectation “what will be.” One of my favorite quotes that got me through my divorce was, “I can’t control what happens to me. I can only control how I react to it.” I love it when I encounter others who hold a similar attitude. No one is EX-empt from divorce. To those who say, “It will never happen to me” (like I did), you may find yourself in shock one day. Divorce EX-tends to all corners of our society and EX-cludes no one.

(I’m having fun writing this piece, so EX-cuse me while I keep going!)

To those people who are stuck EX-aming their unplanned lives collapsing around them, I say this: No EX-cuses! Inhale, then EX-hale. Now, pick up the pieces and become an EX-ample of how to move forward successfully after hitting a bump in the road. No one can do this EX-cept for you. Let the world EX-plode around you with new opportunities. EX-press your emotions. Don’t let your ability to love or to be loved go EX-tinct.

Having a failed marriage and becoming a divorcee at age 40 was not part of my EX-pectation for my life. That being said, it did become my EX-istence and part of my story. I was one of those people who opted for life to go on positively. I met an

EX-traordinary man. I am EX-tremely grateful that he came into my life and the lives of my kids. It's nice to be confident in the EX-clusivity of our marriage. We have a common passion and bond around our EX-tra-curricular activities and have EX-plored the world together. We have EX-panded each other's horizons. I feel EX-alted and respected by him, and in EX-change, I try to honor him in the same way. The bottom line is that this relationship and marriage EX-ceeds anything I ever imagined before.

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Mae West said, "All discarded lovers should be given a second chance, but with somebody else." EX-actly!! My point is this: whether you call someone your EX- or your former-, make peace with that part of your past and move forward. Take advantage of your second chance, and make it EX-traordinary. I think I've EX-acerbated my point. There are some fabulous EX- words. Use them. Live them. Celebrate them. Just think: what a great way to celebrate getting rid of one EX by introducing several new and more powerful ones!

By the way, I also met a woman once who didn't use the term "EX-husband" or "former husband." Instead, she had me laughing when she started talking about her "wasband." I thought I misunderstood. Then she clarified and EX-claimed, "The man who **was** my husband is now lovingly referred to as my 'wasband.'" Love it! I thought that was EX-tremely clever.

Monique A. Honaman, JD, MLIR, wrote "The High Road Has Less Traffic: honest advice on the path through love and divorce" in response to a need for a book providing honest, real, and raw advice about how to survive and thrive through one of life's toughest journeys. The book is available at www.HighRoadLessTraffic.com and Amazon.com. Monique writes for HopeAfterDivorce.org, FamilyShare.com, LAFamily.com and CupidPulse.com. She can be reached at

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