

April 17, 2000

Princeton Church of Christ
33 River Road
Princeton, NJ 08540
Attn: Ms. Phyllis Rich
Divorce Recovery Program

Dear Phyllis,

The end of my eighteen-year marriage on December 16, 1998 was an emotionally devastating experience. I found myself slipping into the depths of despair and anguish. I had a choice to make. Either I can continue my downward spiral or learn to control the situation. My company is a member of the Confidential Advisory Program. I called them for the names of support groups in the area and yours was one that I was given.

I started attending the meetings in January 1999. The room was filled with men and women of various ages, religions (I'm Jewish), races, and beliefs. I immediately felt at ease with the people there and began participating that first night. I believed that the men and women there could help me navigate the treacherous waters of divorce. I felt safe discussing my situation and my feelings. The members were attentive and sought to help by advising me and disclosing their own experiences. Week after week, I sought the group's help. I began gaining insights into my marriage and myself. As time went on, I began helping new people in the group just beginning the process. By helping others, it helped me learn more about myself.

The seminars also provided another means to resolve my feelings by exposing me to topics related to both personal matters and divorce recovery. They are enlightening and informative.

Although it has been sixteen months since the divorce, I still attend most of the support group meetings and seminars. The meetings continue to help me come to terms with the end of my marriage and I continue to benefit from them. In addition to dealing with the past, I use the knowledge gained to pave the way for my future relationships. I want to learn more about me, my reactions to situations, and other people's responses so that I can avoid the mistakes I made in the past. I want to be successful in my next relationship. I want to walk down the aisle one more time in my life and make it work.

The divorce recovery program is an investment in myself. By other members helping me, by me helping others, and with a lot of self-evaluation. I hope to make a better life for myself. I do not dare to consider where I would be emotionally if this program were not available. Thank you for all of the time and effort that you give to this essential program.

Sincerely,

Bruce
Hightstown

December 16, 2003

Hello Phyllis!

I know that I haven't been to the group for a while but I think about all of you often. I hope that things are going well.

Five years ago today, December 16, 1998, my marriage died. Although the relationship was very difficult at times, Sandy was my wife for eighteen years and I did love her. I didn't want this to happen. I tried to save the marriage, but I couldn't.

I found out about the group from the Confidential Advisory Program that my employer participated in. I will never forget how on that snowy night in January 1999, I drove to the church only to find that the meeting was canceled. There on the door was a sign which said "No Divorce Recovery". Anyway, I was there the next time.

You saved my life. My world was spinning out of control and I had nowhere else to turn for help. I knew that I did not want to find relief with bottles of alcohol or pills so I took the more difficult route and that was to deal with the situation. It has been a difficult five years. Two steps forward; one step back. Through it all, you and the group patiently listened to stories of my successes and failures. You helped to clarify issues when I was too involved in them to see clearly. I felt understood and respected.

Only now do I believe that I am turning a corner. I am starting to accept what happened and go on with my life. Although I hear from Sandy every few months, I know that there will be no reconciliation. After house sharing for years, I am ready to settle down and buy my own home. After dozens of dates, I have been seeing a woman for about fifteen months that I hope to spend the rest of my life with.

Other people recovered from their divorces faster, but maybe I didn't do half bad. I'm still working on it. It will take years. This divorce shook me to the core. No matter what happens, there will always be a special place in my heart for Sandy and I wish her peace, happiness, and love always. We both made mistakes and, ultimately, failed each other.

G-d bless you and your loved ones for the work that you do. You take time away from your family to be with people like us. Know that you make a tremendous impact on people's lives - especially this one. I hope to visit the group soon.

Bruce
Hightstown