

Divorce Story- Leaving a Love Gone Wrong to Live a Life I Love by Juliette Haegglund

My name is Juliet Haegglund and my former husband and I had this beautiful love story. We met when I was on vacation in Southeast Asia. He lived in Southeast Asia at the time. I lived in South America and I met him when I was on vacation. And he was different from anybody that I had ever dated and I, you know, I fell pretty hard. We had a wonderful time together. We traveled the world and did a lot of amazing things together.

Somewhere about three years into our relationship, the cracks began to appear. We had a series of breakups and makeups and breakups and makeups. And then, about 14 years after we met, I found that those cracks just got bigger and bigger and bigger until they turned into caverns which pretty much engulfed me, right? That's what happens when you start to get these caverns. So, I realized that I needed to make a change.

And one of those breakups in particular was a very difficult one because I was abandoned when I was pregnant with our son. I was abandoned for six months. And so, I had become this person that I did not recognize and I realized that nothing was going to change and the only way I could move forward was to make a change. And so, I filed for divorce.

Despite, you know, all the hurt I had gone through, I just wanted to put the past behind me, and so, I thought I would try to make this as positive and quick a process as possible. But my former husband had other ideas. He did not want the divorce and so he was determined to hurt me as much as he could.

And one of the many things he did was he filed for custody of our four-year-old son at the time. So nothing really prepared me for how difficult and devastating that the whole divorce process was going to be.

I was in a very bad place. I felt like I was not getting adequate legal representation and I was getting very desperate. So, a friend who had attended *The Guide to Good Divorce*SM

seminar told me about Trey and about the seminar and so I called Trey's office up and I booked an appointment.

I came to the appointment with Trey and when I walked into the conference room, Trey was sitting at this conference table and in front of him he had all these folders opened up. He had gone and researched my entire divorce process. And he knew things about my divorce that I did not even know. And at that point I just thought I'm going to hire this guy. So, I hired Trey. He was very gracious and it was just a week to mediation. You know, he got up to speed on my case very quickly.

At that first appointment, it was a two-hour appointment and mostly he just listened to me. He asked me a few questions here and there, but just him listening to me and trying to hear, you know, hearing me tell my story from my perspective. That meant a lot to me.

So then, I also attended The Guide to Good DivorceSM seminar and I got a lot of really great information. Information about the legal process, which is a very, very complex process. And then also information about divorce financial planning, which I had absolutely no idea about. And so this, you know, made a very big difference for me through my journey and the process of getting divorced.

And there's a few things that I've done that has helped me along the way. And there's really five things that I'm going to talk about. And the interesting thing is as I started thinking through some of the things that have helped me through my divorce process, I found that those things actually tied really well with the Five Keys in The Guide to Good DivorceSM. So that was really, really interesting that I had attended the seminar and subconsciously, I was working through some of the things that I'd learned in the seminar in my life without realizing it. So I'll start with those five things.

The first thing is be gentle with yourself. Be kind with yourself. Divorce is a very traumatic process and you really are doing the best you can. You have to just, you know, do what you need to do to get yourself through the situation that you're in.

So as I was going through the divorce process, I read a lot of books. Some of them were great, some of them were not so good. And whenever I found quotes from those books that I liked, I would scribble them down on sticky notes and put them on my mirror. And as I stood there in the morning brushing my teeth, you know, I would read and repeat those mantras to myself and those would help me get through the day. I mean, it got to a

point where I had so many of those sticky notes that I could barely see myself in the mirror.

And since then, I've taken the sticky notes off and I've put my favorite ones in a frame. But one of the quotes that really stuck with me through that process was from a book which said that the best gift we can give our children is our own physical, emotional, psychological and intellectual health. And this was one that was very important because I realized that I needed to take care of myself before I could take care of my son. So that's, you know, one of the things that's helped me through.

The other thing I would say is learn to let go. For me, the process of letting go actually started very early. It started while I was still in my marriage and a lot of it happened in the last two years of my marriage. You know, I found myself really letting go and it was a very difficult process and probably one of the most difficult parts of my marriage.

And now looking back on it, I realized the reason why was because I was going through this whole letting go process while I was still in the marriage. And it's not in linear process. You know, you're going to go forward and backward and forward and backward. And sometimes it's going to feel like you're taking one step forward and two steps backwards. But as long as your general direction is forward, you're doing great. And you know, whatever it is you need to do to help you let go, you know, you do those things.

You know, some of the things, the other things I did was just getting a closer relationship with my family. I found that the closer I got to my family, the more I withdrew from my marriage. And I started to realize that my relationship with my family had also suffered. So that was another thing that helped me.

And then, I repurposed my wedding ring. So I had my wedding ring turned into this beautiful piece of jewelry designed by my jewelry maker. The other thing I did was I sold my engagement ring and I invested it into my business. And so that was another thing that really made me feel very empowered.

The third thing I would say is acquire knowledge. Knowledge is power. For me, having Trey and his team behind me helped me a lot with that part and then also attending The Guide to Good DivorceSM seminar where I got a lot of information about the legal process and also about divorce financial planning which was something I had really no idea

whatsoever about. And I can say that today my finances in terms of organization and planning for the future are in the best state they've ever been in my entire life.

And another thing I got from The Guide to Good DivorceSM seminar was making new connections and meeting other women who were going through what I was going through as well. I have a friend who I had not been in contact with for a while and she'd gotten divorced a few years before but we'd never really talked about it because we'd not been in contact for a while and then we reconnected and I opened up to her and I started telling her about what was happening through my divorce process and she started predicting what was going to happen next.

She had lived my divorce. And it was just amazing to me to find that there was somebody out there who was going through something that I was going through, something very similar to what I had just gone through. And so, she also had a lot of advice for me, but just being there and understanding the way I was feeling meant a lot. So, you know, when you start opening up, you will find that there's so many other people out there who are going through or have gone through what you have gone through, and they can provide a really important support system for you.

The fourth thing I would say is rediscover something you love or find something you love, whichever it will be for you. For me, it was both of those. In terms of rediscovering what I love, I rediscovered dancing. I used to love dancing and I'd stopped dancing a few years before. And so, I started dancing again. I loved Latin dancing in particular. And so, I started dancing with a couple of friends. And I just felt so wonderful and so good after doing that.

The other thing I started doing again, which I had stopped doing, I also really used to enjoy kickboxing and body combat, and I'd stopped doing that as well. And so I started doing those things again. And I found, you know, in addition to that physical exercise really helping me physically and mentally, some of the kickboxing and body combat I was doing also was helping me from a self-defense standpoint and just feeling better about being able to defend myself, because I got in a point where I was beginning to feel threatened.

In terms of finding something you love, out of the ashes of my marriage, I rediscovered my love and my passion for food. And I started a parallel career as a chef, a cookbook

author, and a food photographer. And today I've published nine cookbooks. I'm going to be publishing my tenth cookbook this year. And I also have a cooking school, The World in Juliette's Kitchen, where I share my passion for cooking with other people.

The other thing was, you know, the cooking also helped me as a form of therapy as I was going through my divorce and even before I started the process. And it was so funny because you would know when I'd gone through a very stressful period because you'd come to my kitchen and there would be all these dishes all over the counter. And then I would start trying to find neighbors to offload the food to. I think my neighbors' waistlines must have gotten thicker during my divorce process.

And the last thing I would say is, you know, one other thing is, you know, they say that life, if life gives you lemons, make lemonade. I would say in my case, you know, life gave me lemons and I made lemon vinaigrette.

And then the last thing, the fifth thing that I want to talk about is be the bigger person. And this for me was probably the most difficult of all of these things that I've mentioned today. How can you be the bigger person with someone who has hurt you deeply and continues to hurt you deeply? It's very, very hard. But what I found was that it took me so much more energy to hate than it did to love.

There's a saying from Mother Teresa that goes, "If you want to love, you need to learn to forgive." And that's something that I am trying to practice in my life. Like I said earlier, it's not a linear process. It's going to be back and forth and back and forth, but as long as your general direction is forward, you're doing great. And so I'm moving forward and I've left a love gone wrong and I'm now living a life I love.