NVR 2 L8

Finding A Future, A Resource For What's Next

This resource discusses possibilities in finding your future. It addresses the who, the what and options for the how. Each path is unique and each step may sometimes be slightly off balance. The consistency is that on each path and with every step taken, there is choice.

The future begins to take shape when personal terms can be defined. The definitions may take time. There will be stages of grief, there will be questions, there will be self-doubt and most likely, there will be tears, lots of tears. Solitude becomes solace, a quiet moment in time without judgement, without contradictions and without chaos.

The ties that were binding have been broken and the future has many possibilities. When navigating there, a slow and steady pace may be the most helpful. A gentle reminder to allow grace to enter the picture. Things will not be perfect for a while and that's ok.

The trauma bond could reappear, it's natural because the relationship was all that was known for however long it lasted. The ability to look in the rearview mirror takes tremendous strength. When that strength is present, it provides permission to accept a new sense of freedom. The freedom to reclaim the "you" that existed before … before the chaos.

Once strength has appeared and remains for more than a fleeting moment, there are choices to be made. Choices regarding which path to take. For many, the choice is to look exclusively forward, leaving the past exactly where it will remain.

"That suitcase has been packed, locked and sent to the landfill – forever."

For others, there is a desire or even a need to research prior relationship patterns. "It seems familiar, yet different." When was the initial exposure to this pattern or the first abuser? When choosing this, the steps are different. There may be a realization that the original abuser is still holding space in your life. Now what?

The future is about strength, finding a voice and defining boundaries. Defining boundaries is a safety net. Boundaries also provide clarity regarding what is acceptable and what is not. They prioritize personal space and help protect the freedom that has been reclaimed. Boundaries will be different for everyone. They become an anchor - choices are now owned by the receiver.

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"My life, my choices and now ~ on my terms."

When there are no children involved, all research points to no contact, zero. This is the safest for the receiver. It may not be the path of least resistance because the abuser will try many things to just get a response or a reaction.

After leaving, when there are children from the relationship, boundaries are different. The most effective response is to engage only when necessary and only relating to the children, schedules, school, etc. Should there be attempts at love-bombing, belittling or contradiction the safest action is to disengage without a response.

When the person is still in your life, in some capacity, the relationship is actually redefined. There are boundaries yet, they're internally controlled and externally cordial. Most of the time, these people are relatives or spouses of relatives. Redefining the relationship means intentionally limiting access to your personal space – internally controlled. Conversations shift from being personally intimate to cordial – externally controlled.

What does the future look like? We're sharing a few personal reflection exercises that may provide a safe starting point.

EXERCISE 1: 3 questions, that's all.

1. Who am I now?
2. Who do I want to be tomorrow?
3. What steps do I need to take to get there?

EXERCISE 2: Perspectives and allowing grace

Trusted family, close friends and colleagues have insight into the self that may have been forgotten. It's nice to receive reminders ... Ask them, from their perspective

1. What makes you, you?
2. What are your super-powers?
3. What are you most passionate about?
4. What makes you belly laugh?
5. What brings you joy?

The future is yours to design and own, on your terms.