

Adjusting to Divorce: Stay Involved, Create a Budget

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I was driving on I-15 about a year ago, minding my own business (probably speeding just a little) when out of nowhere a giant green kayak was coming straight at me. In that moment of panic, I changed lanes without even looking and was lucky not to have run into another car.

Divorce can feel this way. It sometimes comes out of nowhere. (In many cases, one spouse wants the [divorce](#) and the other does not.) You now find yourself in the divorce lane, and the cruise control isn't working.

In this unsettling period of adjustment, we can often forget about areas of our lives to keep intact. Many people going through divorce feel isolated from others in the first year of divorce, according to research. A great way to merge through a divorce is to stay involved in your community and friendships or invite those to be more regular in your life. Some ideas are to go out to lunch with your friends or family members regularly. Attend your local church weekly. Find a support group with others also navigating a divorce and connect regularly. Find somewhere in your community you can regularly volunteer to serve others. Keeping yourself involved can be a great way to feel less isolated and alone during this time.

If you are more of a solo driver, there are still ways to combat this feeling of isolation. Pick up an old hobby or develop a new one that can connect you to others. This can include dusting off the guitar in the corner of

your room and taking lessons again or wearing out those underused running shoes on the nearby running trail. If you have been working from home, consider going into the office a couple times a week for a change of scenery. The workplace is a great environment to feel surrounded by others and part of a team. The key is to do something where you are regularly surrounded by others but maybe not always needing to socialize with them.

Another area of life that can drift after divorce is finances. Research has found that within the first year after a divorce, most people's financial situations have changed significantly; usually budgets are tighter. This research also found that people were the best at keeping to a budget the first year after divorce (probably most likely due to tighter budgets and learning how to manage money on a solo basis), but often slipped after that.

Creating a budget and updating it weekly can keep you focused on your finances. Having a specific day and time set aside for updating your budget can keep you on track.

Important categories to keep in your budget are specific savings. These may include savings that go toward paying off debt, emergency savings, and fun savings like vacations. This is also a great tool to see where you spend your money and adjust your habits as necessary. You can create your own budget on an excel spreadsheet or search for a budgeting app that works for you on the app store. A lifelong habit of regular budgeting can aid in keeping you out of unnecessary debt and making emotional purchases at an emotional and unsettled time of life.

On your drive through life – now in the divorce lane – it can be tricky to keep your focus. Keep your social life and finances in good operating condition to aid in your adjustment. (Oh, by the way, these are good ways to enhance the possibility of wonderful new relationships!)

If you are looking for more areas of life to keep in focus post-divorce, you can find more articles on the UMC website. [Check out this article on post-divorce exercise routines and sleeping habits.](#)

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