

AVENUE D:

Support for Survivors of
Betrayal-Related Separation and Divorce

"The Road to Debridement"

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Topic 11 of 12

DREAMGIRLS: Designing Our New Lives

What kind of post-divorce life do I want?
And how do I get there?



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Need support? Contact Rae at **HEALING TALKS BACK Coaching, Consultation and Supervision, LLC**
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a note from rae

First things first: Welcome to the conversation!

If you're downloading this worksheet, it's probably because you find yourself standing at a crossroads you NEVER expected to navigate: picking up the pieces at the END of an intimate relationship, one mortally wounded by sexual betrayal. I've stood at that crossroads myself (twice, in fact), healing from that double-whammy trauma of betrayal-related divorce. Suffice it to say, **I understand the superhuman strength it takes to rebuild your life**, all on your own, often under circumstances that feel less than inspiring.

Even though the details of YOUR situation are unique, you may relate to some of these messages commonly spoken by fellow survivors, all entertaining the question of "**What comes next?**"

- * *Once upon a time, I knew what I wanted for my life. Now I have zero idea—and that's scary.*
- * *Why even try to plan for the future? I have no control over it anyway.*
- * *Dreaming is for naive souls; when you've known this kind of heartache, dreaming is foolish.*
- * *What if I let myself dream again, only to find myself living another nightmare?*
- * *How can I believe "the best is yet to come," when those words feel empty and hollow?*
- * *I want to "dream new dreams" and "design my new life," but I don't know where to start.*

Those questions are SO legitimate—so let's have a conversation about it:

- * In questions #1–7, I prompt you to explore your experience of dreaming, including its role in your life and relationships.
- * In questions #8–9, I walk you through the experience of revisioning a lifelong dream—deconstructing it to discover what values exist (and may still exist) at its core.
- * Finally, in question #10, I invite you to explore the classic "wheel of life" exercise. Even if you've done this before, try it again with your evolving post-divorce eyes.

These inquiries are designed to help you evoke awareness, gain clarity and process your reality from different angles. As with all such invitations, please don't pressure yourself to answer every question; instead, trust yourself to choose whichever ones will stretch you in the direction your soul needs to go.

*In service and support,
—Rae*

Courageous Explorations™

WORKSHEET INSTRUCTIONS: Each week, I'll provide you with this list of 10–20 coaching questions, formatted into a digital/printable worksheet. I call these questions COURAGEOUS EXPLORATIONS™, written by me specifically to serve and support each of our 12 specific topics related to betrayal-related separation and divorce. These questions serve as a practical and foundational coaching tool, written to help you to “dig deep” and process how each topic relates to you, your experience and your relationship.

We'll draw upon these questions to explore this topic from a variety of angles. I'll invite you to share your most meaningful “aha moments,” plus any areas in which you find yourself challenged, confused or conflicted. As always, remember to practice self-care, self-soothing and self-intervention (emotional time-outs) as you dig into this deep, personal work. Most importantly, please take a moment and pause to honor yourself for being so beautifully, bravely courageous!

PS: Got overwhelm? Please be gentle!

Incremental healing involves three distinct-yet-alternating modes of operation: awareness, acceptance and action. (1) **awareness** = I see and understand this, (2) **acceptance** = I'm coming to terms with this, and (3) **action** = I'm doing something about this. If we try to operate from three modes at once, we're likely to find ourselves spinning our wheels. If you're not gaining traction in one mode right now, SHIFT GEARS, and lean into whichever mode is manageable for you today. To avoid feeling pressured or overwhelmed, remember this: your next opportunity for Courageous Integration is right around the corner. You won't miss this boat, and you can't screw this up. I promise!

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Are you ready? Let's get started!

DREAMGIRLS: Designing Our New Lives

What kind of post-divorce life do I want? And how do I get there?

(1)

On a scale from 0–10, where am I at TODAY on the “designing my new life” spectrum?

0 = I have ZERO idea what comes next; I don't know what I want, I don't know what to expect, and I don't know what dreams I might dare to dream anymore.

10 = I'm zeroed in on my goals! Everything I want, everything I expect, and everything my dreams are made of—they're all crystal clear to me. Bring. It. On.

(2)

Big picture, what were my feelings about “dreams” at the start of this relationship? By contrast, what were my feelings about dreams at the start of this separation or divorce? What are my feelings now, and how might I anticipate those feelings changing within the next 1–2 years?

continued >>>

- (3a) In what (if any) ways did my ex support or participate in the dreams I had at the start of our life together? What about dreams I developed later, over the course of our relationship? If possible, write/share about a story that demonstrates this **SUPPORT**.
- (3b) In what (if any) ways did my ex dismiss, devalue or sabotage the dreams I had at the start of our life together? What about dreams I developed later, over the course of our relationship? If possible, write/share about a story that demonstrates this **LACK OF SUPPORT**.
- (4) Aside from my ex, who in my life has always supported and honored my dreams? Have I paused to let that individual (or individuals) know what their support means to me? If that person is no longer alive or present in my life, consider writing a heartfelt letter that articulates this message of appreciation.

continued >>>

(5a) Consider the ways I've supported others' dreams; this may include my ex, friends, family or others. Take note of the ways in which this support manifested itself in both practical and less-tangible ways. If possible, write/share a story that demonstrates this support.

(5b) Ask and answer the following question: "Based upon my demonstrated capacity to support my loved ones in honoring their dreams, what kind of support might I now channel toward supporting myself and my own?"

continued >>>

(6) Informed by my answers above, what conclusions might I draw about myself, my relationships, and my dreams?

(7) Complete this sentence with as many endings as possible: "Specifically related to my dreams for the future (and designing my life to support those dreams), I am proud of myself for..."

continued >>>

RE-VISIONING LIFELONG DREAMS

WORKSHEET DATE: _____

(8a) **STEP ONE:** Type this link into your browser; it will lead to an audio recording in which Gaelyn introduces this “Re-Visioning Lifelong Dreams” exercise, created by Lori Rubenstein. (If you can’t play the recording for some reason, please let me know.)

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/15pvKCAKhZj1iIWocrwe-N7rpYryinmZ3/view?usp=sharing>

(8b) **STEP TWO:** Envision and/or write about an OLD “dying dream” I once held for my future—specifically something that is no longer possible, practical or desirable, due to this separation and/or divorce. Share about this “dying dream” with our group.

continued >>>

- (8c) **STEP THREE:** Pause a moment to think beyond the specific supporting details of the dream I just described. As I do, bring to mind the peripheral details (specific factors) that make this dream unique. Stretch myself to isolate and identify which personal VALUES exist at the heart of this particular dream. Write or share about those values with our group.

continued >>>

- (8d) **STEP FOUR:** Envision and/or write about a NEW “living dream”—a dream that can begin to take shape now that I am no longer with my ex. Choose a new dream that’s **inspired by the same specific personal values that existed at the core of my OLD dream.** Write or share about your new living dream with our group.

continued >>>

(8e) **STEP FIVE:** What is one obstacle I expect I'll encounter, as I work to make this new living dream come true? What resources might help me to avoid or overcome this obstacle?

(8f) **STEP SIX:** What is ONE small step I can take toward this new living dream within the next month? Three months? Six months? What is one "stretch goal" I might strive to achieve within the same timeframe?

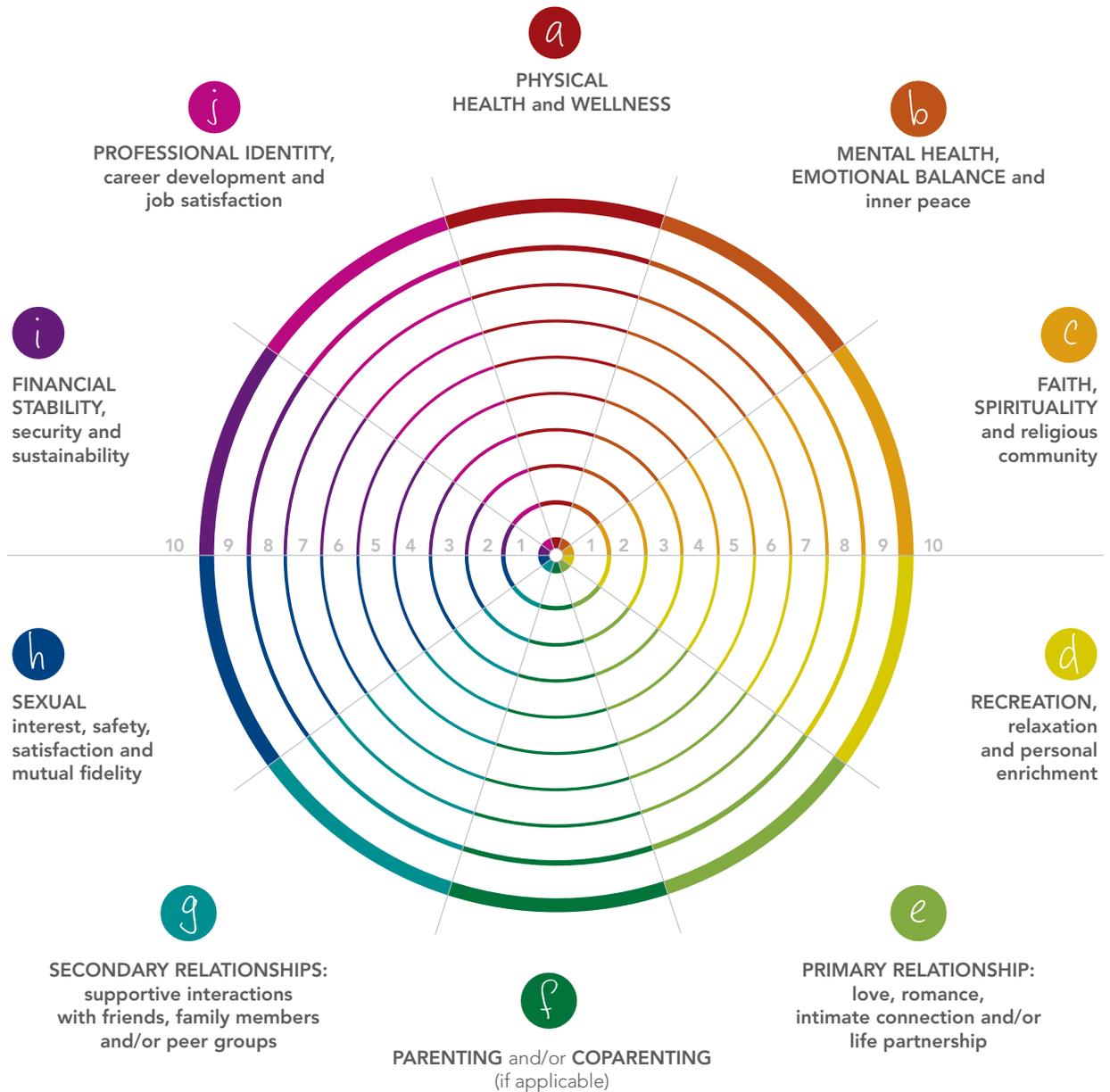
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(8g) **STEP SEVEN:** Finish this exercise by writing an affirmation, one that acknowledges that MY DREAMS MATTER—and that I can build new (living) dreams in the space created by old (dying) ones.

(9) **What was this exercise like for me? What are my takeaways as the result of this exercise?**

DreamGirls “WHEEL OF [NEW] LIFE” Exercise

(10a) **STEP ONE: For this exercise, begin b in each of the ten sections highlighted below.**
10 = I'm completely satisfied. This area of my life is working beautifully, with zero need for improvement."
00 = "I'm deeply unsatisfied. This area of my life is NOT working, with definite need for improvement."



(10b) STEP TWO:

In column #1, record your CURRENT numbers from the previous page.

In column #2, record a TARGET number (where you want to get yourself eventually).

In column #3, write a response to this question: **"If I increase this number, what becomes POSSIBLE?"**

	CATEGORY	#1 CURRENT	#2 TARGET	#3 If I increase this number, WHAT BECOMES POSSIBLE?
	PHYSICAL HEALTH and WELLNESS			
	MENTAL HEALTH, EMOTIONAL BALANCE and INNER PEACE			
	FAITH, SPIRITUALITY and RELIGIOUS COMMUNITY			
	RECREATION, RELAXATION and PERSONAL ENRICHMENT			
	PRIMARY RELATIONSHIP: love, romance, intimate connection, life partnership			
	PARENTING and/or COPARENTING (if applicable)			
	SECONDARY RELATIONSHIPS: friends, family and/or peer groups			
	SEXUAL interest, safety, satisfaction and mutual fidelity			
	FINANCIAL STABILITY, security and sustainability			
	PROFESSIONAL IDENTITY, career development and job satisfaction			

(10c) **STEP THREE:**

What was this exercise like for me? What are my takeaways as the result of this exercise?

Great job! Ready to move onto Courageous Integrations? >>>

