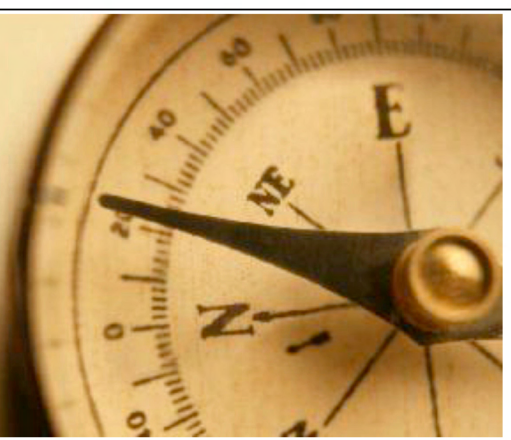


LifeMapSM



"LifeMap is a navigational tool to help you on your path towards personal and professional success. Our belief is that you can achieve a more rewarding career, a more productive organization and a more enjoyable and abundant life."

August 21, 2007

This Week's Message:

**Going Solo - on the
home front.**

Paths Forward

Resources

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at your next meeting
or conference.**

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Going Solo - on the home front.

I've been doing research for this edition of LifeMap since last April when Bob M. of Boston emailed to ask if I might focus some attention on the needs of people who were newly divorced. As I researched this area I was almost overwhelmed with the multitude of areas where newly-divorced folks could use solid support and advice. These areas touch on emotional issues, family issues, legal issues, financial issues, social issues and, sometimes, relocation or work issues. As I spoke to more people about what I was finding in this already expansive area (considering that about half of all marriages end in divorce), it seemed to grow exponentially before my very eyes.

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There is an incredible amount of literature devoted the historic origins of marriage from sociological, religious and anthropological viewpoints. I have done some reading in this area and, though I am certainly no expert, I noticed a glaring omission in such discussions of marriage as "the foundation of society", "a family unit to provide for the raising of children" and other definitions that support a variety religious or moral values. That omission is the simple human need to connect deeply and intimately with another

person - someone with whom to share the joys of life as well as to help ease the burdens of life. And though modern definitions of marriage are being widely (and heatedly) debated and cohabitation is the predominant trend in some countries these seem to be distinctions without essential differences in regard to loving, committed, mutually supportive relationships and to the pain that occurs upon their demise.

Loss and pain go hand in hand. This distress is exacerbated when loneliness and isolation are added to the equation regardless if the source is the breakup of a non-marital relationship, divorce or the death of a spouse. It would be impossible to address all of these concerns in one LifeMap but we can take a look at some of the commonalities and identify some starting points as to how they might be addressed.

Paths Forward

• **Emotional Support.** Finding oneself suddenly alone, for whatever reason, can raise a host of emotional issues: loneliness, anger, guilt, resentment, sorrow, and grief, even depression. Sometimes just confiding in a close friend or family member will bring relief from these negative emotions. However, if these understandable reactions linger for an unreasonable period of time or they interfere with your ability to enjoy life it may be helpful to seek the assistance of a counselor, psychologist, clinical social worker or psychiatrist. Long gone are the days when seeking such professional assistance was seen as a weakness. There are well-trained, highly skilled, professionally licensed, and caring individuals in all of these disciplines who can help ease the pain of your loss. Ask those you trust (such as friends, family, clergy, or your physician) if they have the name of someone they would recommend to you. Be a good consumer: check out their backgrounds, ask about their approach to your issues, ask about cost or insurance and then meet for an initial consultation to see if you connect on a personal level.

• **Legal Support.** We live in a society of laws so whenever you have questions about your legal rights, obligations, or status you should secure professional legal counsel. The most obvious example is a divorce attorney. When there are assets, debts, businesses and children involved these arrangements are complicated, can become quite emotional, or used as instruments of revenge. However, today many couples are using divorce mediators to reduce some of the rancor these proceedings often take on.

If you have suddenly become a widow or widower your paramount sense of loss will be accompanied by a list of legal to-do's. You will not be at your best during this initial period so have a trusted confidant by your side to help you stay focused, to handle phone calls, to keep track of details you may forget or neglect and to take notes when you meet with your lawyer. Now is the time when having an established relationship with a family lawyer is especially useful. He or she can help you deal with wills, trusts, probate court, insurance issues, and guide you in name changes on property titles, financial accounts, credit cards,

etc. Sadly, you may need some professional insulation from unscrupulous sales people (or even family members) who may strike when you are at your lowest; here again is where a lawyer can help.

There is no shortage of lawyer jokes (and some of them are actually quite funny). But, you will most need a good attorney in times of loss, pain and sadness. Hopefully you will make the time now to arrange your personal affairs as we suggested last month (see LifeMap archive 7/10/07, "The God Forbid List" @ www.drpaulpowers.com) and use that opportunity to establish a good working relationship now with a trusted attorney who will be there for you when the chips are down.

• **Financial Support.** We briefly touched on this issue above - from the legal angle. Adjusting to your new situation (whether from a break-up, divorce or death) can take some time. It is wise not to make any dramatic changes that you can avoid during the initial stage of this transition when your emotions can be variable or even volatile. Whether or not you have stayed on top of your financial affairs, now is the time to locate and organize all relevant materials so that you have a complete and comprehensible picture of your financial situation. The data you are compiling can come from a variety of sources: bank / investment account statements, pension / retirement plan documents, alimony or child support agreements, credit card bills, mortgages, deeds, Social Security information military papers, etc. This will take some time and effort but, at a time like this, it can be a useful distraction as it provides a concrete list of things to do. Your attorney probably has some good ideas for you but you should also seek financial expertise specific to your situation even if you are of modest means. You can find such help though the customer service department of your credit union or bank, from your accountant, or from a certified financial planner.

• **Social Support.** It is natural to want some 'alone time' to sort things out and grieve the loss of a relationship. Occasionally it may even seem that some family or friends are intruding on you. But try to see their positive intention in not wanting you to struggle through a painful transition all alone. There is no right or wrong length of time to grieve; there is only the right time for you. Perhaps some socializing with family and friends will help you over the worst of it. If not, consider an individual or group counseling option which many people find helpful. One way to get your mind off of your troubles is to help others with theirs. Explore options to volunteer somewhere that is in keeping with your interests and values. Believe it or not, work can be a great asset here; consider committing yourself to a demanding new project with people whose company you enjoy or sign up for a course or seminar series that will add to your professional qualifications. Remember, there are people out there who are willing and able to support you in a difficult time - find them, allow them to help and express your appreciation graciously.

LifeMap is about directly addressing the ups and downs of life in ways that are supportive and sometimes demanding because they are geared to keep you moving forward -

especially in tough times.

Resources

Someone you know job hunting or thinking about it?

To order the best, concise, all-round job changing guide available. "Winning Job Interviews: Reduce Interview Anxiety, Outprepare the Other Candidates, Land the Job You Love" by Dr. Paul Powers, click the link below.

Stalled at work? Still struggling to find your true vocation?

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Have an issue or question you'd like Dr. Paul to address in a future edition? Send an email to the email address list below.

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Sincerely,

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