

# The Phoenix Ritual

**This is an exercise to try to help you come to some closure with your divorce.**

## **The definition of a phoenix:**

*a legendary bird which according to one account lived 500 years, burned itself to ashes on a pyre, and rose alive from the ashes to live another period*

In many ways this is what divorce is about. It is an often painful end of one part of our life and the beginning of another. Like the phoenix, divorce burns us but we can get up out of the ashes and live a full and productive life again.

These series of exercises are designed to help you through that process by providing closure and a new beginning. **It is a short series of exercises.**

## **Requirements:**

- No distractions. You should be alone
- Honesty. Be open and honest about your feelings
- Be prepared to get upset if that's how you feel. It is ok to cry or get angry

Understand that this may not work for everyone as you may not be ready. For some of you, this will never work as you process things differently and will find your own closure.

**Hopefully this will help trigger some closure, healing and a new beginning for you.**

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### Disclaimer:

This is intended to provide information only. You should seek advice from a qualified professional. We encourage you to take steps to obtain the most up-to-date information and to confirm the accuracy and reliability of any information.

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# Exercise 1 Trauma

**Trauma is defined as:**

an injury (as a wound) to living tissue caused by an extrinsic agent  
a disordered psychic or behavioral state resulting from severe mental or emotional stress  
or physical injury  
an emotional upset.

**Divorce hurts! It is a wound.**

Check all that apply

- I have been hurt
- I have lost something I cared about deeply
- I feel lost
- I don't know what to do

Just like a physical wound, you need to heal.

Unlike a physical wound, we don't have a visual reminder or a visual sign that it is healing.

This first step is to clearly acknowledge the existence and nature of this wound.

**Instructions:**

- Write as much as you can about how you have been hurt
- Be completely honest with yourself
- Focus on how you have been hurt not on other emotions

A large, empty rectangular box with a thin black border, intended for the user to write their response to the instructions above.

## Step 2 Emotions

The personal side of divorce is one of raging emotions in many people.

It is not ordered like many self help books would like you to believe nor do you have to feel all emotions.

**It is a deeply personal experience.**

**It is not an intellectual process!**

**It is a chaotic, whirlwind of emotion that can hit you at any time**

Check all that apply

- I feel angry about what has happened to me
- I feel devastated and lost
- I feel deep loss and sadness
- I feel completely numb

### Instructions:

- Write as much as you can about how you feel
- Be completely honest with yourself
- Focus on how you have been hurt not on other emotions
- Let go, curse if you want to, let it out but please don't break the keyboard!
- Use "I feel" sentences

## Step 3 The letter

There are often things left unsaid after a divorce.

Those things remain as unfinished business and getting closure for them is important.

Here you will write a letter to your ex and say all the things you have wanted to say but couldn't.

I want you to imagine that you are sending it to your ex or if you are uncomfortable with that, and then imagine it flying off never to be seen again.

The goal is to express these things and externalize them.

### Instructions:

- Write everything you have wanted to say to your ex
- Imagine them there in front of you unable to speak or hurt you in anyway
- Curse if you wish to. Get out the emotion too.

To \_\_\_\_\_, I have really wanted to tell that

## **Step 4 Exercises**

Emotions often need physical expression. These exercises may make you feel self conscious or silly but give it a go anyway. At any time you can stop and come back later to continue.

### **For anger**

Get an alarm clock or timer and set it for 10 minutes. Get a box of tissues.

Go get a pillow and beat it up. Imagine it is your ex if you want.

Imagine a situation where you have felt helpless and frustrated recently. You may feel silly but go with it and let your anger come out.

Stop when you are worn out or you find yourself no longer angry and perhaps crying or your 10 minutes are up. Be careful not to hurt yourself.

When the 10 minutes are up, do something nice for yourself. Go take a hot shower, a nice cup of coffee or tea or other treat. Then come back here.

### **For sadness**

Get an alarm clock or timer and set it for 10 minutes. Get a box of tissues.

Now I want you to shut your eyes and think about the hurt and sadness. Give yourself permission to cry. For these 10 minutes, you are allowed to feel the full depth of your hurt and sadness.

When the 10 minutes are up, do something nice for yourself. Go take a hot shower, a nice cup of coffee or tea or other treat. When you are ready you can come back to this and take the next step.

## Step 5 Lack of control

During divorce, there are many things you have no control over. Many of these things mean a lot to you. This results in frustration and anger and an unhealthy situation if not dealt with.

Write below all the things you do not have control over. Be specific and thorough.

Suggestions:

My ex-spouse and their behavior.

My kids when they are at my ex-spouses house.

Being single again.

The limitations on my life due to the divorce.

Understand that you have no control over these things and that instead you will focus your energies on things you can control.

## Step 6 Acceptance

Accept that you have no control over these things and that trying to control them is a waste of energy.

Your energy needs to be directed in a positive and productive way. You will have no energy left over if you focus what energy you have on things you cannot control.

Accepting that you do not have control over something is not the same as saying it is ok or right. Life is imperfect and we need to accept those imperfections in order to make the most of it.

Pick 5 things that you have no control over and fill them in below.

I accept that I have no control over

I accept that I have no control over

I accept that I have no control over

I accept that I have no control over

I accept that I have no control over

**Grant me the serenity  
to accept the things I cannot change;  
courage to change the things I can;  
and wisdom to know the difference.**

## Step 7 I can control

**There are always things you can control in your life even when it seems hopeless.**

Suggestions:

You can control your behavior

You can provide the best you can for your kids

You can be nice to yourself

You can improve yourself e.g. education, job, hobby, exercise

Pick 5 things that you have control over and fill them in below.

I have control over

I have control over

I have control over

I have control over

I have control over

**Grant me the serenity  
to accept the things I cannot change;  
courage to change the things I can;  
and wisdom to know the difference.**

## Step 8 I resolve

You are now ready to make a promise to yourself to help get closure and to heal.

Check each box below

I solemnly resolve to:

- let go the things I cannot control
- do my best with the things I can control
- accept the divorce and all that it means
- resolve to make a new beginning

## Step 9 The magic wand

If you had a magic wand or unlimited money, what would you want to do with your life now?

Remember we are moving forward, not trying to fix the past. That is impossible. Let yourself go and write without censoring yourself. This is brainstorming. Many of the ideas are impossible but let's not worry about that now. Put down as many as you can think of.

## Step 10 Action

Pick some items from the box above that you have control over and that you will take action on. Put them into the goal boxes below. Goals are no good without actions.

Actions are steps you can **reasonably** take.

They are **time limited** i.e. you must set a time to start and when to achieve.

You must be able to **measure your success**.

An example would be

**Goal:** to make new friends

**Action:** Make 5 new friends in the next 6 months

Goal 1

Action 1

Goal 2

Action 2

Goal 3

Action 3

Goal 4

Action 4

Goal 5

Action 5

Keep this list and check it regularly and see how you are doing. To change our behaviors and thoughts is a difficult process. You can share some of these goals with friends and family and ask them to support you making these changes.

# Congratulations

You have made it to the end. I truly hope this has helped you in some way.

Please do let us know what you thought, positive or negative. [Let us know how we can improve this experience](#). Our email is [feedback@newlifeafterdivorce.com](mailto:feedback@newlifeafterdivorce.com)

Now you are done, it is time to **reward yourself**. Do something to celebrate a new beginning.

- Treat yourself to a new look. New clothes, new hair style for example
- Go to a health spa
- Go out for a nice meal
- See a movie

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## You must celebrate to complete the "ritual"

Please do come back visit us at the [New Life After Divorce website](#)

Do pass this along to others you think might benefit from it.