

The Divorce & Breakup Coach Ready to Support and Empower those considering Divorce as D-Day Approaches (8th January 2019)

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Divorce became my SUPERPOWER

****After her first marriage ended, Caroline Strawson had £70,000 debts and lost her home**

****Best selling author, Caroline, known as The Divorce & Breakup Coach, helps clients to see divorce as a SUPERPOWER and a catalyst for change**

****This D-Day, Caroline Strawson wants to help others realise that divorce need not be the end but a catalyst to redesign your life**

****She implores you to not to put your self-worth and happiness in somebody else's hands**

As lawyers across the country are braced for a spike in enquiries of people looking to divorce on January 8th, the day dubbed D-Day ('Divorce Day'), best selling author and one of the UK's first accredited Divorce and Breakup Coaches, Caroline Strawson is poised to offer support to anyone struggling with the idea of facing 2019 after a breakup, with a marathon live online mentoring session throughout the day.

Northampton based mum of 2, Caroline Strawson went from being a traditional 'fairy-tale' family, to becoming a desperate ex-wife who was driven by fear after being left with accumulated debt of £70k and 2 children to care for when her marriage broke down. Fast forward 6 years and she is running three successful businesses, and has turned her life around from self-harming and not being able to leave the house, to now inspiring other businesswomen globally, becoming a best-selling author and is now known as The Divorce & Breakup Coach helping clients to not just bounce back after their divorce, but bounce forward to see divorce as a SUPERPOWER and a catalyst for change.

As online divorce searches are about to surge (according to data, more than 40,500 people will search "divorce" online in January*), this D-Day, Caroline Strawson wants to help others realise that a divorce need not be the end but a catalyst to redesign your life to be one where you can truly be happy once again by focusing on core areas you can control. Using the positive psychology of PERMAH, which looks at the five core elements of psychological well-being and happiness - P – Positive Emotion, E – Engagement, R – Relationships, M – Meaning, A – Accomplishments, H – Health - Caroline coaches clients to identify how they can increase their happiness and overall life satisfaction. She believes that by focusing on these five elements when going through a divorce can help people reach a life of fulfilment, happiness, and meaning.

On the 8th January she will be running a free interactive mentoring session in her group providing support for anyone who needs it, and access to her advice via live FAQs for a full 8 hours as part of her mission to empower those going through a breakup.

Caroline believes there are a number of reasons for the rise in divorces in January, such as the stress of trying to create the perfect Christmas, financial troubles exacerbated by festive spending demands, or the new year meaning people are more adamant on a change.

Caroline said: "The reality is that in January couples get to crisis point after existing relationship

tensions have come to a head over Christmas. There is so much pressure over the festive period for families to have a picture perfect Christmas – trust me I have been there –I was obsessed with what others were thinking and how they perceived our family –my fairy tale looking life was so important to me. But the reality was that none of it was real – don't just stay for the picture perfect family when you're simply no longer happy with your spouse."

"It is do important to reclaim your happiness – value your happiness rather than being unhappily married. A divorce is about taking control back of your life and stop putting your self-worth and happiness in somebody else's hands. Happiness is yours to reclaim."

Having suffered years of emotional abuse within her marriage, Caroline knows first-hand how tough the divorce process can be especially when dealing with high conflict. She said:"I am so passionate about helping others by being their strength and light in the darkest of times so they don't feel alone. I aim to empower them through the power of Positive Psychology, her own unique coaching techniques and proven, practical exercises that she has learnt through experience, training and personal hindsight."

Caroline is on a mission to stop others hitting rock bottom as she did after narcissistic abuse because she knows first-hand how this can nearly break you. She openly shares her own lows she went through including depression, anxiety and self-harm and total loss of identity. Caroline wants to help others realise that a divorce need not be the end but a catalyst to redesign your life to a more exciting and happier one where you can truly be happy once again and not live in a constant state of anxiety.

Caroline runs a broad range of Divorce Coaching services powered by positive psychology, including the launching of The Positive Divorce Club which is a local non profit meeting for local people going through divorce to learn and connect at this traumatic time. Caroline has an online kickstart recovery programme launching plus one to one coaching with unlimited messaging so her clients never feel alone. She has a free facebook group -Divorce Breakup Support After Narcissistic Abuse which has built to over 3000 members globally in just a matter of weeks. She also offers a 'High Conflict Middleman Messenger Service and a parallel parenting tool to help promote effective parenting strategies. Retreats are also in the pipeline, both UK and abroad, where those going through Divorce or breakup can come together to find strength and empowerment with others in similar situations.

*****Notes on Caroline's personal story*****

Having been diagnosed with post natal depression following the birth of her miracle baby after suffering 4 miscarriages, Caroline was faced with discovering her husband was having an affair. Only months later her 'rock', her mum, suddenly died and this combined with the breakdown of her 12 year marriage sent Caroline being diagnosed with PTSD. Having truly hit rock bottom, Caroline, who had always signed up to the fairytale married life, having seen her parents enjoy a happy 40 years of marriage, experienced a dramatic loss of self-care, a crippling financial situation and desperate depression when her marriage broke down. She tells of not being able to look at herself in the mirror, panic attacks and self harming, living on wine and junk food snacks and only having 42p in her bank account as she was crippled with 70K debt and having her house in negative equity and repossessed. She also shares how a psychotherapist was her turning point after they made her realise that none of it was her fault and that actually she had been emotionally bullied by someone with a personality disorder, covering the 'behind the scenes' areas of divorce that seldom are talked about. In the last 5 years she has turned her life around having re-discovered her former self, invested into learning and

development, embraced an entrepreneurial journey and explored positive psychology providing her with clarity and focus. She has been there and “bought a million t-shirts” and now wants to “save others and help them come out stronger, faster.” You can find out more at www.carolinestrawson.com

*****8 Tips for Surviving Divorce During the Holidays*****

Divorce at this time of year can throw up all kinds of emotions whether you are newly divorced or this is the first Christmas you are apart because it is not the normal Christmas you have been used to. This is particularly prevalent if you have children. There can be intense feelings of sadness and anger all in the mix as thoughts of your children having a lesser childhood and Christmas now the parents have separated. This absolutely does not need to be the case and I have listed 8 top tips to cope with Christmas if divorced.

1. Plan Ahead

Waiting until the very last minute to set up your kids' holiday and school break schedule will just add more stress to all of your lives. Make sure that you include the kids in the planning process because chances are your kids may feel dis-empowered by your divorce and including them gives them a voice, and a chance to feel like a part of something again.

2. Forget About Perfection

If you are wanted to create the “perfect” Christmas to make up for what has happened due to those feelings of guilt, you are already setting yourself up for failure and it puts an enormous amount of extra stress and pressure on you AND your kids plus what exactly is the “perfect” Christmas!? How many families do you know that sit around a log fire, singing carols, sipping sherry and not arguing?! Instead of going for “perfect,” try going for “happy” with new traditions. Also don't beat yourself up, if it is an awful Christmas because it is just one day out of 365 in a year.

3. Focus on the Big Picture

Can you really remember every Christmas you had growing up in minute detail? I would guess not and your children will be the same. If your holidays this year are terrible, anything you do next year will be better. Look for the positives. This year's failure could remove next year's pressure for you. Your children will be looking to you to mirror your emotions, so if you are sad, they will be sad and if you make an effort, however hard that may feel, your children will thrive on that. They will also learn that it is possible that not every holiday in their life will be fabulous ... and they will survive! You are teaching them coping strategies and resilience.

4. Let go of guilt

Guilt can suck the spirit and happiness out of Christmas in a flash and whether you realise it or not, your guilty feelings don't just affect you, they will affect your children too. Either your kids feel bad because you feel bad, or they get spoiled because you try to overcompensate to make up for everything they DON'T have during this holiday. Try and teach your children some gratitude and instead of feeling the guilt, feel gratitude about the new and exciting traditions you are putting into place. It enables your kids to learn that life is full of imperfections but you can be flexible and make the best of a situation and this is a great life skill to teach them as it is not just about material items at Christmas, but love and time together. Feeling grateful is one of the best ways to shift yourself out of guilt and into a more positive state.

5. Get Back to Basics

Divorced or not, it's easy to get caught up in the over-hyped consumerism of the Christmas. We are

constantly being bombarded with adverts about the latest gadgets. Focus on what experiences and new memories you can create. Watch your favourite movies together, eat Christmas foods and focus on enjoying your time together, rather than on giving or getting more stuff.

6. Cut Yourself Some Slack

Be kind to yourself!!! Often we are so hard on ourself and actually the harder you are and trying to not show emotion, the more your children will feel it is wrong to express emotion and that it is a weakness. It is not!! It is a strength and you want to raise children who have an attitude of good mental health for themselves. Don't isolate yourself even if you don't necessarily feel like going out and celebrating, being with others often helps take your mind off of your own pain especially during the time your children are with your ex partner. Get out of the house and go somewhere that you can see other people. Allow yourself to feel the emotions that you are experiencing and know that this is normal but does not need to define you for the rest of the year and into the following. Try not let yourself to wallow in negativity.

7. Keep it Simple

Resist the urge to fill every waking moment of your Christmas holiday with activities. Planning too many activities will only make you feel more overwhelmed than ever which will negatively impact your mental health. Give yourself permission to celebrate the holidays as quietly or as differently as you want this year as you are creating new memories and traditions.

8. Practice Gratitude

No matter how difficult this holiday season may be for you, millions of people living in developing countries would gladly change positions with you. While knowing that others are more miserable than you won't change your own circumstances, it might help you put your situation in perspective. Instead of focusing on what you don't have, focus on what you do. Showing and feeling gratitude can have a huge impact on the brain and start to generate new more positive neural pathways and slowly start to rewire the brain and change your negative lens to a more positive one.

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*data released and analysed by divorce support service Amicable

Images available of Caroline.

Caroline is available for interview, comment, quotes, features, blog posts, Q&A's...

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