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Transition News

T.I.M.'s Quarterly Newsletter

May 2005

Dear Susan,

Welcome to the on-line publication of the Transition News. This is our third edition and, so far, your support and feedback have been wonderful. Thank you!

As T.I.M. enters its fifth year of existence, things continue to change and grow. We have a new logo (see top of the page) and new tagline: "**Empowering Women in Changing Relationships. TM**" In the next few months, we will also be updating our website and brochure. It's an exciting time!

Along with continuing to offer support groups and educational programs to divorcing women, I will also be providing "**Divorce Coaching.**" Divorce Coaching is the process of helping women prepare for their dissolution by outlining step by step what they need to do and what resources they should employ in their particular situation. As these women continue through the divorce, I provide them with emotional, mental and spiritual guidance. This ultimately saves them a great deal of time, money, energy and heartache. If you, or someone you know, can use this type of support, please contact me.

People sometimes ask me if my work is depressing and my response is an emphatic, "NO!" Quite the contrary. While some of you certainly come to me with challenging and difficult circumstances, what sets you apart from others is that you are working very hard to get through whatever obstacles are in your way. I get to witness your journey and I relish knowing (even when you don't) that there is another side of the challenge for you and I hold the space for you to grow. That is far from depressing! It is enlivening!

My continued thanks for those of you who have told others that T.I.M. is a great resource.

Susan Pease, The Divorce Coach

Asking For Help

So many of the women I work with tell me that they have always been the ones to take care of the chores at home (cooking, cleaning, laundry, food shopping, bills, carpooling, etc.). In addition to being a mother and a wife, the majority of these women are employed outside the home too! Trying to be all things to all people is a great set up for failure, exhaustion and resentment!

Recently, in one of my women's divorce groups, the topic of conversation centered on how difficult it is to ask for help. Many said that it was easier to just do everything themselves. When asked why, they stated things such as, "not wanting to bother anyone," "not wanting to hear the flack that comes with asking," and "they ([ex]husbands and kids) can never do things correctly so I end up having to do it anyway!"

It is possible that, in the short run, it feels easier to do things yourself, but there is a lot to be said for delegating, letting go of the perfectionism and making sure *your* gas tank is full. You will be happier and healthier and so will those around you!

Going through a divorce is a perfect time to start changing the patterns from "I'll-do-it-all-myself," to, "yes-I'd-love-some-help!" So many of the tasks involved in this process are simply too big to handle alone. These include dealing with the emotional ups and downs, preparing intimidating paperwork, sorting out material possessions, and moving in and/or out of your home.

Certainly, everyone has the choice to attempt these feats alone, (and I'm sure that many of you can accomplish these tasks on your own) but ask yourself how you will feel when it's all over. You are much less likely to feel depleted, tired and overwhelmed if you ask for (and get) the help you need.

Other benefits of asking for assistance include letting others be more involved in your life, deepening your friendships, and giving people an opportunity to "get out of themselves" for a while.

Ask T.I.M.

This segment is devoted to answering questions you may have regarding divorce.

Q: I am starting the process of getting a divorce. What criteria should I use when choosing an attorney? SP- San Anselmo

A: Choosing an attorney is a very important part of your divorce process so take your time and **trust your instincts!!!**

When I ask people how they came upon their attorney, most tell me that they called the same one a divorced friend had used. This is NOT effective unless you also ask your friend what kind of divorce they had - Was it contentious? Did they do a collaborative divorce? What were their points of negotiation?

Simply because your friend recommends a particular attorney, doesn't mean that this family law specialist is right for you. I strongly suggest that you get names of several different attorneys and interview them all. Ask them questions pertinent to your divorce. For example, if your divorce involves the valuation your husband's business or retirement, substance abuse issues or complicated child custody circumstances, ask him/her what kind of expertise (s)he has in this area. If the answer is that (s)he lacks knowledge on this, don't necessarily end the interview. Ask what alternatives they might offer. I spoke with one attorney recently who told me that she was going to contract with a peer who had the corporate business knowledge she lacked. Like any profession, attorneys don't know it all and the best attorneys are aware of their limits and have good resources to help them serve you better.

If you don't like how an attorney talks to you, or the answers they give you, pay attention! There is little worse than getting half way through your divorce proceedings, having a fall-out with him or her - who you weren't sure you liked in the first place - and having to start over from square-one. There are plenty of attorneys out there so **don't settle on one you don't feel good about!**

Q: How do you deal with teenage children who do not like the person that you are dating? This has been a big source of stress on my new relationship and my daughter refuses to go to counseling. Other than "hating" my boyfriend she is a completely happy, very social, top student (all A's) and athlete. Whenever I try to have a discussion with her about "Stan" (name changed to protect the innocent) I get my feelings hurt. She has stopped complaining about him to me because she knows that it upsets me. Everyone else in my family thinks Stan is great. When will she get over all of this? She is heading off to college in 2 years and I deserve to have a life. I continue to see my therapist once a week -- but I really am not getting any insights from her about tactics, approaches, etc. on this topic. Do you have any words of wisdom to share with me? Thanks for your help!- JB, Tiburon

A: Well, JB, unfortunately there are no guarantees that the next important person in your life following a divorce will be given the green light by your children. But this has less to do with whether he is a good guy and more to do with her fear of losing you. Try not to take her reaction personally (and tell him not to either!). This initial resistance is actually quite common and, more often than not, it goes away with time once she sees that he really is OK and that you are not going to leave her.

Most likely what is going on is a bit of jealousy and protectiveness. (In either case, fear is the underlying

emotion here.) She may be protective of her father (your ex-husband). Even though it is not rational, (and you think she is a teen and should know better) she may also be afraid that this man will try to replace her father. Likewise, she may be jealous that there is someone else in your life besides her who is special to you and she may fear that he will become more important to you than she is.

Reassure her that she is still very important to you and that you will not jeopardize your relationship with her for him. If she cannot hear this through a conversation, then greeting cards and small meaningful gifts can sometimes bring home the message. You may also want to let her know that no one can replace her father and that Stan has no intention of trying to "muscle in" on the family.

Remember, too, that a teenager is doing her job when she is testing! Developmentally, that is what they are supposed to do: find out where the limits are; question authority; and, test their own strength. Don't give her too much power or she will think she can direct the show. While most teens *seem* to want to be in charge, having too much control actually scares them. Acknowledge her concerns, and then let her know that you are going to continue to date Stan.

You may want to come up with groundrules such as: when Stan is in the house, she must be respectful to him and to you, and/or talking about Stan at all is off-limits. Don't underestimate the modeling you are doing by sticking to your truth and seeking out therapy. Keep taking this kind of care of yourself and, I promise - even if it takes ten years - she will have more respect for you and she might even thank you!

To submit a question to T.I.M. for future publication in the *Transition News*, direct your query entitled, "Ask T.I.M.," to susanpease@tiofmarin.com

Odds & Ends

Thank you to those of you who let me interview you for my book. You all shared amazing stories with me and I feel honored that you took the time to help me out. I am still working on the book (it is title-less at the moment!) and will keep you posted on it as it progresses!

Thank you to Louise F. who recently donated a half a dozen fabulous books on divorce to my lending library!

For Rent: Central San Rafael apartment - walking distance to downtown. Spacious, private parking and much more. \$1,100/mo. Call Sarah for details - (415) 457-0265. Available May 1st.

Need Health Insurance? If you are losing your health insurance as a result of your divorce, contact T.I.M. for a potential insurance resource - (415) 257-0830.

Upcoming Events

Business Building For Women Part II: "Setting Your Business Up For Financial Success" - This workshop will assist women business owners in learning to make the best use of her time and find the most profitable clients. Presented by Dana Kunz, Real Estate Broker and Ex VP of Finance and Susan Pease, LCSW, CADC and Director of T.I.M.

Details - Saturday, May 14 from 2:30 pm to 5:30 pm at the Pacific Union Building, 189 Sir Francis Drake Blvd in Greenbrae. The cost is \$55 in advance/ \$60 at the door or a "2 for 1 special" - bring a friend and you each get in for \$25 in advance/\$30 at the door.

Women's Financial Wellness Workshop - "Plan for the Future; Focus on Today." This workshop is aimed at any woman who wants to be smarter with her money. Presented

by Kimberly Twombly of UBS (Bank of Switzerland).

Details - Saturday, May 21 from 2:30 pm to 5:30 pm. One of the women in the T.I.M. community will graciously be opening her beautiful waterfront Tiburon home for this event. The street address is 2338 Mar East. \$25 in advance/\$30 at the door.

"Contemplating Divorce Workshop" - Designed for women who are ambivalent about staying in their marriage or who want to divorce but don't know how to get started.

Details - Wednesday, June 22 at Drake High School from 6 pm to 9 pm. To register, go to www.marinlearn.com and click on "Courses" icon. Go to Self Category, then to Personal Growth. \$29 Find directions on-line as well.

"Women's Divorce Workshop" - "*Knowledge is power and it's also a money-saver,*" is what Basia T. had to say about this workshop. This is an absolute MUST workshop for any woman going through divorce!

You will learn just about everything you need to in order to get through your divorce more easily. **Family Law Attorney, Suzan Barrie Aiken, and Financial Counselor, Susan Bross, are the featured speakers of this workshop.**

Details - Wednesday and Thursday evenings, June 29 & 30, from 6 pm to 8:30 pm at the law offices of Suzan Barrie Aiken, 265 Miller Avenue, Mill Valley. \$195 before June 22/\$225 after June 22.

Women are encouraged to register in advance for all events as space is often limited. *Partial scholarships are available for most events on a limited basis.* **Checks may be made payable to T.I.M. and mailed to 705 Fourth Street, San Rafael, CA 94901.**

Future events in the works: *Dating in the New Millenium* as well as more *Singles Mixers* (If you are interested in hosting an upcoming Single's Mixer, please contact me)

Suggested Reading



Too Good to Leave/Too Bad to Stay - by Mira Kirshenbaum

Coming Apart - by Daphne Rose Kigma

When Things Fall Apart - by Pema Chodron

email: susanpease@tiofmarin.com

web: <http://www.tiofmarin.com>

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