

Rediscovering Your Happily Ever After

*Moving from Hopeless to Hopeful
as a Newly Divorced Mother*

PEGGYSUE WELLS

 Kregel
Publications

Rediscovering Your Happily Ever After: Moving from Hopeless to Hopeful as a Newly Divorced Mother

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INTRODUCTION

ONCE UPON A TIME

Note to self:
Wheels on luggage do not work on sand.

It stinks. Standing at ground zero, mourning the loss of a marriage stinks. God designed marriage to be a lifelong covenant. A cord of three strands: you, your spouse, and the Lord. That's plan A. There is no plan B.

But many find themselves here. Statistics tell us that more than 50 percent of marriages end in divorce. The numbers are staggering enough; when you put the faces of men, women, and precious children in place of those numbers, the heartbreak and devastation is criminal.

Countless books describe how to save troubled marriages. I have read many of them. Plenty of books debate when and if separation and divorce are permitted in the eyes of God. I'll leave those topics to those experts. This book is for people who, like it or not—and none of us like it—find themselves in the debris, mourning the death of a marriage.

Singer Stevie Nix said in her song titled “Landslide” that she was afraid of making life changes because she'd built her life around one

INTRODUCTION

key person. Many of us can relate. Suddenly, the person we orbited is no longer the center of our universe. Dazed and confused, we look around wondering how to put the world back together, and feel pretty clueless about where to begin. Shell-shocked, we find it difficult to focus when we most need to. We may not have wanted change but now change has been thrust upon us. It is time for a course adjustment.

In the midst of this life-altering upheaval, you may feel as I did—abandoned by God. My heavenly bridegroom, my heavenly father. Moving from being an *us* to being me, and a new me at that, was confusing, frustrating, and frightening. When I most needed to know God was beside me, holding my hand and leading me through the dark, I felt like he, too, had deserted me.

The good news is that God is still God of all creation. He created you and you are valued. In the midst of unbelievable betrayal, God promised to use even this horrific chapter of your life. In his unequaled economy, nothing, not even this, goes to waste. He'll help you navigate this huge upheaval. Though it feels like an eternity, the emotional agony is for a season. As absurd as it may sound, joy will return if you are willing to move forward.

This book is an extra large scoop of hope. You'll discover, as I did, that whatever is over our heads is under God's feet. Whatever seems impossible is actually *Himpossible*.

We ask ourselves, Who am I to be brilliant, gorgeous, talented, fabulous? Actually, who are you not to be?
You are a child of God. Your playing small does not
serve the world.

MARIANNE WILLIAMSON, *A RETURN TO LOVE*





CHAPTER 1

TUMBLING DOWN THE RABBIT HOLE

How do I find my way?

I hate the conflict that shadows my house.
I hate the suffocating smog of lies. I hate the hate that
reigns in power. I hate the heat that scorches the life
out of everything. I wish one breath of sweet, fresh air
would just once brush my cheek. And such would be
just one thought of honesty.

MY DAUGHTER

“Where’s Dad’s car?”
Peering out the windows of our fifteen-passenger van, my
daughter searched the driveway. In the back, the chatter of the other
children abruptly quieted. At the end of the long gravel lane, our
house was strangely dark.

I parked and turned off the engine. The children piled out and in
anxious silence made their way into the house while I unstrapped the
toddler from her car seat. Inside, the older children turned on lights.

Taking the steps two at a time, my son raced upstairs to the master bedroom. With the baby on my hip, I followed.

He met me at the top of the stairs. The light from my bathroom was still on behind him. “Dad’s toothbrush isn’t here.”

“He left.” My daughter leaned against the wall and slid to the floor.

Another daughter went to her father’s medicine chest to look inside. Then she went to the clothes closet. “He’s gone,” she said.

I dropped onto the edge of the bed and the younger children buried themselves in my lap. We held each other while my oldest children collapsed on the carpet and sobbed.

Weeks earlier, following years of counseling that failed to curtail an escalating situation, our family had gathered in the family room. “You either have to stop being abusive or find another place to live,” I told my husband. “It’s not good for you to treat me this way. It’s not good for me to be treated this way. It isn’t good for my son to think this is how men treat women, and it’s not good for the girls to think this is how men treat women.”

He chose to leave.

Now I looked at my beloved children, their lovely faces reflecting the wrenching pain of their broken hearts. How could I ease their devastation? Where does the wounded caretaker go to be cared for? Where was God? What do I do now?

Initially after their dad left, the children and I felt marked relief. The tension was gone. We could relax and eat again. The first six months I did double duty trying to keep all of life’s many plates spinning, to provide stability for the children and their understandably confused emotions, all the while holding onto hope that he’d get himself together and return home.

The children and I were humiliated that we were now what society termed a broken home. We were embarrassed that we had not been enough to inspire him to love us and make the effort to be a family with us.

“Why don’t you just start over? Start the relationship fresh and build it,” one child had suggested to him a year earlier.

“You don’t understand,” he replied. “It’s too hard.”

It was six months before each of the children tentatively told someone in their circle that their dad was no longer part of our household.

I operated in crisis mode, working overtime to help the children adjust while dodging the unkind behavior of the man who once promised before God, family, and friends to love and cherish me. The principles our family was built on were torn away like a storm-tossed ship whose ties to the dock were severed. I kept waiting for things to settle down. But they never did.

Years later, for my birthday, my teenage son gave me a George Strait CD. This multi-award winning country singer recorded a song titled *She Let Herself Go* that my son wanted me to hear. The words he penned on the accompanying card read, “Sometimes you just gotta let yourself go and get a life.”

I was a long way from thriving. Barely surviving was a more accurate description, and that wasn’t good for me or for my children. Like the song said, it was time to let myself go and get a life. For all of our sakes. It was time to make changes and make them right away.

Welcome to your new beginning. Finding yourself unintentionally single is doubtless not the life you had expected. Standing in the shattered pieces of your hoped-for happily ever after, it’s time to rise like a phoenix from the relationship ashes and begin living again.

You have a huge hole in your heart. People say that time heals all wounds. While waiting for my gaping injury to heal, I discovered that God often prefers not to eliminate the hole but teaches us to live with it. And then he artfully weaves it into the fabric of life. In his economy, he will use even this.

We can facilitate the process. When we are wounded, it is tempting to cocoon. To draw a tight circle and stay inside the safety of that comfortable, familiar, and controlled zone. To become the incredible

shrinking violet. But healing and life exist outside the walls we build around our hearts. I dare you to plug your nose and dive headfirst into the rushing river of God's grace, forgiveness, and love.

Five steps took me forward. These were simple acts I could incorporate by noon. A simple attitude adjustment that is reaping a lifetime of benefits. For me and for those dear to me. Surprisingly, these steps also helped me look more beautiful—inside and out. Even my posture improved.



You are not big steps away from anything; you are small shifts away from everything.

Keith Kochner

It was time to make some shifts. I was ready for some shifty days.

1. Stop blaming.

As long as I continued to blame others for the situation, I stayed stuck. Whether I blamed my husband, my parents, or myself, the blame only kept me cemented in the same spot.

The same is true for all of us. Are we blaming a husband, in-laws, or the other woman? Blame cripples only one person. Me. It has no effect on the target of my blame. That other person is not sitting at home wringing his hands because I am convinced that my circumstances are his fault. That other person is living life while I resemble Winnie the Pooh's gloomy, gray, albeit cute, friend Eeyore.

Does that mean my spouse is no longer responsible for his behavior? Does it mean that you or I were not treated abysmally? Or that I wasn't hurt?

Certainly not. The hurt, pain, betrayal, and devastation are real. Fact.



A man can fail many times but he isn't a failure until he begins to blame someone else.

John Burroughs

However, by playing the blame game, those facts became my excuses for not moving forward. Freedom came when I acknowledged the truth of the situation. People made choices. I made choices. He made choices. Some of those choices hurt me deeply. Some of those choices made a Grand Canyon-sized impact on my life.

Now, what choices was I going to make today?

A friend or counselor who allows us to vent, to cry and scream about our pain, is a gift. Initially, when all we feel is the betrayal, a tender listening ear can help us express our grief and verbally process.

“How are you?” My brother telephoned from out of state. His question was rooted in common courtesy and he expected the customary, “Fine, thanks. And you?”

“Some days,” I confided, “it hurts so bad I can’t breathe.”

Curled in the fetal position and crying for days is a common experience for those in this situation. But camping there, the pain became my identity. When I spoke at a national conference, an attendee asked me to look at her résumé before she submitted it to a potential boss. Rather than listing her education and professional experience, she spent paragraphs explaining that she was divorced but had since made peace with her ex-spouse. Being divorced and the pain surrounding that chapter in her life had become her résumé.

I’ve seen the same in women’s groups, both professional and social. For many women, it doesn’t take long before they share they are abandoned by their husbands, divorced, rejected, and now struggling to be a single parent. Ironically, men in similar situations rarely confide such details. Just picturing it is laughable. It may be part of their history but it is not their address.

Certainly the demands of motherhood are topics we share with friends and family. For both single and married moms, there are days when life’s challenges are more intense than others. Yet there is a vast difference between dealing with today’s concerns and claiming a card-carrying permanent victim status of divorce.

In many breakups, one spouse is eager to move on to a new life. For that person who emotionally left the relationship some time before, the divorce is a tedious hurdle. For those of us who dreamed of living happily ever after, we can stumble through the process quite wounded. For me, this was not how I thought my life or my wedding vows would turn out. I couldn't accept that the person I gave my life, love, body, and future to could treat me so callously. I got stuck in my pain. And bitterness.

Recovery began when I limited the amount of time I spent in this place. A day of crying. Ten minutes of venting on the phone. A lunch date with a friend. An hour with a counselor. Permit yourself seven paces. Seven paces to mentally beat yourself up. This principle allows us to grieve, to cry, and to feel our broken heart. To blame myself or someone else for the situation.

Then we must begin to step out of it. Give up our hope for a better past. Face the reality of the present and make choices that move our lives forward. I'd rather be traveling through the sand on my way to the Promised Land than be perpetually camped in the stinking desert.

It happened.

So what?

Now what?



Be not a slave to your own past. Plunge into the sublime seas, dive deep, and swim far, so that you shall come back with self-respect, with new power, with an advanced experience, that shall explain and overlook the old.

Ralph Waldo Emerson

Looking Glass: Do you regularly offer excuses? If you show up late at a place and waste further time by blaming your lateness on the kids,

the dog, or the traffic, you are playing the blame game. You are blaming someone or something else for your situation.

The only person who believes your excuse is you. When you are late, it is apparent that you did not plan your time to arrive at least fifteen minutes early in case you were delayed by life.

In the military, fifteen minutes early is on time. On time is late. Soldiers quickly learn that there are only four acceptable responses—yes, sir; no, sir; I don't understand, sir; and no excuse, sir.

When I dropped making excuses, my days and relationships streamlined. Free from cumbersome excuses, my conversations improved. People are attracted to those who fully live life without excuses.

2. Release others from your expectations.

Repeatedly doing the same thing but each time expecting different results is the description of insanity. Expecting someone who has continually treated me poorly to suddenly treat me with honor and respect is going to disappoint only one person. Me.

Expecting an irresponsible individual to act responsibly today is sure to prove frustrating. Certainly, people can choose to make good choices. We hope and pray that they will. It was the expectation that tripped me up. I had to allow other people the freedom to be who they are by releasing them from my expectations. It's what I want them to do for me.

I had a neighbor who telephoned only to complain. Initially, I greeted each call with enthusiasm, looking forward to building a neighborly relationship. But every encounter was a tirade of criticism. No matter how often I adjusted our lifestyle to please my neighbor, the disapproval continued. After several months of this pattern, I no longer expected us to become friends. I released my neighbor from my expectations.

Surprisingly, I spent years expecting that *this time* my spouse would treat me honorably. Even after he left, I held high hopes that he would reverse his choices. Though I only invested months in expecting my neighbor to be a pleasant addition to my life, I held onto higher

expectations for my spouse for decades. Long after patterns showed me he was not going to be what I anticipated him to be, I continued to clutch my expectations close. I created excuses for his actions and denied reality.

Letting go of my assumptions of how I thought he should behave, of how I thought he should treat me, was a healthy step forward. Stepping back and taking an honest look at who this person really was based on his consistent behavior was a hearty dose of honesty. When I finally took off my rose-colored expectation spectacles, I no longer left each phone call and encounter perpetually hurt because my high hopes were not fulfilled.

If someone in your life has a history of being inconsiderate, don't look for him or her to be concerned about your feelings. If your aunt is consistently malicious, I doubt she will suddenly morph into Miss Personality Plus at the next family reunion. If your spouse withheld money, affection, or respect before, he's sure to do the same now. If he didn't treat you well before, don't think he will do so today.

Release your spouse from your dream of happily ever after. When you release others, you are set free from unhealthy patterns, disappointments, excuse making, and the exhausting effort of living in denial. The person you set free is you.

Looking Glass: If you are thinking *maybe this time* about anyone, it is a signal that you are clutching onto expectations you have about that person. Expectations regarding how you believe that person should act, behave, or feel.

If you are regularly offended, it is a sure sign that you're harboring rigid assumptions. It is time to release that person from your expectations and allow them the freedom to be who they truly are.

3. Channel your anger constructively.

One woman said she smashed her husband's windshield. Carrie Underwood sang a song in a minor key about a woman who destroyed

her lover's new, souped-up four-wheel drive when she caught him cheating. Could I relate? Yeah!

I actually chastised myself for being too cowardly to vent my anger toward him. But there was no lack of anger and the associated adrenaline. Being livid at being hurt and betrayed is normal. Anger is not a sin. Ephesians 4:26 instructs, "In your anger do not sin." Marcus Aurelius said, "How much more grievous are the consequences of anger than the causes of it."

Anger is a gift from God. It is an emotion that recognizes a wrong and empowers us to do something about it. What we choose to do with our anger makes a big difference in our ability to move forward. What we do with the anger can be either sinful or productive. "No man can think clearly when his fists are clenched," said drama critic George Jean Nathan.

When Cari Lightner was killed by a drunk driver with a record for driving while drunk, her mother was angry. Candace Lightner channeled her fury in a healthy direction. Candace founded Mothers Against Drunk Driving. MADD has had a positive impact nationwide. Candace will never know this side of heaven how many lives she saved by channeling her anger constructively and initiating stronger laws against drunk driving and repeat offenders. You and I may have been positively affected by this mother's diligent efforts.

"For we know him who said, 'It is mine to avenge; I will repay'" (Heb. 10:30). The Lord has given us instructions in the face of mistreatment:

Is not this the kind of fasting I have chosen: to loose the chains of injustice and untie the cords of the yoke, to set the oppressed free and break every yoke? Is it not to share your food with the hungry and to provide the poor wanderer with shelter—when you see the naked, to clothe him, and not to turn away from your own flesh and blood? Then your light will break forth like the dawn, and your healing will quickly

appear; then your righteousness will go before you, and the glory of the LORD will be your rear guard. Then you will call, and the LORD will answer; you will cry for help, and he will say: Here am I. If you do away with the yoke of oppression, with the pointing finger and malicious talk, and if you spend yourselves in behalf of the hungry and satisfy the needs of the oppressed, then your light will rise in the darkness, and your night will become like the noonday. (Isaiah 58:6–10)

One woman rolled up her sleeves, harnessed her adrenaline, and tackled all the neglected chores around the house. She replaced a leaky window, fixed a shower, changed out old carpet, updated paint, and hauled away trash. She created a lovely environment.

Another woman started a support group for single moms. She compiled a list of agencies that offered services for mothers and children. She planned monthly meetings where the ladies studied the Bible. These women traded skills. One exchanged babysitting with another who knew how to wallpaper. They helped do each other's taxes. They spruced up each other's yards, cried on each other's shoulders, and cheered for each other's children.

Many women channel their energy into completing a college degree. When I returned to college, half the class consisted of traditional students working on their degree right after high school. The other half was made up of women of my vintage. Though a few were empty nesters, most were getting equipped to take care of themselves and their children.

Plenty of single women decide to dust off old dreams. They start businesses, go to work in their field of interest, partner with philanthropic organizations, and hone their hobbies from painting to music to writing. One lady opened a stylish interior design store. Two ladies opened an upscale bakeshop serving the community and shipping delicious treats nationwide. Three gals became family physicians. Another woman organized mission trips to third world countries

where teams of women brought medical clinics and support to poor women and their children. “For we are God’s workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do” (Eph. 2:10).

In my experience, women who continue to blame and vent their anger unconstructively become bitter and contentious individuals. It is “better to dwell in the wilderness, than with a contentious and angry woman,” warns Proverbs 21:19 (NKJV). I can be bitter and contentious or I can be gentle, gracious, and productive. The choice is mine.

Looking Glass: Are you laughing or are you a fun-sucker? Angry people who are not using their anger and adrenaline to create something positive suck the fun right out of any room or group they enter. Despite the anger that pain and betrayal generate, are you creating something worthy of your time and energy? If you’re not laughing frequently, you are a fun-sucker.

4. Embrace healthy relationships and maintain a distance from toxic ones.

Are you collecting ministry projects? If your circle of friends consists solely of people who need to be rescued, and individuals who join you in poor-me pity parties, it’s time to expand your circle.

My relationships are healthiest when they include someone I mentor, my peers, and someone who mentors me. Healthy relationships do not allow me to perpetually be the victim, nor do they drain me dry with their own insatiable needs.

I sometimes fear becoming too vulnerable in a friendship because I fear being rejected. I fear competition. I don’t want to appear to be needy.

Completeness comes first through our relationship with God. Good friends encourage us to be the best we can be. They don’t buy our excuses for staying stuck. Develop a plan with the counsel of

those who hold a similar heart. Begin with God and wisely add others with unselfish motivations. That's how change happens.

Healthy friendships can say no to each other and remain strong. Healthy friendships share feelings honestly and can trust each other to honor confidences. These associations are accountable, available, and give each other freedom to fail—as we all will on occasion. Healthy friendships are built on equal footing and they ask each other about progress on their goals.

Healthy friendships are not always there or everlasting. They can be seasonal. Only Jesus Christ is our forever friend. Healthy friendships are not competitive, envious, exclusive, rescuing, smothering, or testing.



Never approach a bull from the front, a horse from the rear, or a fool from any direction.

Cowboy wisdom

Looking Glass: What motivates you to be someone's friend? Do you like yourself for who God created you to be? Or are you seeking fulfillment from another? Are you drawn to people because of your common pain? Or do you relate to their greatness, potential, and the opportunity to participate together in society?

When you like yourself, rejection will still be disappointing, but not overpowering. Scripture tells us that God loves and accepts us. You and I are beautiful in the eyes of the Lord. When we choose to believe God's word, rejection from others no longer devastates or destroys us.

Accepting yourself includes . . .

Accepting that Christ loves you enough to die for you

Being content with your age

Being content with your weight

Developing your talents

Not sabotaging your potential

Working with your limitations and not taking on more than you are able



Oh, the comfort—the inexpressible comfort of feeling safe with a person—having neither to weigh thoughts, nor measure words, but pouring them all right out, just as they are, chaff and grain together; certain that a faithful hand will take and sift them, keep what is worth keeping, and then with the breath of kindness blow the rest away.

Dinah Craik, *A Life for a Life*

I am involved with healthy relationships when my friends and I both dream big and accomplish our goals. We support and encourage each other to be our best.

5. Take responsibility for yourself.

This is the single most important step toward positive change.

For too long I relied on others to care for me. I relied on my parents and my husband for emotional and financial support. Even when it was substandard, I expected these emotional and physical needs to be supplied by another person. Like a character in Jane Austen's *Sense and Sensibility*, or *Pride and Prejudice*, I viewed a husband as my financial plan.

Often, after the breakup of a marriage, women settle for second best in life because that is what is left to them. Financial support may be minimal but we make do with it. I was an expert at accepting lemons I shouldn't have accepted in the first place and then I knocked myself out making them into lemonade. I was an expert at being a victim.

Do you have an excuse and a story for everything? The victim

mentality is characterized by explanations and justifications. The conversation of a perpetual victim is focused on how bad things are, how someone else has done them wrong, and the unending list of reasons why they can't do something. They sound like a bad country western song.

The victim mentality is easy to put on. There are generous perks to being a victim. We wouldn't adopt the victim mentality if there weren't benefits.

Ouch. I hated discovering that being a victim was not something someone else did to me but something I did to myself.

When I'm a victim, I can be self-centered, focused on all the hard things that happened in my life. I get to recite my ever-lengthening list of wrongs that have been perpetrated on me to gain sympathy from others subjected to my tale of woe. Occasionally, a codependent type will respond by helping me in some way and I feel validated.

Being a victim means I don't have to succeed or achieve my full potential. I can carve out a mediocre comfort level similar to the dip in an old mattress, and stay there. I always have justification for sabotaging my dreams, dropping out of programs and projects, and not quite becoming a professional or succeeding at anything. I run a lot of 99-yard dashes instead of finishing the 100-yard run.

Best of all, being a victim means I place responsibility for myself on someone else. I can expect others to take care of me and then whine about how my needs have not been met. It becomes a perpetuating cycle of being a victim so I am victimized so I am a victim so I am victimized.

The victim mentality is tough to remove because it's self-inflicted. It's the single greatest contributor to staying stuck and living below the abundant life God promised. To stop being a victim, I had to stop blaming others and genuinely face myself. I had to acknowledge the ways I participated in the situation. Certainly some situations clearly have one party who violated major agreements in a relationship. But how I contributed, ignored, denied, enabled, and responded are

entirely mine to own. If I complain that I had no voice in the financial arena, I also have to acknowledge that I allowed that to occur.

Larry Burkett said men abuse because they can. The message here is that people—male and female—will do what others allow them to do.

The only one who makes me a victim is me. The only one who can change that in me is me. I had to look at myself and see what I'd denied about myself. It was time to see what others had seen all along. I had to put on surgical gloves, dig deep, and make repairs.

The terrifying aspect of this step was accepting responsibility for the results. Accepting that success was up to me. I also own my failures. Me. Not anyone else. I chose to no longer accept lemons from others. I chose to no longer accept lemons from myself. Moving from victim to personally responsible meant, like the sign President Truman posted on his desk when he made the decision to drop the nuclear bomb, "The buck stops here."

But it's more than worth the effort to move from victim to victorious. It's worth it to face our fears about being personally responsible and plunge into the abundant life that God promised. Even if you've never done it before, you can become a big girl, a mature woman who is responsible for yourself.

It's not terribly difficult. The change in attitude can be implemented in moments. The Lord frees us when we partner with him to become personally responsible for our spiritual, mental, emotional, physical, sexual, and financial well-being. Suddenly the world is transformed from a series of all the things we can't have or can't do to a vast universe overflowing with potential and possibilities. We can make choices. We can find solutions. We can make mistakes and learn from them. We can suffer legitimate victimization without remaining a victim. No longer a ball and chain, the past becomes a stepping stone to a promising future.

Our faith grows when we stop relying on another human being, or the government, or the church to take care of our needs. No other

person will ever be our savior. When we embrace responsibility for our own happiness, health, future, and provision, we lean more on Jehovah Jirah, our God who declares that he is our provision. Our conversation is positive, centered on others, ideas, and possibilities. People enjoy our company and appreciate partnering with us because we bring optimism, steadfastness, and faithfulness to relationships and projects. We attract friends who make a lasting impact on the world.

My happiness and situation in life are, in large part, determined by my own choices. There are benefits and prices to every action that I choose. It is vital that I weigh the cost and the perk of each decision and then take action. When I find myself making poor choices, the truth is that I am receiving some benefit from this decision that presently outweighs choosing a different option. Ouch again.

Continual frustration is a sign that I'm out of sync with God's plan. A personal retreat is a vehicle for getting on track with what the Lord has already created for me to do. A conference center just an hour from my home offers one-day opportunities for people like me to "come apart" to spend time with the Lord. If I don't regularly come apart, I will come apart.

It is necessary to get alone with God. Away from the phone, the never-ending household responsibilities, the noise of the radio, television, and computer. To pray. Read Scripture. Journal. Listen. Mostly listen. I set a goal and move toward it. If the Lord has a course adjustment in my settings, it's far easier to steer the direction of a flying plane than one that is parked with the engine turned off.

When guilt holds me back, I can pour out my regrets to the Lord. Accept his forgiveness. If there is sin you or I need to turn away from, then by all means quit. Now. Guilt from the Lord is guilt unto life as a result of legitimate sin. Repent, accept Christ's gift of forgiveness, and move on. Guilt that is not a result of sin is false guilt. It is a burden that serves only to cripple. An excuse. A sign that I am not taking personal responsibility.

We can gently and honestly take stock of ourselves. Give up com-

paring ourselves to others. God is head over heels, crazy in love with you and me. God is not standing there, hands on hips, hollering, “Come on. You can do better than that. Try harder.” No. He stands with his arms outstretched, encouraging us to run into his inviting and accepting embrace.



I do not try to dance better than anyone else. I only try to dance better than myself.

Mikhail Baryshnikov

“Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light” (Matt. 11:29–30).

Looking Glass: You reflect personal responsibility when you take responsibility for your emotions. No one makes you feel a certain way any more than you can control how another feels and reacts. You choose your emotions and behavior. Are you being responsible for your emotions? For your behavior? Or do you allow your emotions and behavior to control you?



All the art of living lies in a fine mingling of letting go and holding on.

Henry Ellis

◁ Look Back

What is it like to live with you? What habits and characteristics benefit you? What habits and characteristics don't benefit you?

▷ Move Ahead

This week, refuse to blame anyone, including yourself. Each time you are tempted to criticize, condemn, or complain, instead give thanks

REDISCOVERING YOUR HAPPILY EVER AFTER

to God. One friend gave up the three C's from her vocabulary by paying a dollar each time she criticized, condemned, or complained. She put the money toward a charity. It was a win for her and the group she supported.

One's philosophy is not best expressed in words; it is expressed in the choices one makes. In the long run, we shape our lives and we shape ourselves. The process never ends until we die. And, the choices we make are ultimately our own responsibility.

ELEANOR ROOSEVELT

