



*Exercises and Worksheets:
Letting Go of Bachelorhood*

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Checklist: Letting go of Singlehood

The following statements have come directly from my clients.
Check the boxes that resonate for you:

- I feel envious of younger people in their early twenties. They seem so free and *single*.
- I'm scared about not being able to go out to bars and flirt.
- I still want to be attractive to the opposite sex.
- I wish I had the chance to experience some things again, i.e. college, dating, clubbing, traveling.
- I'll miss going to clubs and flirting.
- I'm good at being single. It's comfortable and familiar.
- I don't want to give up my freedom.
- It seems like everything exciting is equated with being single.
- I long to be 21 again.
- I'm scared I won't be able to take trips with my friends.
- I have to change the way I relate to half the people in the world—the opposite sex!
- My life is over.

- You mean I can never have sex with anyone else... ever again?!
- I feel like I'm losing my youth.
- I can feel my childhood slipping away.
- I am losing my independence.
- When we move in together, will I ever have space and time to myself?
- Is _____ going to be the last person I ever sleep with?
- I like my life now. I love living [alone, with my best friend, with my brother]. Why does this have to change?
- I will never be able to travel alone.
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It is important to distinguish between the *true* beliefs and the *false* beliefs. For example, it is true that as a married person you will most likely be changing the way you relate to the opposite sex. But is it true that your life is over and you will never have any fun again? No! And is it true that you will never be able to go away for the weekend with your friends? Not unless you and your future spouse make that agreement. In other words, a lot of the fears that people feel

about letting go of singlehood are not based in reality, but they indicate a need to *recognize* that there is a change happening and to allow yourself to grieve this change.

When grieving the loss or change of identity the mind wants to grab onto tangible experiences because it is confusing to grieve something as amorphous as an identity. With most losses in life we can point to the thing that we are leaving or losing—a house, a city, a job, a person—but with a loss of identity there is nothing to point to. The truth is that the loss is less about anything tangible—the of one's own apartment—and more about the general sense that you are leaving one *life stage* and moving into a new stage of life.

The most important step, after distinguishing the true and false beliefs and putting some of the unnecessary fears to rest, is to let the feelings in. You don't have to understand them. You only have to trust that they are a very important part of your transition, and the more you let yourself feel them, the better off you will be.

Worksheet: Distilling False Beliefs

1. Which of the boxes that you checked are false beliefs?

2. Where do you think these false beliefs came from?

3. How can you find out the truth around these false beliefs?
i.e. Talk to your fiancé and share your fears; talk to other
married people; get in touch with your truth about

partnership as opposed to the messages and behaviors that have been modeled for you.

Once you have distilled the false beliefs, you are left with your true grief about saying goodbye to this identity. The next step is to concretize the feelings around this ending. One exercise that clients have found effective is to create a collage of the images that represent your single life. Use personal photographs, magazine cut-outs, old letters, drawings, and any other artifact that symbolizes singlehood to create a visual representation of the identity you are leaving.

Another powerful way to honor the ending is to write a goodbye letter to your bachelor self. Include what you have loved about being single, your fears about this phase of life ending, the important people who have helped shape your

singlehood, and any other thoughts and emotions that will help you let go of attachments to this identity. Use the following page to write the letter. When you are finished, complete the ritual by reading it aloud – perhaps as part of your bachelor party (see article on meaningful bachelor parties) as you burn or shred an object that represents your singlehood. Burning and cutting are ways to bring the action into your body and let your psyche know that it's time to release the old way and open the space where a new identity can enter.

Goodbye Letter to Single Self

Letting Go of the Past

Memories, thoughts, and feelings about ex-partners are inextricably linked to the singlehood identity. For most of you, the single past means a past with women: women you loved, women you loathed, women who adored you, women who enchanted you, women who broke your heart, women you flirted with, women you left, women who “got away”. Because our culture maintains that once you are engaged you must have eyes and thoughts only for your intended, to admit that exes pop onto your mind may feel taboo. But just as stifling the grief around losses only fans the flame, so attempting to stifle feelings about exes only magnifies their intensity.

Nearly every client I have worked with has shared that they have had dreams and thoughts about exes during their engagement. There is the first love who holds that pure space in your heart. There is the crazy artist who never could quite commit but made you feel like you were part of a vibrant, creative world. There is the one who swept you

away on never-repeated sexual highs. There is the one who got away, the one who makes you wonder, “Where is she now? Could it have worked?” In the end, my clients realize that the musings about past girlfriends are a normal part of this transition. Once they are validated, the memories are allowed to breathe and move through the body so that an acceptance of the present commitment can arise.

Dream Log: Partners from the Past

Use this space to record your dreams about ex-girlfriends as they arise.