



~Wendy's Recovery Map~

~because we all need to find our way

PHASE I

SHOCK and AWE

aka: "THE NIGHTMARE I CAN'T WAKE UP FROM"

Shock
Betrayal
Fear
Questioning
No trust
Clues missed
Clues seen
Relief
Confusion
Fragile
Disbelief
Shame
Anger
Despair
Weak
Blind sided
No dots connect
Secrecy
Crisis
Foolish
Inadequate to cope
Embarrassment
Deer in headlights
Can't think beyond the feelings
Worry, worry, worry in so many directions
Overwhelmed
Can't breathe
Isolation
SO ALONE
How did this happen?

(for me, 6 months)

PHASE II

SURFACE ACCEPTANCE

aka: "SWIM, SO I DON'T SINK"
(Survival)

Having to handle everything
Overwhelmed, in a new way
Making choices alone
Dealing with the nitty-gritty of separation and filing for divorce
Dealing with accounts
Paying the bills
Dealing with housing
Breaking news to kids
Dissolving joint accounts
Getting utilities in your name
Deciding how to wear your rings
Deciding who should and should not know
Deciding how much to tell
Attempts to negotiate
Peeling away from him
Looking at all of your belongings in a new way
Forcing yourself to put one foot in front of the other
Weary of it all, and it's just begun
Keeping busy, so as not to feel
Establishing new routines
Taking on more part time work
Facing family and close friends
Finding a new "normal"
Being careful about keeping kids protected—watching what you say about him
Resentment about everything
Looking forward with dread

(for me, 1 year)

PHASE III

WRESTLING with REALITY

aka: "THE MOUNTAIN IS *STILL* THERE TO CLIMB"
(Having to think)
Is this all there is?
Pressure to be "over it by now"
Less family rallying support
Weary of stage two, ready to go back to handling less, but without HIM
Stuck---No road map to follow
Uncertainty
Which way is forward?
Anger resurfaces:
I don't want this new life
I don't want him to see me dealing—I don't want him to think he's off the hook
Sadness resurfaces:
Maybe there'll never be someone, a partner
Wasted time
I have never really been loved
Fear of the unknown
Questions:
To tell the kids the whole truth or not--who should be the one to tell?
To tell others of the past, others of the future—what do I say?
Heavier questions that were allowed to be put off earlier:
Sell the house and downsize?
Change careers to earn more?
Well.....now what?
Some of the "bad" stuff has faded—*almost* tempted to go back—it would be easier in some ways
Lonely, but afraid to "get out there"
Trying to move forward, but it's so hard sometimes

(for me about a year)

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PHASE IV

A NEW REALITY

aka: "THE WOUNDS HAVE HEALED—
LIVING WITH THE SCARS"
(Accepting and Adjusting)

Acceptance:

"I am a divorced woman who was married to a gay man."
"I did not cause this to happen, it happened TO me."
"He will never understand what he put me through, nor will he ever apologize for it."
"This is not what I envisioned for my life, but it is what it is, I will be okay; this will not consume me anymore."
"I did the right thing, in choosing to leave a toxic relationship, even though it meant breaking vows."
More inner peace and self-sufficiency
Less wrenching heartache, more joy
Able to be alone and not lonely (*most of the time*)
Putting my story in writing & sharing with others to give support

Adjustment

"I am responsible for EVERYTHING now, from tires to taxes, to tending the house, making ALL the decisions about my present life and my future."

Still learning to cope with all this "singleness" & stillness in the house: Friday nights, Saturday mornings, Sunday afternoons, dinner time, holiday weekends

Waves of anxiety intertwined with true contentment and self-confidence
Finding new hobbies & interests

Wondering

"Should I ever believe in marriage again?"
"Will I ever trust anyone again?"
"Am I too old to have adolescent dreams?"
"How do you know if it will work?"
"Is it worth putting myself out there?"
"Can I trust myself?"

PHASE V

(Not there yet, to be cont'd....)

It *might* be titled
"BECOMING WHOLE"
aka: "MOVIN' ON"

It *may* include:

Setting new goals
Venturing out more
Taking trips
Completing bigger projects around the house
Giving back/Paying forward the help and support received along the way
Feminine spirit restored
Feeling whole, with or without a man in my life
Looking back with satisfaction
Trusting myself
Embracing the future, rather than fearing it

On a personal note~

If you are reading this map, you have taken a *huge* step forward. I encourage you to find more steps forward than backward in your recovery journey. Sometimes a step forward may just be a small change in your mindset. It will rarely be easy, but know that it *will* be worth it.

All journeys are a bit different, but each journey is worth taking, to restore one's spirit, and become whole again. I hope this map of my own journey will help you get there one day ~W.

