



The Art of Divorce Recovery

By the late Don McNay

02/20/2013 01:40 pm ET | Updated Apr 22, 2013

*“Hear the whisper of the raindrops,
Blow softly against my window,
Make believe you love me,
One more time, For the Good Times”*

*-Kris Kristofferson
(hits for Ray Price and Elvis Presley)*

“For the Good Times” hit the charts about the time that my mother and father divorced. For the rest of his life, it was one of dad’s favorite songs.

In 2006, after my first marriage ended, it became one of mine. The song resonates because it pays homage to good memories. On the other hand, it’s easy post-divorce to be obsessed with looking back. Although the song focuses on happiness, post-divorce reflection often breaks down into bitterness, anger, finger-pointing and name-calling. Not only has the divorcee gone through hell, he or she can’t seem to get past it.

That is where Dr. James Stillwell comes in. His job is to help people learn from their past, but focus on the future. Stillwell, based in Lexington, Kentucky, is a master of divorce recovery. James, a happily married grandfather and father of four children, did not learn about divorce from firsthand, but it’s hard to knock Dr. Stillwell’s street cred. Along with an impressive academic background, Dr. Stillwell has helped over 3000 individuals and families through the divorce recovery process. I have referred several friends and clients to his divorce recovery workshops and others to receive individual and couples counseling. All rave about his services.

James told me that it’s hard for him to go in public and not run into someone who tells him, “You saved my marriage” or “You helped me get through the worst period of my life.” Job satisfaction has to be high on James Stillwell’s list. He truly makes a difference. He is an incredibly nice man with the perfect demeanor to be a counselor. He has read and mastered every book ever written on relationships and knows when to drop his knowledge into an individual situation. He comes from a background in the ministry, but his outlook and services are non-denominational.

He’s made the transition from being affiliated with a mega-church to setting up his own counseling services and divorce recovery workshops. I am sure he nails individual counseling because every divorce is different, but he has had incredible success with his group workshops. I wish I had gone to one. I had several chances. James and I have developed our relationship over Facebook. I can’t remember when we became friends, but he has become a friend in every sense of the word. Actually more like a guiding beacon. I signed up a couple of times for his classes, but something always held me back. Like pride.

I equated divorce to failure. I don’t mind telling the world about my business failures (and success), but there was something about my marriage ending that I wanted to keep to myself. I’m a family oriented guy and having my life upended was tough. My mother and sister died unexpectedly within six months of the divorce. I needed group support and individual counseling, but resisted doing either. I sank into a long period of morose. I stopped going to work on a regular basis and was bad about returning phone calls when I did. Business suffered. I didn’t want to tell anyone about the divorce, even though I am a high profile figure in a small town and everyone knew anyway. I have a vast network of friends and people who care about me, but I let myself get isolated.

Divorce recovery could have helped. It certainly couldn’t have hurt.

James could sense my despair through my Facebook posts. He stayed on me about attending and I kept signing up and not showing up. I was finally ready to go and then I happened to meet a wonderful woman who is now my wife. I never made it to his class. Then, James asked me to speak to a group of widows about their finances. I was able to help them and get a firsthand look at Dr. Stillwell’s unique skills and talents. I had a divorcing friend drive me to the program with the unspoken agenda that the person would connect with James and sign up for his class. It happened and was a positive, life-changing experience. My friend once asked how I could recommend divorce recovery when I did not attend myself. I said that I made a mistake and wanted others to learn from it. If you are going through divorce, thinking about divorce or have been divorced for years, you need to find Dr. Stillwell or someone like him in your city.

“For the Good Times” needs to be a song about the future, not the past.

Dr. James Stillwell has a Divorce Recovery workshop twice a year. He also accepts individual and couples for private counseling. You can contact him at fjstillwell@gmail.com or at 859 258 2060 or by visiting his website @ drjamesstillwell.com