

Learning to Compromise: My Way or the Highway!



By Monique

Honaman for [Hope After Divorce](#)

"Marriage is about compromise; it's about doing something for the other person, even when you don't want to." – Nicholas Sparks, The Wedding

I had a great conversation with two friends, both widowed, the other day. They're dating each other, and it's starting to get serious. While not pointedly addressed quite yet, it's clear that the "we should spend the rest of our lives together" conversation is not that far off in the future. How wonderful for them! To have found love again – and all the joy, happiness, and elation that comes with new love – after both having lost spouses is wonderful and very sweet to see. Of course, they should spend the rest of their lives together. Thank goodness for second chances and the fact that they met

each other.

Once example of a celebrity couple who will be tying the knot soon is Christina Aguilera and Matthew Rutler. This will be Christina's second marriage; again, thank goodness for second chances! She has a young son, who Matthew will become a stepparent to, yet another transition that will hopefully be smooth for everyone involved.

Related Link: [Christina Aguilera Dating 'Burlesque' Assistant Matthew Rutler](#)

Deciding they want to spend the rest of their lives together is the "easy" part. The more practical and more difficult part comes when the discussion turns to where to live. His house or hers? Her family room couches or his? His china or hers? His toaster or hers?

It's crazy, but *this* is where it can become overwhelming. The reality is that both people own their own beautiful homes, fully stocked with every practical item (the blender, ironing board, and beach towels) and also filled with all sorts of things that are meaningful (grandma's mirror, great-grandma's gravy boat, and the painting bought on vacation in Italy many years ago). Their styles may differ: His Victorian period furniture may clash with her Asian influence.

What to do? Of course, it's essentially no different than when two divorced people choose to marry and frankly no different from when two established single adults (never married, divorced, or widowed) but well on their way to being "real" adults (with more than a studio apartment outfitted with milk crates and a mattress of the floor) enter into marriage.

Often times, both partners come to the relationship with established "goods" as well as established habits, ideals, and traditions. Perhaps one likes to eat dinner by 6 p.m. each night, whereas the other enjoys eating much later. Maybe one

likes to be up and out each Saturday morning by sunrise, whereas the other relishes the idea of lounging in bed reading the paper until lunchtime. Perhaps one likes to spend Christmas out of town surrounded by the chaos of dozens of family members, whereas the other likes to make the holiday a more quiet, intimate celebration.

Related Link: [Make Your Relationship Count This Year](#)

Younger and less-established couples certainly need to compromise as they begin their lives together, but it's often easier, as they don't generally have decades worth of "baggage" (both literally and figuratively) that they bring to the marriage. It gets tougher as we get older!

When I remarried several years ago, my husband and I brought together two households. As crazy as it sounds, we literally did have to decide to keep my silverware or his, my dinner plates or his, my toaster or his...and on and on! That was challenging in and of itself (actually, he had a lot of things that were "nicer" than mine, so it made for some easy decision-making). Some people might say that the best solution is to start new with everything, and as fun as that sounds, it's just not practical. Who has that kind of money to throw around, and why get rid of things that are meaningful to one person or the other?


In addition to compromising on the things, we also had to learn how to merge our family traditions and our expectations for everything from how to save, how to spend a Sunday morning, what temperature to keep the house at, how many blankets to put on the bed, etc. This can be much tougher. After all, we were established in our routines. We had our "normal," and defining a "new normal" isn't always easy.

You know what, though? Defining a "new normal" can be fun if approached with the right attitude. If you aren't open to compromise when dating, how in the heck are you going to

compromise if you get married? Open yourself up to learning something new or even just experiencing something with a new lens. You might surprise yourself at how much you enjoy the change. After all, change keeps us vibrant and alive. Don't become too set in your ways. Be open to new experiences, new traditions...even new toasters and new beach towels!

Does compromise become tougher as we get older? Are we more set in our ways? What do you think?

For more information about Hope After Divorce, click [here](#).

 *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 HighRoadLessTraffic.com and Amazon.com. Monique writes for HopeAfterDivorce.org, FamilyShare.com, LAFamily.com and CupidPulse.com. She can be reached at Monique@HighRoadLessTraffic.com. Follow Monique on Facebook and Twitter.*