

The Wounds of Divorce

By David Paul

Divorced father with three children

As a member of the Royal Canadian Navy, I have been trained to do an “after-action review” after an encounter with the enemy or other calamity. It is a hard look at how those involved can make improvements to reduce or avoid further injuries or mishaps. Throughout life and especially during trials such as divorce, an after-action review can bring many avenues to learn and grow.

It starts by taking the correct amount of responsibility for what occurred. As we take an accurate accounting of our actions, perhaps with the help of a counselor, recognizing where our agency was involved and where the ex-spouse’s agency was involved, we can observe things we can change in ourselves. We can also assess the status of our mental, spiritual, and emotional health.

Making constructive efforts to change as we apply the lessons learned encourages the healing process while paving the way to a brighter future.

Accessing the Savior’s Atonement

In war there are always horrific wounds. These can be deep and painful, and those who have not experienced them cannot truly understand what it’s like. Wounds to our hearts and souls caused by divorce are equally painful and can also be difficult to understand for those who have not experienced something similar.

But we are not alone. The Savior is ready to help us. His Atonement’s healing power can help us recover. Do not turn your back on the Church. Ask for priesthood blessings and get to the temple as often as you are able. The healing process is often a long one, but having the Spirit in your life will help speed the process.

The first year after divorce is tough. There is a grieving process at the loss of a relationship that was once the center of our hopes. It is like a roller-coaster ride of emotions and challenges. We play our part in the healing



process by remembering that we are precious children of our Heavenly Father with divine potential, by attending our Church meetings, reading our scriptures, praying, serving, and attending the temple. Though the road may seem long, the promise is sure. Follow the Lord, and you can have eternal life and all the blessings you are promised, including peace and joy in your soul.

Moving toward Remarriage

Be careful when you decide to start dating. Make sure that you know who you are and what you want. Be OK being alone with yourself (and the Savior). When you are happy with who you are and where you are going, it is harder for the adversary to derail you or for you to end up in an unhealthy dependence on someone else. The relationship you developed with your former spouse took some time to reach certain emotional and romantic milestones. Even unhealthy relationships have areas of comfort, so it can be tempting to slip into those too quickly with someone. Watch your pace.

Supporting Divorced Men

Those who have suffered through a divorce are like veterans on the battlefield of this war for our souls. They need our respect, love, understanding, support, and acceptance. Give loving guidance and encouragement if and when they are open to this. Exercise faith in them and remember that the Savior has His timetable to heal the pieces of a broken heart and spirit. Healing and miracles will happen, in time.

The author lives in British Columbia, Canada.