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## REAL LIFE

## How having a broken heart can transform your life.

By: Shona Dee for [Divorced Moms](#)

Remember, nothing – no thought or situation – is permanent. Not even some marriages. Although it may be near impossible for you believe right now, this life will one day be your new normal.

One day, almost two years ago I, like countless other amazing and wonderful women before me, found myself as a single mother. This was a club which I did not sign up to (hell no!), but with the right support and a little effort, I absolutely felt an honoured member of it no time at all. Now, I can't imagine my life any other way.

When my [husband unexpectedly left](#), to say I was blindsided would be an understatement. I felt as though the carpet had been ripped from under my feet, my world turned around and upside down. Of course, I was going through an unprecedented level of change, and the uncertainty that came with this. The words survive and thrive were not yet part of my vocabulary.

I had not felt certain emotions with such depth before – [emotions such as anger](#). (I can recall picking my husband's beloved push-bike off the floor with the intention of hurling it at him – until one of my teenagers very sensibly took hold of my arm to stop me). This was my first real experience with grief. Grief for the identity and life I had associated with for so many years, and for the dreams I once held so dear.

*Dr. Ginni Mansberg on how a divorce kick-started her career. Post continues...*

That period in time was all of these things. But (and it is a big BUT), it was also a time for new discoveries and a new direction. I discovered an inner strength I did not know I had. After coming through the initial shock and grief, I discovered an intoxicating sense of freedom. Freedom to parent according to MY values. Freedom to make decisions on the spot. Freedom to be me.

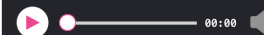
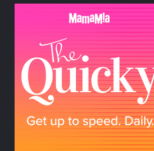
Most importantly, I discovered, in time, a new closeness to my children as we all settled into our new lives and re-evaluated our priorities and expectations.

Now, I not only have a great relationship with my kids, I am also on good terms with my ex. Although I couldn't recognise it at the time, what happened, happened for a reason. The less I resisted what was happening, the easier the journey was.

Below are some things I learned along the way which I hope will help someone else who has found themselves unexpectedly in the single mum club:

SHONA DEE  
APRIL 5, 2017
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#### The Quicky

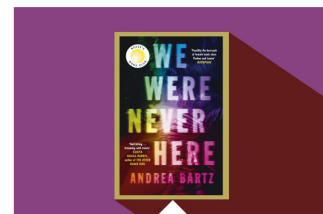
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## You must be able to adapt to change.

Accept that **nothing is permanent** in this life – good or bad. Situations and people naturally evolve and change over the course of time, and you will find that once you accept this, life becomes a lot less daunting and change of any sort is nowhere near as scary as it potentially could be.

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One of your biggest obstacles right now may be how to get over some pre-conceived expectations of how a family should be. When your kids spend time with their Dad and you're alone, you may be thinking (or actually screaming inside) "Noooo!! This is not how it's supposed to be!"



*Shona says her relationship with her children improved after her divorce. Image: Big Little Lies, HBO*

You can learn, however, to change your thought processes, and as a result, let go of these preconceived expectations, as well as any stigma you may have attached to the idea of being a "single mum".

There are plenty of unhappy and dysfunctional two-parent families out there – a traditional family environment is no guarantee of a happy family life. Ongoing violence, dysfunction, arguments, substance abuse or mental health issues will have a far greater impact on your children than being raised by a single parent will.

With love and care, your children will adjust to their new circumstances. In fact, they will not only adjust, they will be privy to some pretty amazing and valuable life lessons – patience, strength, resilience, and tolerance in the face of change are a few which come to mind.

## You should allow yourself to just be.

When you're feeling overwhelmed, stop for a moment and sit down. Just observe your surroundings, wherever you are and breathe. **Breathe in and breathe out**, slowly and deliberately. Notice after a few moments that the world is still going on around you, and you are still here, breathing. Although it may seem so, the world hasn't stopped turning. There has been a pretty major shift in your world, but the world at large is still OK.



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Video via Mamamia

Once you are feeling a little more grounded you can start to look at this thing, demystify it and then begin the process of managing it.

You will most likely be [experiencing a myriad of emotions](#). That is OK. Feel them. Whatever you do, don't suppress or block whatever you are feeling. Sitting with uncomfortable emotions for a time (rather than constantly distracting yourself) is helping yourself immensely.

So, you feel like crying. Cry. Cry for a few moments, then wipe your tears. You feel like screaming? Go into your bedroom, close the door, and SCREAM! Do these things until they are out of your system, then move on - make sure you don't stay too long in this space. Do it. Get it out of your system. Move on.

Remember, nothing – no thought or situation - is permanent. Although it may be near impossible for you believe right now, this life will one day be your new normal.

### Focus on personal growth.

See this as an [opportunity to flourish](#). To be who you wanted to be before marriage and life took over. Think back to a time in your life when you truly felt as though the world was yours, that *anything* was possible. It may have been when you graduated from university. Tap into the psyche of that young girl and feel the exhilarating and intoxicating sense of freedom once again. The world was yours for the taking then, and it is now.

Good luck. You will get through this. You will.

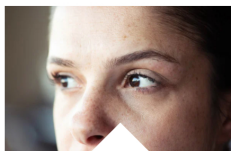
*This post originally appeared on [Divorced Moms](#).*

*What advice would you give to someone who has just gone through a painful relationship breakup? Answer in the Comments section below.*

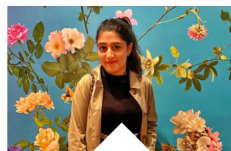
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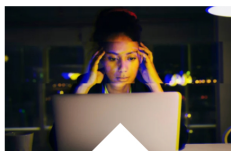
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