Being single in this society often has a negative connotation. People, some of us singles included, think we are not good enough, worthy enough, happy enough, or loved enough to have that one special person. We’ve spent a lifetime on the “what ifs”- what if I’d been better, what if I had cared more, what if… and the list goes on and on. The truth is, we’ve all probably felt like that during one time or another. The loss of a spouse, a friendship, or even a parent can send us rushing back to those thoughts.

We all want to have a sense of security and belonging. Somehow, it seems easier to know our self worth when we have someone special standing beside us. But why should that stop us? It has taken me several years to realize this on my own.

I spent years hurting, grieving, and being angry. I was young and bitter, always thinking, “Why me?” I was never able to move forward because I spent my days living in the past. I grieved for everything I had lost: my husband, my son’s dad, my family. The next few years were spent trying to get some of that back. The failed attempt at reconciliation finally cut the cord. I had tried, but had I done everything in my power? I believed I had. And, so, I moved on. But something was still missing.

The ugly truth is, I’m divorced, twice. I am not happy about that fact. I do not rejoice when I hear those words escape from my mouth. In fact, I’ve tried to forget about the last one. I was still searching for what I had lost seven years before. After just three years, I had lost that marriage, too. I kept thinking that I was doing fine. That I wasn’t the one in the wrong. Granted, it takes two to make or to break a marriage. And then I had to ask myself some difficult questions. Did that just actually happen? Was I divorced, again? What was wrong with me?

*PHILIPPIANS 4:13 I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.*

I was better this time, pretending that it was just a bad dream. It was a well-kept secret that no one needed to know. August 2010 was more than five years ago. I will never truly understand everything that has happened in my life. But I recently began to understand my second divorce. I had a defining moment while sitting at church one Sunday night. It occurred to me that everything was ok. I realized that I was no longer yearning for what I always thought I was missing out on. I was finally able to look at myself for who I am. I am a single woman in her 40’s. I am a mom. I am a child of God surrounded by His love and mercy. My past is behind me and I can now look forward to each new day waiting for God’s plan to unfold. *JEREMIAH 29:11 For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the LORD, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.*

The key to being single is to let go of your past. Let go of the guilt, the pain, the “why me’s” and the “what if’s.” Whatever happened is over. You’ve grieved. You’ve cried. You’ve survived. There’s no blame. There’s only forgiveness. Forgive yourself, forgive others, then ask God to forgive you so healing can begin. *EPHESIANS 4:31-32 Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice. Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.*

Singleness, no matter the cause, changes our lives in an instant. But we are not alone. Surround yourself with friends and family. Find a church group. But most importantly, find yourself. Discover yourself all over again, or perhaps even for the first time. Love others. Love yourself.

*PROVERBS 3:5-6 Trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways submit to him, and he will make your paths straight.*

*ISAIAH 41:10 So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.*

Let us not think of ourselves as a single parent, single mom, single dad, singled-out, or being solo. But instead, let’s celebrate the unique person that we each have become. *PSALM 31:24 Be of good courage, And He shall strengthen your heart, All you who hope in the LORD.*

**Melissa O’Connor**

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