

Lessons I Have Learned

By Betty Peck

I came to Visions Anew a broken puddle of tears. I was a mess. Margot said I looked like a lost puppy. My husband had left me after 13 years to be with an old friend from high school he'd reconnected with on Facebook. I was terrified of having to face the world alone. But ladies, I'm here to tell you, there is HOPE.

Divorce has taught me so many invaluable lessons:

1. **Never drive right after you've received the opposing attorney's initial offer.** I was absolutely seeing RED when I left the parking lot to come home that day. I was speeding, blowing stop signs left and right, blowing through stop lights. I so deserved five tickets. At least. Blessedly, there were no cops in sight.
2. **Never drive while you're thinking about your wasband and his new wife.** I totally blew through a red light, narrowly missing an on-coming pickup truck. And a cop was right behind me. I began to laugh to myself, thinking, "Can't wait till I explain to him why I blew through that light. This is so going to be at least a \$350 ticket." The officer approached, asked for my license and registration and then went back to his car. I waited for the bomb to drop. He returned, glancing at my license, and said, "You live over there on Mint Road up in that new house on the hill?" "Yeah," I replied.

"You know Tony Flores?" he asked. "He's over there on Mint Road. He's a good buddy of mine. I go visit him at his house a lot."

"Tony???" I squeaked excitedly. "You're friends with Tony???? How cool is that???"

"Yeah," he responded, smiling, handing me back my license and registration. "All right," he said, "just pay more attention next time." And he let me off without even a warning. I couldn't believe it!! ! God bless Tony!!!!

Driving carefully, making sure I stopped at every stop light, I made my way to work where I serve as my brother's administrative office assistant: the same brother with whom I live in the big house on the hill. Dying of curiosity, I approached my brother. I just HAD to know. "Gilbert," I asked, "who's Tony Flores???"

3. **Every divorcing woman needs a Whack-a-mole.** Ladies, we all have frustration, pint up anger that has to be released somehow. I was feeling guilty about the anger I felt toward my wasband. It seemed so unchristian. And then I talked to my counselor. "Hey," he said, "Jesus got angry. Jesus threw tables and chairs in the temple." "That's it! That's it!" I beamed. "I am soooooo getting a Whack-a-mole for Christmas!!!!" You can buy Whack-a-mole at Wal-mart for \$22.50. It's in the kids' section. But ladies, it's so not a kid's toy. What mother wants her precious children to learn to bap moles on the head? It promotes violence and hitting, and

insults. Ladies, don't buy this toy for your children. Buy it for **yourself!!** The object is to bap the lit up moles on their heads, and they light up faster and faster, which means you have to hit them faster and faster, harder and harder as you go. The mole in the middle counts double the points when he lights up. I've named my mole in the middle Speckle, because you see, my wasband is Lee S. Peck. Since I didn't want my boys to know that I envisioned their father every time I bapped the mole in the middle, I took the first two letters of Lee's name, Le and put them at the end behind S Peck, and voila! Speckle! And ladies, I have to tell you: playing Whack-a-mole does WONDERS for my soul. **It's better than sex!!!** Thirty minutes of playing Whack-a-mole and bapping Speckle on the head, and I was in sheer afterglow. I never felt such peace!!!!

Ladies, divorce doesn't have to be the end. Divorce can be just the beginning of the most exciting, fulfilling adventure in your life. An adventure where you get to redefine yourself and recreate the new you. I crawled into Visions Anew in 2009 a blubbing, hopeless mess. I flew back from Missouri to Atlanta (1000 miles) one year later to volunteer at the 2010 June Visions Anew retreat. I HAD to come back. I HAD to give you ladies a message. **There is hope.** You don't have to go it alone. We're all sisters in this together. And you will find lifelong friends among your Visions Anew sisters, friends who can help you through the tough times, mentors who can tell you from experience that the sun will shine on your life again. And ladies, if sharing my journey with others can empower divorcing women who are this year's puddle of tears so that they leave with a smile, a Can Do Attitude, and a heart filled with hope, then my divorce was sooooooooooooo worth it!

I was terrified to face this world of divorce. But what I've found is that as I embrace the flow of the river I'm now riding instead of trying to fight the current and swim back upstream to the old life I once had, life is opening up some amazing doors of ministry opportunities that are bigger than I ever dreamed possible. I'm finding that in the midst of all the pain, life is more beautiful and full of so many more possibilities than I ever would have had, had my husband stayed true to our marriage vows and not gotten the divorce. I'm finding **myself**, really for the first time in my life. I'm finding my calling, and I'm embracing life in a way I never embraced it before. And because of that I **thank God** my husband left me for that other woman, for in letting me go, he has set me free to fly, and baby, I'm gonna soar!!!!

Ladies, you have a choice to make. Are you going to be a victim of what has happened to you, or are you going to be a victor rising above the circumstances, a victor who shines like a beacon of hope to others who are called to walk this path? Yes, there will be tough times ahead. I'm still in the thick of them. But ladies, when those times come, what I've learned to do is to hang on to the belief that maybe I'm being called to travel this path so that God can use my experiences to help bring hope to someone else down the road who comes in a broken puddle of tears. So how about it, ladies, let's make a commitment to join me NEXT year at the Visions Anew Retreat as a volunteer -- to beam at next year's puddles of tears and fill them with empowerment and hope!!!!