

# **SPECIAL REPORT**

## **5 Steps to Beginning Again**

**The 5 critical steps people take to successfully move through significant life transitions and begin again to build new, amazing and joyful lives.**

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## 5 Steps to Beginning Again

So just how do you begin again after you have experienced a significant relationship loss? Perhaps it has been a divorce, maybe death, or maybe it was an end to a long significant relationship. Regardless of the cause of loss, when our heart is broken our life seems to turn upside down. We feel numb; don't know what way to turn. We struggle to make sense of it all. We just do what we have to do to get through the day.

The initial pain of loss is powerful and can feel overwhelming. The memories seem to fill every waking hour. Everything we do, everything we watch, everything we eat, everywhere we go brings back memories of what was. We have sleepless nights, feelings of insanity as day by day we slowly take those first steps into a new way of being, into what will become our new life.

**This period of pain and grieving is difficult but it is the first step we must take to get our life back.** Your life that at this point may not yet have a clear future. The important thing to know is that you will survive. You can make it. You will feel better, no doubt about it.

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Some of the things you can do during this time are: join a group (with a leader) who are going through the same experience, find a counselor you can talk with, and stay close to friends and family. Many of you have already heard about what helped me get through this initial period was all the above, AND a dog that I got shortly after my separation which gave me a reason to go outside, walk, get fresh air and exercise. Tank, my yellow lab, was a godsend. Tank, who was a very special dog to me, has a piece written about him in my e-book, *From Shadow to Light*.

**The second step is about letting go of the past.** After the initial period of pain and grieving, longer for some than others, we start on the journey of beginning again by gradually, over time, learning to give up the past. By doing so, we began to fill our lives with new activities, new memories and new reasons to live. But this second step is a very challenging step, because in the process of letting go we finalize to ourselves that what was - is never go to be again. That shred of possibility, our denial, the last spark of hope that something might change we learn to let go completely.

It is this work of letting go that prepares us for the journey of beginning again. As time passes we find we are tired of the pain, the anger, and the feelings of hopelessness. We come to a place where we are sick and tired of being sick and tired and we are ready to start over. We are ready to put our energy and attention on "**beginning again**".

**The third step is about envisioning your future.** We create an actual picture of the future we want . . . a picture in our mind of where we want to go, what we want to do next. Our picture of the future works as a magnet to attract new opportunities our way. When we get tired and discouraged it works to buoy us up, to actually pull us forward to take the steps necessary to build our new life. **It becomes our intention.** And having a clear intention/picture of where we want to go is powerful. "Intention is a difficult thing to measure. Like wind you cannot see it, yet you see its force. Intention, like the wind, when you harness and direct its power, is like putting up your sails and letting its force carry you to your desired destiny." Rebecca McLean

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About this time in my own recovery from loss I remember writing down 50 things I still wanted to do in my life. I wrote personal things from removing some spider veins from my legs and losing weight, to dreams of traveling, kayaking, and building something with a hammer( I had in mind a dog house), and getting a satisfying job. I wrote that I wanted to be secure and happy - first alone and then if right, in another relationship (only because I do that was the right order!). I kept this list with me taking it out every now and again to just read it.

As time went on I begin to see I was doing much of what I had written down. Over the next 5 years I had just about accomplished them all. In some way, they had all seem to materialize . . . even the saline injections for the spidery veins! I accepted a job with a non-profit in another state and in that job I traveled extensively around the world, helped build a home (used my hammer), kayaked with friends, and on it went. I learn to be comfortable being on my own. I especially was enjoying my independence. Only recently has a significant relationship been something I wanted to put my energy towards.

**The fourth step is about taking action.** Taking those small steps that when added up takes you where you want to go. Once we set our intention that action is going to happen. To some degree we just need to be ready to take advantage of the opportunities that begin to come our way. But, of course, it is wise to have short term goals written down along with small but consistent steps we will take to achieve the goals.

It may sound strange, but one of the most powerful tools for setting and attaining goals is to recognize the challenges that stand in the way of achieving our intention or goal. Learning to identify these challenges we might face in reaching our new goals directs us to take the necessary actions to preempt them. **If you are aware, you are half way there!**

During this time it is important to use affirmations. Using affirmations helps ensure that our self talk is positive. An affirmation creates a positive, empowering message to remind you of your intention and/or goal. The definition of affirmation is: "to make firm," or "to firm up". The act of creating an affirmation is to formulate a thought or internal message that is positive and current in time. An example might be, "*I enjoy exercising and am feeling more energetic*" - short, written in present tense and clearly stated.

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There is a wealth of research regarding the power of affirmations including some that has found that we have 500 thoughts every minute and 90% of them are the same thoughts we have had before. And for the most part those thoughts are not that positive! Research has also demonstrated that carefully constructed affirmations can create significant shifts in the internal chemistry of the human body, particularly brain chemistry and immune function.

**The fifth step is to re-evaluate, revise and celebrate your victories along the way.** Because you will have victories, and celebrating them reinforces your sense of confidence and self-esteem. There are some good questions to ask yourself as you put your actions into practice.

- What is working well?
- What have I accomplished?
- What didn't work well?
- What haven't I accomplished?
- What have I learned from my successes and challenges?
- Were my goal or action steps too big or unrealistic?
- Was the action step scheduled at the wrong time?
- Do I need reminders?
- Do I need someone to help hold me accountable?
- How can I do it differently?

**In particular, Dr. Candace Pert, a key research scientist for the National Institutes of Health has stated, "The body is the outward manifestation of the mind."**

As you learned to evaluate your success and challenges and gain increased awareness and understanding of yourself, you begin to set more informed goals/actions with greater and greater results. Don't be afraid to ask the non-judgmental questions above. They help you work smarter. There is nothing wrong or bad about you or your answers- just information that will help you along the way to fulfilling your goals and intentions. Before long you will be amazed at the new life you are building for yourself.

And remember, the most important part of Step 5 is to celebrate, celebrate, celebrate! When you do not successfully complete the declared action step, acknowledge what you have learned – and that's cause for celebration too - it's all a victory!

### **Summary:**

We covered the five steps of beginning again: (1) grieve your loss, (2) let go of the past, (3) envision your future, (4) take action, (5) re-evaluate/revise and celebrate! It's some of the hardest work you will do, believe me I know. Working with a coach or in a group is a great way to help ensure your success. Doing the work brings you great rewards. It is these steps that when taken leads you out of the *shadow into the light* and into your new life.

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Many people think it just takes time to heal and they wait for something to happen – which usually doesn't happen. Aurora Winter, Author of *From Heartbreak to Happiness*, says "***it's not the passage of time that counts. It's what you do with the time.***"

Time magazine reported that it typically takes people 5-8 years to recover from a heartbreaking loss. I say that is too long! With the right coaching approach, recovery can happen in much shorter time. You'll be amazed.

**Your next step:** Put yourself in a place where you will find guidance, accountability, and support. You may have a group to support you in your local area; but if not I invite you to the next Springboard Bootcamp where you can work with a coach and like-minded individuals using a supportive, self-care focused structure to move through the steps and begin to realize your magnificent new life! It can happen. It happened for me. It can happen for you.

**Springboard Bootcamp begins July 21<sup>st</sup>.** Come and take that leap into your new future. Create your best year yet. Are you divorced, widowed or had a long term relationship end? Often a little structure and camaraderie is what you need to refocus your life and to begin living the life you dream of. Are you ready to begin? Say YES, to your new life. Don't let anymore time slip by. Register now at <http://www.marlenelockwood.com/bootcamp>.

**E-book: From Shadow to Light, Your Roadmap through Change \$12.99.** This e-book was written for people who have experienced a significant loss in their lives. My goal is to help support you in having a better experience with change and transition. In this e-book you will find information, stories and humor along with activities designed to gently guide you into your new way of being. You will find practical steps that, if taken, will help you move forward on your journey through change to find a wonderful new life, perhaps yet unimagined.

Purchase your copy now at <http://www.marlenelockwood.com/booksarticles.html>



### Author Resource

Marlene Lockwood RN, MPA, life and wellness transition coach, works collaboratively with people to guide and support them through significant life transitions. Through carefully design structure s and strategies she helps them redefine their lives so they can realize a new, joyful and abundant way of living.