

# Exploring Your New Identity Following Divorce

## Objective

To identify interests and positive qualities as you create a new identity following divorce.

## You Should Know

Divorce is a major life transition, an event that shifts your status, your roles, and your identity. Transitions mark the endings of old phases and the beginning of new ones, producing changes in your life trajectory. A major transition like divorce will cause you to rethink your identity.

Your identity answers the following questions: “Who are you?” and “What does it mean to be you?” Identity includes the basic values that shape the choices you make and what you value related to relationships, career, and more. You might hold many identities: parent, partner, teacher, or friend, for example.

When you divorce, you might experience an identity crisis. Not only do you lose your spouse, but also your lifestyle and way of being in the world. Your identity is closely connected to your relationships. So, when relationships change, how is your identity affected? You are no longer someone’s spouse, you file your taxes differently, and you might have less money to spend – affecting the way you live your life and see yourself. Your identity as a parent might change, and you might even lose friends. The key is to recognize your identity will change following divorce, and take proactive steps to create a new identity.

If you connected your identity to your ex-spouse, you might feel lost when the relationship ends. This worksheet will help you identify your interests and positive qualities to create a new identity following divorce.

## What to Do

First, examine the changes that have occurred since your divorce, some of the qualities you have discovered in yourself, and interests you might like to cultivate. Focus on your strengths and skills. In your post-divorce life, you will build on these capacities to create a new identity.

Describe five changes you have experienced as a result of your divorce. This might include where you live, whom you live with, job status, and so on.

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_

Describe how you have adjusted to these changes. Are you having difficulties or challenges? What has this transition been like for you? Explain.

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Describe qualities, beliefs, personality traits, and anything else about you that has remained unchanged by your divorce.

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Describe five positive qualities or traits you have discovered or developed since your divorce. For example, you might have discovered you are independent, financially savvy, or courageous.

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_

What are five interests or activities you would like to explore?

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_

5. \_\_\_\_\_

Now, pretend you are going to “advertise” your new identity in the newspaper. The goal of your ad is to declare your new identity to the world. Based on your responses above, write your “identity ad” describing the new you.

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**Reflections on This Exercise**

Did completing this exercise help you identify ways your identity has changed since your divorce? Explain.

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Did this exercise help you create a new identity? Why or why not?

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Did anything surprise you as you completed this exercise? Explain.

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How helpful was this exercise? \_\_\_\_\_

(1 = not very helpful, 5 = moderately helpful, 10 = extremely helpful)

What could you do differently to make progress in this area?

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