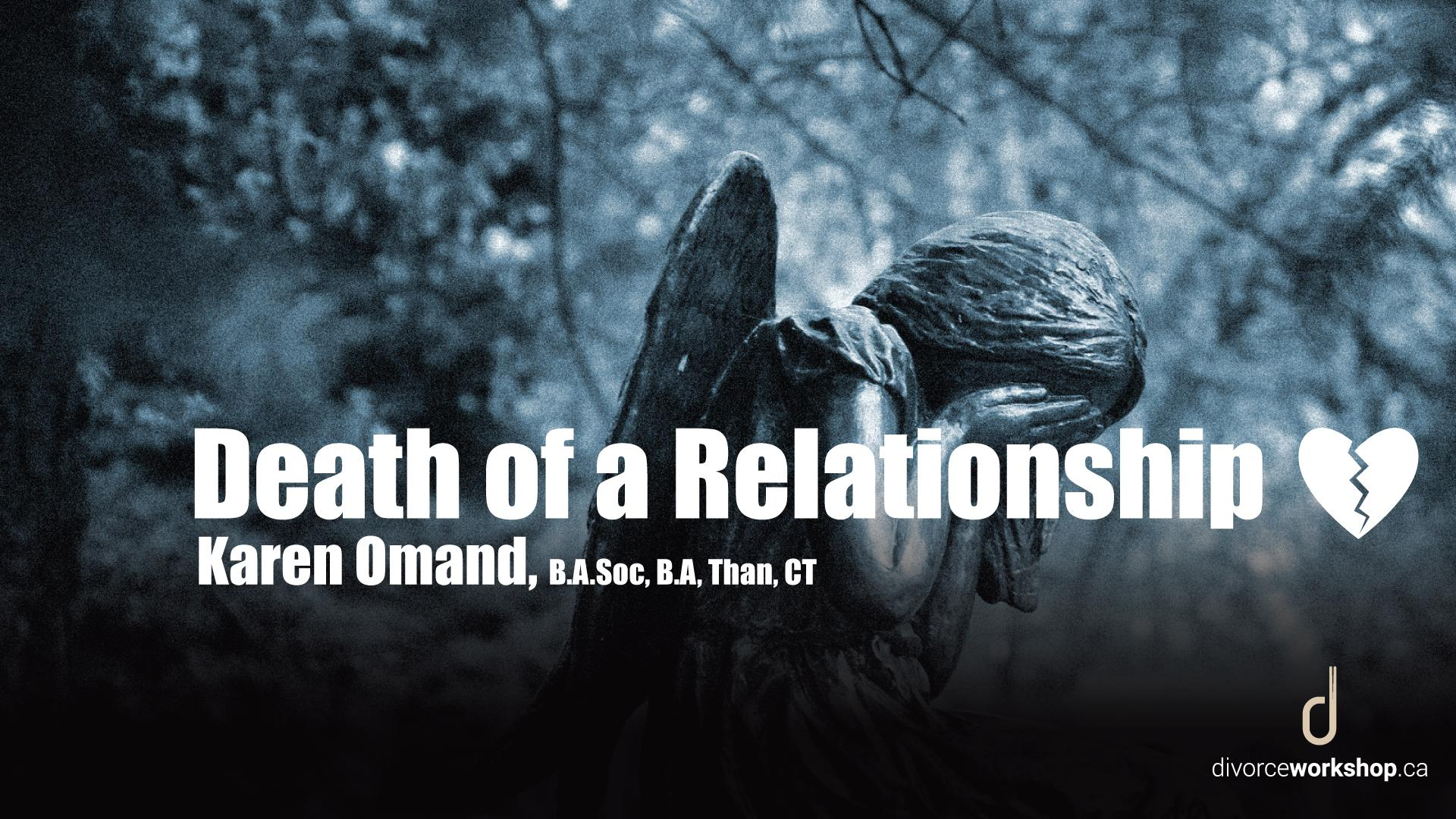
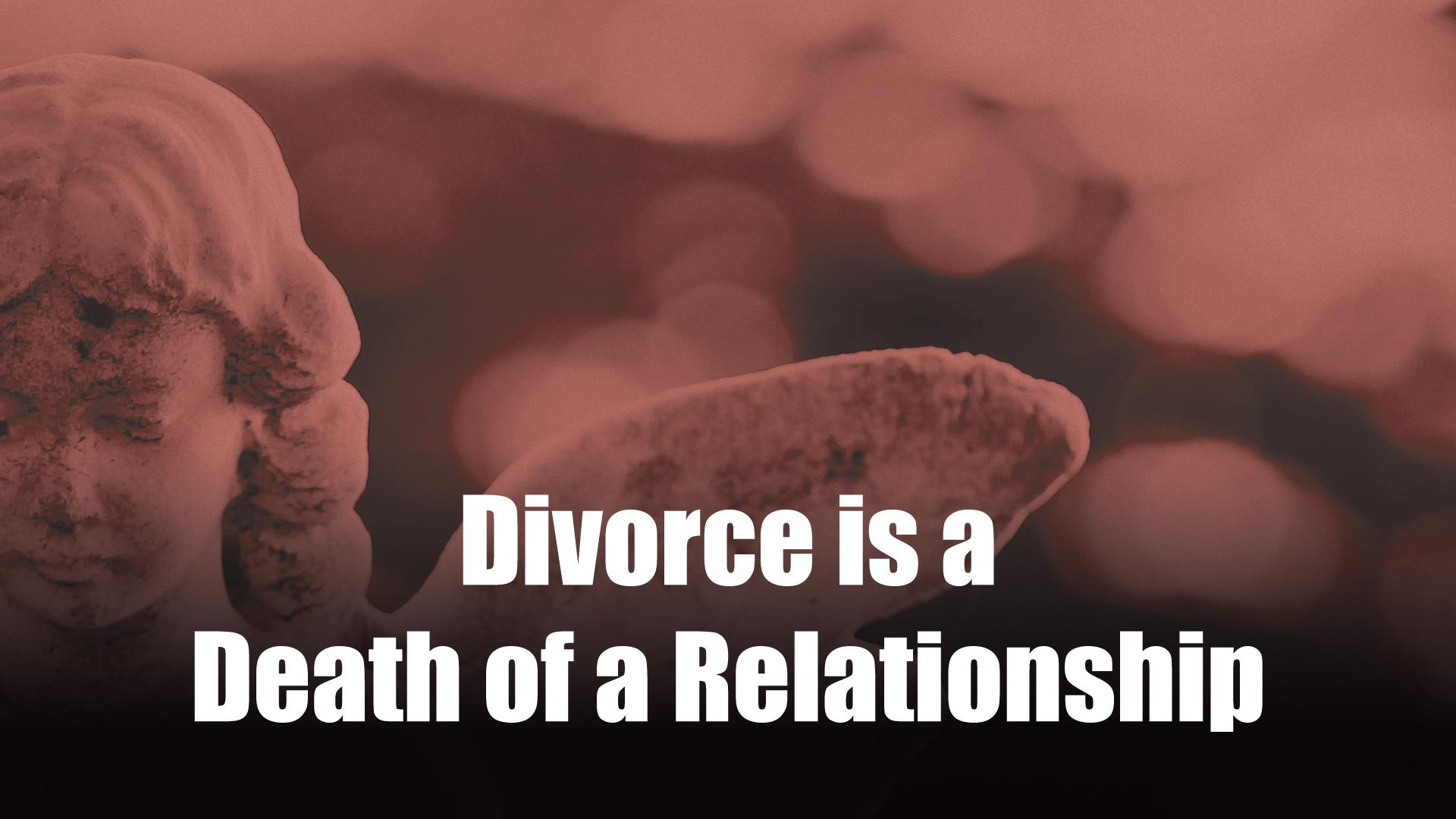

Death of a Relationship
Karen Omand, B.A.Soc, B.A, Than, CT
divorceworkshop.ca


Grief

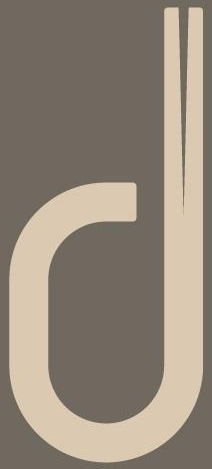

We do not handle Grief well


Divorce is a
Death of a Relationship

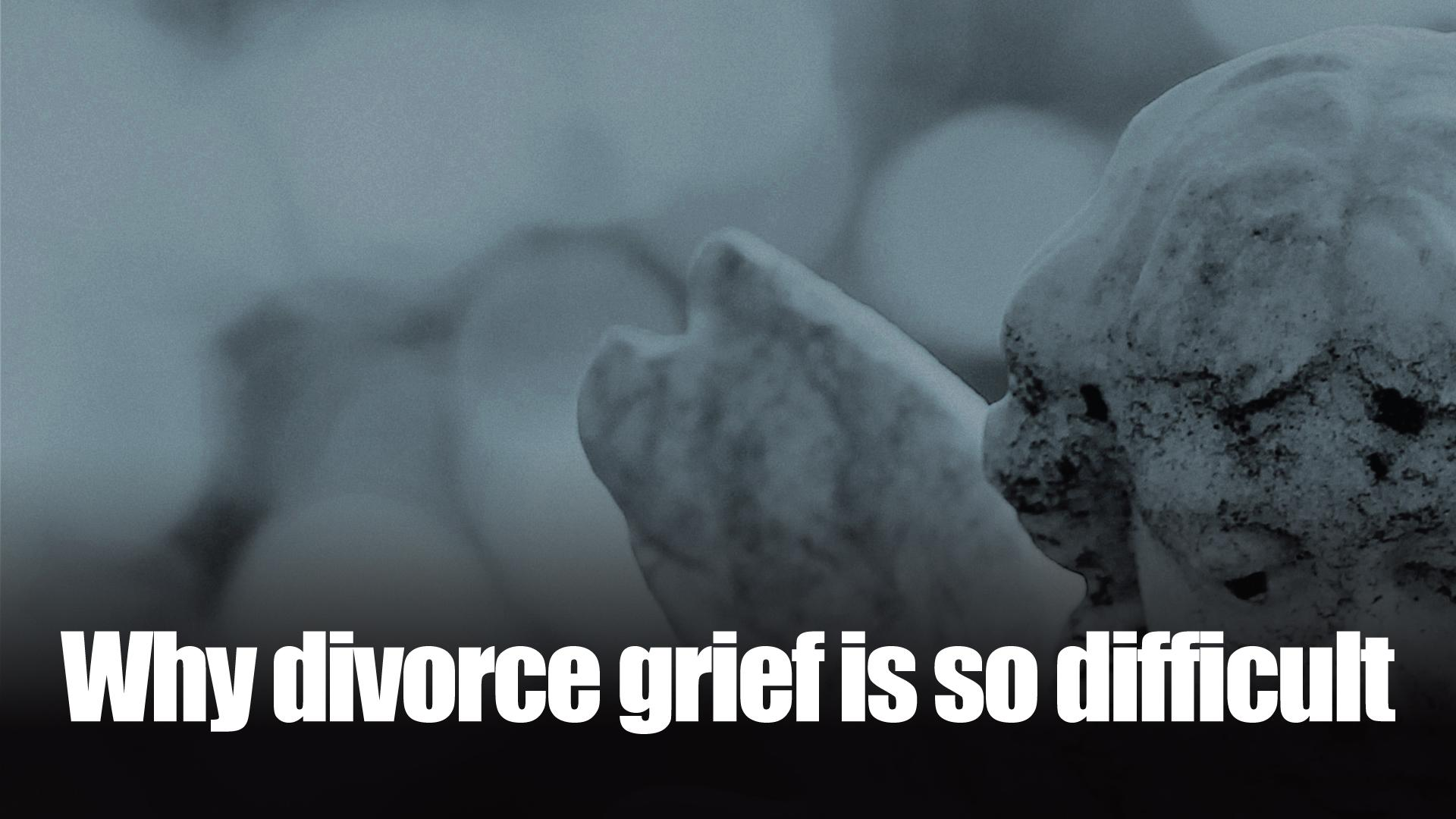


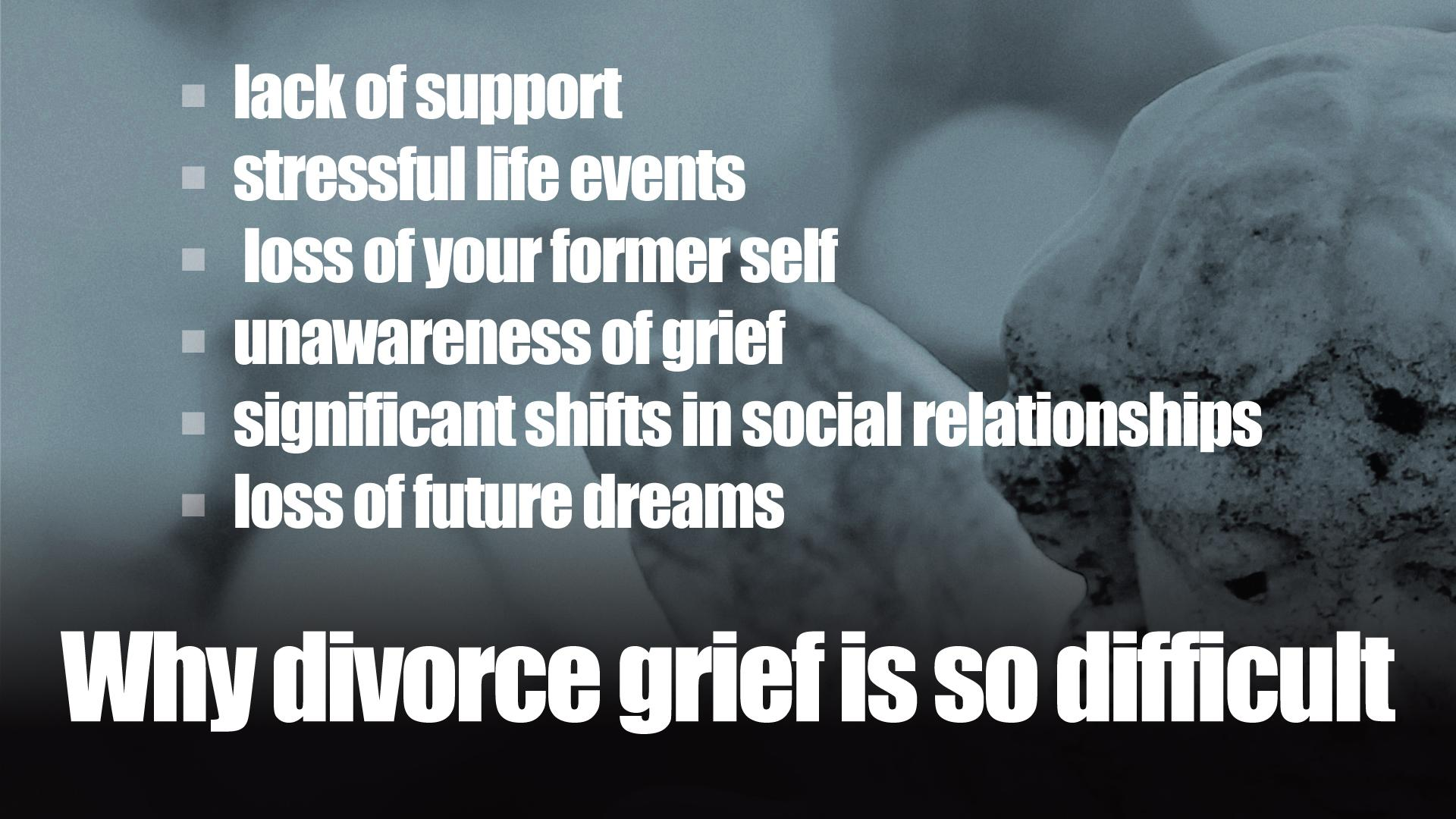
The Importance of Addressing Grief

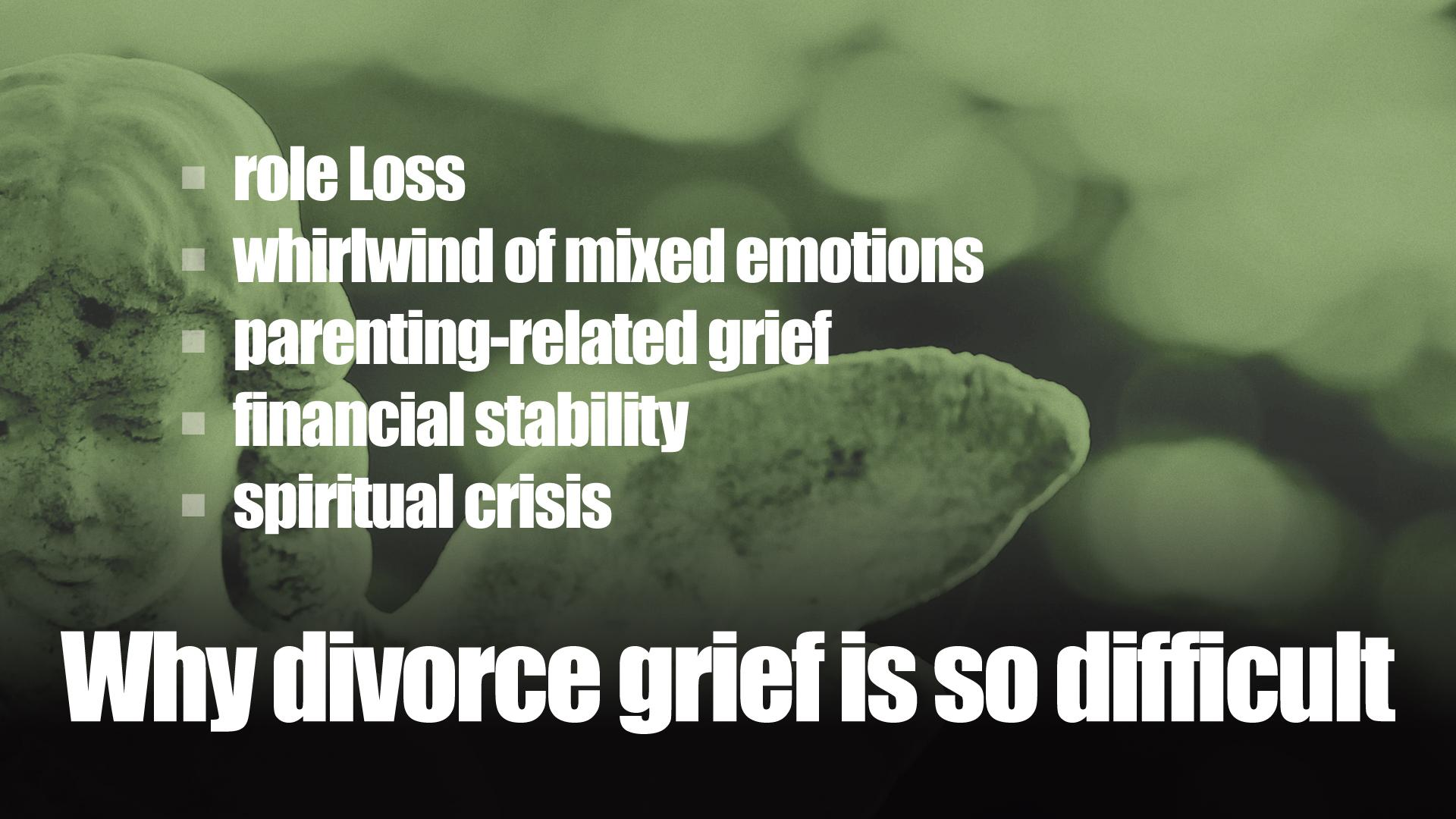

How did I get here?



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Why divorce grief is so difficult


lack of support
stressful life events
loss of your former self
unawareness of grief
significant shifts in social relationships
loss of future dreams
Why divorce grief is so difficult



- role Loss
- whirlwind of mixed emotions
- parenting-related grief
- financial stability
- spiritual crisis

Why divorce grief is so difficult


What does grief look like?

Symptoms of Grief



What's Wrong with Me?

Divorce Grief Symptoms



To **accept and integrate divorce grief into your life**, you need to recognize and validate it. **Self-awareness and understanding the symptoms** of grief can help you **comprehend the loss better**, enabling you to communicate your needs to professionals who can devise strategies to assist you. It's important to acknowledge that **we all grieve differently** and that our **symptoms are a normal response to our loss**; this can help **alleviate feelings of isolation and self-doubt**. For some, experiencing grief of this nature may be entirely new, and therefore, they may be unaware of the symptoms associated with divorce grief.

This worksheet is intended to help you become **more aware of the feelings, reactions, and behaviors** associated with divorce grief. Understanding yourself and **how you are grieving** can **aid in your recovery** because identifying them as grief can shed light on what is truly happening. As you work through your grief, you will eventually **integrate these feelings into your life.** For some, these feelings of grief may not arise, while for others, they may be quite intense. Both are **normal experiences.**

Common Feelings for Divorce Grief *(Check those that you may be feeling)*

- ☐ Agitation – inability to relax, shaken up
- ☐ Anger – a strong emotion (very common in divorce)
- ☐ Anxiety – feeling nervous and worried
- ☐ Betrayal – feeling your partner has lied and broken your trust
- ☐ Disbelief – trouble accepting the divorce is really happening
- ☐ Emptiness – feeling hopeless and sad, with nothing to give others
- ☐ Fear – does not feel safe or worries for the children
- ☐ Guilt – self-blame, feeling regretful about doing or not doing something
- ☐ Impatience – want things right away and have trouble waiting
- ☐ Isolation – removed or away from others
- ☐ Loneliness – feeling alone
- ☐ Powerlessness – having no control over what is happening
- ☐ Relief – to feel free from the ex and the marriage
- ☐ Rejected - feeling unwanted and unlovable
- ☐ Sadness – feeling unhappy and sorrowful
- ☐ Shame – feeling dishonored or disgraced
- ☐ Shock – feeling surprised and disturbed by the divorce
- ☐ Low self-esteem - feeling worthless
- ☐ Weakness – frail, powerless
- ☐ Embarrassed - for the marriage failure

Common Mental Reactions in Divorce Grief

- ☐ Difficulties in concentrating
- ☐ Continuously thinking about the divorce
- ☐ Difficulty making decisions
- ☐ Believing you were solely responsible for the divorce
- ☐ Thinking everyone is watching you (self-shame)
- ☐ Thinking you are different from everyone else
- ☐ Feeling stressed and overwhelmed

Common Behaviors and Social Interactions with Divorce Grief

- ☐ Trying to stay constantly active
- ☐ Overachieving
- ☐ Underachieving
- ☐ Being preoccupied and forgetful
- ☐ Changes in work performance
- ☐ Blaming your Ex and others
- ☐ Being more clumsy
- ☐ Crying a lot, or more easily
- ☐ Wanting to spend more time alone
- ☐ Not caring about things, wanting to drop out
- ☐ Wanting more attention and affection
- ☐ Dropping out of social activities
- ☐ Seeking approval and reassurance from others
- ☐ Being aggressive, getting more arguments

Common Physical Reactions to Divorce Grief

- ☐ Sleeping changes – too little or too much
- ☐ Weight and appetite changes
- ☐ Tiredness
- ☐ Feeling weak
- ☐ Deep sighing
- ☐ Muscle tension
- ☐ Pounding heart
- ☐ Headaches, stomach aches and digestive issues
- ☐ Increased number of colds and infections

Symptoms of Grief

Physical Symptoms:

- Insomnia
- Headaches
- Body aches
- Digestive issues (e.g., indigestion)
- Tend to get sick more often (immune system down)

Symptoms of Grief

Cognitive Symptoms:

- Difficulty concentrating
- Impaired decision-making
- Memory issues
- Feeling overwhelmed or confused

Symptoms of Grief

Behavioral Symptoms:

- Increased tearfulness
- Changes in appetite (overeating or under-
- eating)
- Avoidance behaviors
- Isolation or withdrawal from others

Symptoms of Grief

Emotional Symptoms:

- Anger
- Anxiety
- Guilt


Why knowing these
grief symptoms matter

Layers of Loss



Layers of Loss

Working Through All my Losses



Primary losses are often associated with the death of a loved one, but in the context of divorce, the **primary loss is the dissolution of your marriage.** While it's common to experience grief after the death of a loved one, society often fails to acknowledge divorce—**the loss of one's marriage**—as a **form of grief.** Despite divorce being the primary loss, there are also **secondary losses that directly or indirectly result from it.** These secondary losses typically manifest as a ripple effect over time, often personal and rarely acknowledged, recognized, or supported by others. They can be **tangible** or **intangible**.

Tangible losses are **material or physical** in nature, while **intangible** losses are **psychological and symbolic**, potentially manifesting months or even years later. Additionally, the ripple effects of these losses can be felt for years. **Examples of tangible secondary losses** include your home, car, financial security, income, jewelry, children, in-laws, family, and friends...

Intangible secondary losses may include your married identity, dreams for the future, confidence, self-image, self-esteem, and a sense of your former self... For some individuals, these **secondary losses can be as or more impactful than the primary loss**, which is the marriage itself.

Fill in the chart below with your secondary losses. Try to include both tangible and intangible losses in the chart below. Once complete, **circle** the **top three losses** that you grieve the most.

home (example)		*my identity (example)*		
		Primary Loss of Marriage (Divorce)		

Take time to **practice mindfulness** by observing your **thoughts and feelings** about these losses **without judgment**, which cultivates a **sense of awareness**. **Journaling** on the **significance of these top 3 secondary losses** in your life can be a useful exercise. Similar to the grief associated with the death of a loved one, **leaning into and working through** the grief of divorce can lead to **acceptance and integration** of these divorce-related losses into your life.

Layers of Loss

Tangible



Intangible



Layers of Loss

Tangible



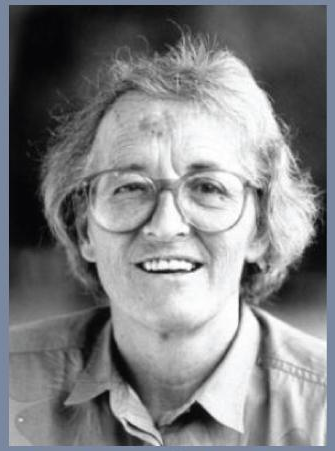
Loss of Shared Finances
Loss of Property
Loss of Personal Items
Loss of Financial Security
Loss of Health Benefits
Loss of Joint Investments or Businesses
Legal Costs

Layers of Loss

Intangible



- Loss of Companionship
- Loss of Social Status or Reputation
- Loss of Identity
- Loss of Future Plans and Dreams
- Loss of Trust and Security
- Loss of Self-Esteem
- Loss of Social NetworksFriends
- Loss of Parental Unity
- Loss of Extended Family
- Loss of Stability
- Loss of Shared Experiences
- Loss of Shared Purpose
- Loss of Faith in Love or Relationship



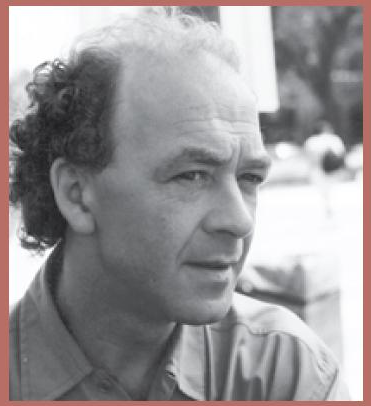
Elisabeth Kübler-Ross

5 Stages of Grief

As a profession we have moved beyond the older Five Stages of Grief…The stages are simple, which our brains often prefer, but grief doesn't work that way.



Dr. Margaret Stroebe



Dr. Henk Schut

Dual Process Model

This model allows individuals to honor their grief while also finding moments of relief, making it a valuable approach during such turbulent times.


Tips for coping
with grief

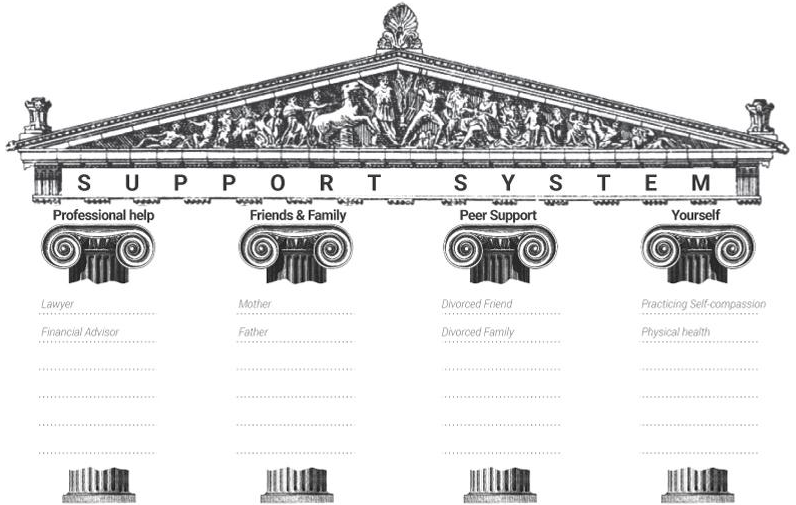

Grief can be
messy

4 Pillars of Support

4 Pillars of Support

Why Support is Important

When navigating a challenging period in your life, like a divorce, **having a robust and balanced support system** is crucial. Imagine your support system as the **pillars holding up a building**. Just like a building needs all of its pillars to provide stability, your support system requires **strength and balance from each component.** If **one of the four pillars is off balance or weaker**, you may not feel as supported during this stressful time. This **imbalance could lead to increased stress and feelings of isolation** throughout your divorce journey. Through this process, it becomes apparent how much support you have and whether it is balanced. It's important to note that not all elements of a support system carry equal weight; the emphasis should also be on the **quality of the support provided.** If you **cannot afford a full professional team** such as, a financial advisor, divorce coach and therapist – **search for online podcasts with professionals in these fields** to get some general advice.



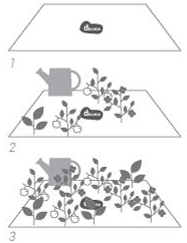
Each pillar is the name of the support system. On the dashed lines above, fill in the names of your support for each system.

My Garden with a Rock

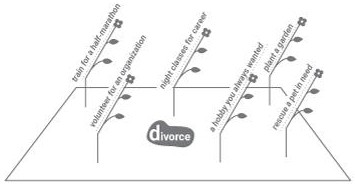
My Garden with a Rock

Add Meaning to Your Life

This metaphorical workout is intended to aid in your recovery by **introducing new elements** that add **meaningful value** to your life, making your **divorce less of a focal point.** These new activities should not be mere distractions, but rather **purposeful pursuits** that contribute to your **personal growth and well-being.** Start planting your garden.



1 The **rock** in the middle of the garden is **like your divorce** and the **garden** is like your **life.** The rock is heavy and it is stuck in the ground. Your sole focus is that rock in the middle of your garden.
2 If we add **meaningful things** to our life, we begin to **crowd out the significance of the rock.** We are enriching our garden with new and exciting possibilities.
3 Over time, your **garden becomes healthy,** full, and blossoming. Though the **rock** remains, its once **overwhelming presence** and impact are **greatly diminished**, becoming almost benign as the new additions crowd it out.



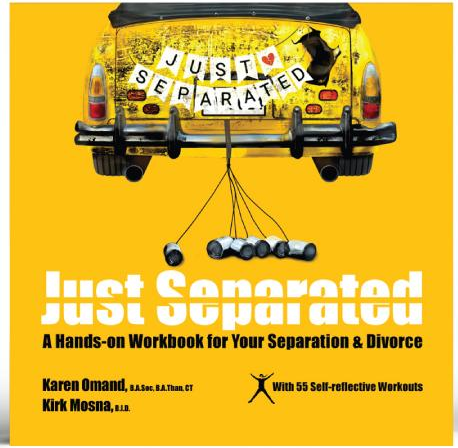
example

Lean into Your Pain

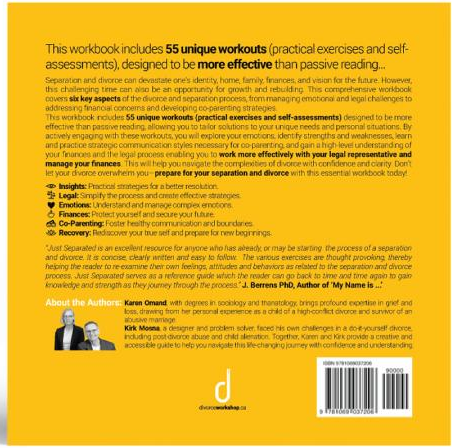


Just Separated

A Hands-on Workbook for Your Separation & Divorce







Available worldwide on Amazon

Karen Omand, B.A.Soc, B.A, Than, CT
karen@divorceworkshop.ca

Thank You

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