

The New York Times

From Our Readers: Rebuilding After Divorce



Hanna Ingber



Writing on single parenting

I recently wrote about how my divorce, while miserable, forced me to learn all sorts of new skills. Hundreds of readers then wrote in with their own experiences of divorce or losing a partner.

Here's what some readers shared with me



Holly Stapleton



Oct. 12, 2021



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Twelve years after a difficult divorce I look back with pride at the life I've built. I went back to graduate school, built a career and kept the house and maintained it beautifully. Took trips around the world with my girls and taught them how to be strong independent women.

I'm so grateful to be a woman living here and now — **history has not been kind to single women**, especially older ones.

— Clea Davis, Ann Arbor, Mich.

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I relish each small successful repair, every picture hung perfectly, done by me with no screaming or worsened damage.

I never felt as good sitting in a psychiatrist's office as I do when I've selected just the right drill bit to mount that anchor...

— Terri O'Brien, Beverly Hills, Mich.

Courtesy of Terri O'Brien



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Six years ago, I left a 30-year marriage and was terrified I would not know how to handle things — an apartment, finances, car repairs, caps on jars. All this fear despite holding a demanding job. I learned **how to use tools and fix things**, and it was so satisfying. Now I know I can handle anything on my own.

— A book publishing professional, Westfield, N.J.

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I'm gathering my strength to leave my emotionally abusive husband of 20 years. I work full time, but our roles are so gendered as well.

I'm so scared. **I'm scared of taxes, of mortgages, of handling finances** that I haven't done in 25 years because he is "better at it than I, anyway." I'm adding your article to my trove of signs that I can do it.

— A working mom, Washington, D.C.

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Last fall, when local infections were sky high, the firewood still needed to be cut and split and family couldn't come help me — so out I went. **I felled over a dozen trees**, cut everything into pieces, got it all back to my house, and split all the logs into firewood.

— Margaret Heykes, whose husband died, leaving her with a 60-acre farm in Spirit, Wis.

Courtesy of Margaret Heykes



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Fathers also wrote in, saying that they were glad their divorce led them to become a more involved parent.

After the divorce I stayed in the marital home, took on shared custody and relished the opportunity to prove to both myself and my girls (and my son) that I could manage both a taxing job and being a good dad as well as a passable “mom”. It was a hectic period with very long days and short nights, but boy, was it worth it!

— A father, Connecticut

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