



# Seven Rounds

Separation support workbook

Divorce Cowboy 2020

# Welcome

Separation was one of the most difficult and challenging times in my life. After getting some support, I promised myself that I'll use my pain to grow.

This workbook is based on the book "Rebuilding when your relationship ends", MKP - The man kind project process, men's circles, person centered counselling approach and my own personal experience.

It's aiming to support men going through separation, particularly in a "dumpee" scenario.

Why Divorce Cowboy?

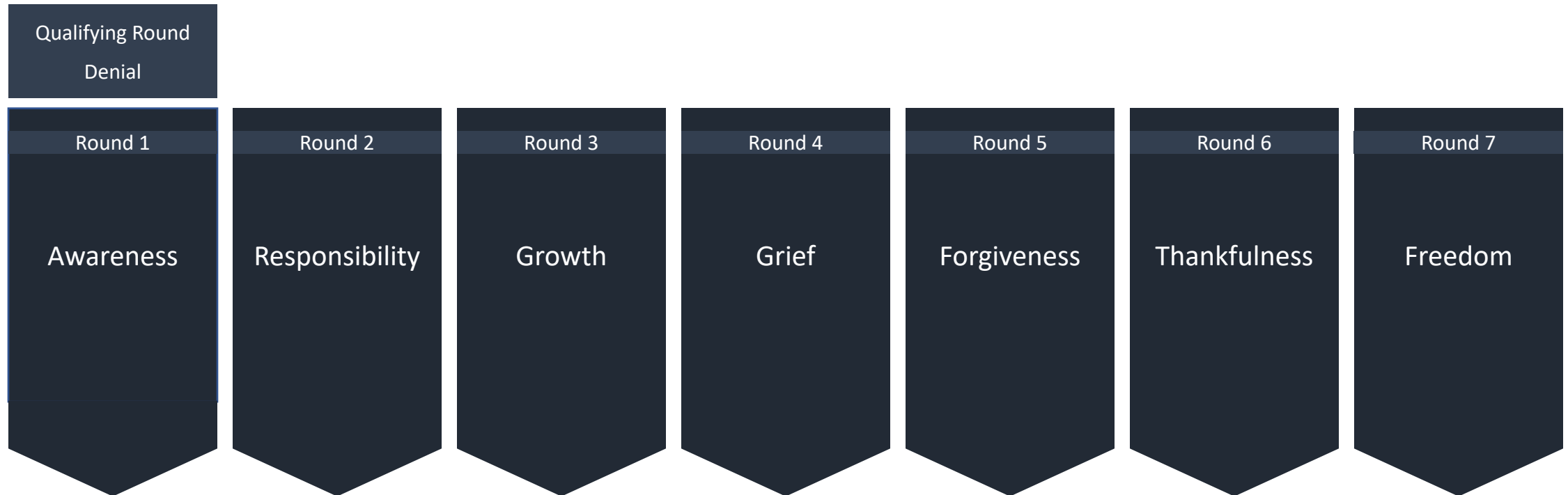
A cowboy is someone who fails and falls but gets up and tries again. Separation can be a long and lonely road full of painful moments. The men who pick themselves up are all Divorce Cowboys.

This is a pilot process, offered as work in progress. I hope it will support you in your healing journey.

Tamir Berkman,

Divorce Cowboy 2020

# Seven rounds



The workbook can be completed at your own pace. It is recommended to allow at least one month for each round. Every round ends with a statement. Say it out loud. Date and sign it or write it in your own words. It's important you fully agree with it before moving to the next round.

## Qualifying round

# Denial

(No healing can be done in this stage)

I was in denial for two years until admitting my relationship is over.

I was using drugs and alcohol to suppress my emotions.

I feared telling family and friends.  
I felt shame for failing in life.

The moment I stopped with drugs and alcohol for 48 hours, I could get in touch with my emotions and make responsible decisions.

No progress can happen in denial.  
Change will happen when the need to change is greater than the need to stay the same.

## The work

Ask yourself:

Am I still living with my partner after she expressed her desire to separate?

Am I using drugs and alcohol? Why? Is it possible I'm doing it to suppress my emotions?

Am I using other forms of escape like working longer hours, more time in gym etc.?

Did I tell anyone about the situation?

Do I feel fear or shame telling family and friends about the situation?

What will happen to me if I stop using drugs and alcohol for 24 hours?

What excuses do I tell myself to justify these behaviors?

Is it possible I'm in some sort of denial?

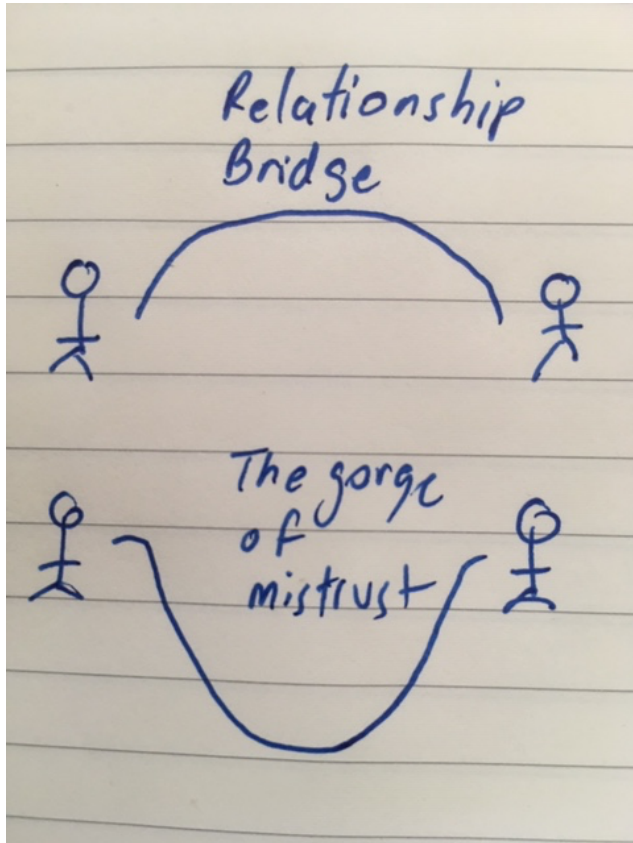
Am I generally happy with my life? Am I positive and present? Am I growing?

## Notes

**I accept that my romantic relationship is over**

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Sign:** \_\_\_\_\_



About 80% of divorces are initiated by women.

On average, a person spends about two years thinking about divorce before taking action.

This means that when a woman says: "I want a divorce", she's in a state of conclusion after self deliberation.

The man, is in an opposite state of mind.

► He's probably hearing about it for the first time (sometimes by denying the signs).

The two sides are now in completely different emotional space. Woman is tired and angry. Man is in shock, denial and disbelief.

This is the moment the relationship bridge, that was eroding for some time, turns into the gorge of mistrust.

Is this a safe space to communicate about critical future decisions?

## Round 1

# Awareness

### The Escape and Cope buckets:

When my feelings took over, I wanted to run away, take a flight, smoke, drink and drive fast. These are escapes.

After a while I've decided to work through it, get a place close to my kid and get some help.  
This is coping.

Ask yourself:

Which bucket does a specific action belong to?  
Escape or Cope?

It is ok to choose to escape just be aware that's what you're doing.

## The work

The first step in self awareness is the awareness of our own feelings. To connect with your feelings try this exercise called: The Check-in process:

Sit down with your eyes closed and scan your body. How do you feel? Where do you feel it in your body?

If there is a color or shape associated with this feeling, what are they?

Try to focus on these key feelings: Mad, Sad, Glad, Fear or Shame. Take time to sit with your feelings. They are guides to whatever is going on with you. Remember, even if you feel sad now, you won't be sad forever. Acknowledge the feeling by stating: "OK, this is sadness". OR: "I feel anger". Ask yourself: Why do I feel this feeling? You don't need to find the answer, just sit with the question.

What are the feelings that come up when you think about your ex? What emotions come up when you think of your separation? It's ok for you to feel. It's ok to sit and observe to become aware of your feelings, negative as they seem. All feelings are ok. What do you do when you feel these emotions? Are these feelings control your thoughts, actions and self worth? Do your feelings consume you? Are you endlessly going through stories in your mind fueled by these feelings? Do you sometimes feel sorry about the way you acted around your ex or kids fueled by feelings?

You're not alone. You're not damaged. It is ok for you to feel. It's time to cut yourself some slack and feel.

Agree to allow yourself to sit with a feeling, understand that feelings come and go.

Write your feeling, thoughts and whatever else that is coming up for you in the notes below.

## Notes

**I'm going to use my pain to grow**

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Sign:** \_\_\_\_\_



## Consider this ►

You have probably lost more than a partner. You might have lost access to your kids, your house, your finance, your friends, family and maybe even work.

As you go through this process one thing will become clear. The only thing you're able to change is yourself.

Be open and remember that separation is the most crucial time in a man's life.

This period, will not only determine the rest of your life, but the lives of your children and grandchildren.

It's worth putting in the effort and end up with a more positive outcome.

## Round 2

# Responsibility

My ex didn't have a relationship with herself.  
I was there. Whatever happened I'm responsible  
for at least 50% of it.

When I took responsibility, I stopped feeling like a  
victim. I started to seek help, truth and growth.

"It takes two to create a relationship  
It takes two to cause a relationship to end - how  
can I take responsibility for my share?"  
*Demian (MKP man)*

## The work

Try speaking in I statements: e.g. I feel, I believe, I think, I want, I need.  
This will help you to take responsibility for your feelings, thoughts, words and actions.

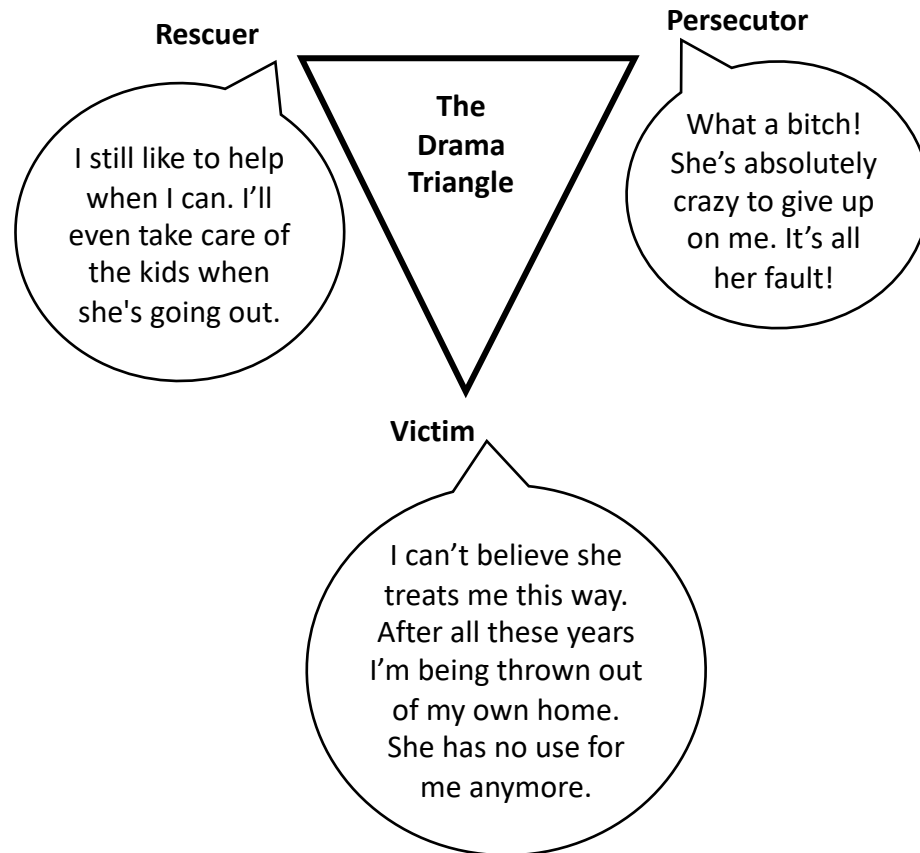
Look at the drama triangle on the next page. Are you being a victim?  
How do you speak about your ex or the relationship or you?

Ask yourself: What did I do to end up like this?  
What do you think is the reason for the divorce? Now ask yourself why. Keep asking why 7 times.  
Example: "The reason for my divorce is that she cheated on me". Why? "Because she felt lonely".  
Why? "Because I was focusing on my work". Why? "Because it made me feel safe".  
Why? "Because I feel valued". Why? ".... And so forth.  
You might discover the real reason why your relationship ended.

Ask yourself: Am I open to taking responsibility for my actions? Can I be an adult and acknowledge I'm 50%  
responsible of everything that happened?

## Notes

Can you see yourself and your partner in this triangle?  
Which roles do you play? Which roles does they play?



Ask yourself:

What do I tell myself when I'm feeling like a victim?

What do I tell myself when I feel like a persecutor?

What do I tell myself when I'm feeling like a rescuer?

What is going on inside my head? How does this make me feel?

How do I act when feeling like this? Who else is being affected and how?

What can I do to get out of the drama triangle? How can I guard myself from going onto it? Are there any pre-measures I can put in place?

Can you see how being on the drama triangle affecting your healing and growth journey? It is extremely difficult to see when you're on the triangle. Take the time with this activity.

## Notes

I am responsible for 50% of my separation

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Sign: \_\_\_\_\_

## Consider this



kids are also going through separation.

They are probably feeling overwhelmed, scared and sad.

A major factor in how children respond and adjust to the separation is the level of conflict they're exposed to. How do you feel about the following statements:

“It is my job as an adult and a parent to make the separation process as smooth as possible for my children”

“My separation doesn't mean my ex and I stop being partners for our kids. We will always be mom and dad”.

“Like it or not, my ex will be part of my life forever. I have a lot to gain from a positive relationship with her and much to lose from a negative one”.

How do these statements make you feel?

Did you find yourself taking one of the roles on the drama triangle?

## Round 3

# Growth

The process became easier when I dedicated myself to my vision.

## The work

Imagine your vision of a best-case scenario – an environment or situation where you're being the person you want to be, having the relationship you want with your ex and kids. Describe the environment they're in a lot of detail: where are you? When does this vision take place and who are you with?

What do you say or do? what actions do you take (or don't take) and what are their reactions to others (and what are other people's reactions to them like)? How are your kids handling this?

How's the relationship with your ex? How are you reacting to her?

How does she react to you? How does it feel? Why are you doing what you're doing? What motivates you?

How you are doing what you're doing in this vision and how well you are doing it?

Are there any areas you can identify that you still need to work on?

What do you know, what are your skills and competencies?

Why are you doing what you're doing in this vision?

What motivates and drives your commitment to this course of action? Why is it important to you? how is it meeting your values, needs and the needs of others?

Who are you in this vision of yourself?

Who are you being for other people and how are you being received?

What do you think of yourself and how are you different from who you are today?

What changes does live like this bring to your life?

What meaning and purpose do live life in this way give?

## Notes

**I will make my separation vision a reality**

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Sign:** \_\_\_\_\_

## Round 4

# Grief

I had no energy for days. I felt weak, drained and directionless. I wasn't even aware I was grieving until my mentor mentioned it.

I believe Men find it difficult to grieve. Maybe it's because grieving is an emotional painful journey. Maybe it's because we rarely take the time to grieve.

TAKE THE TIME TO GRIEVE.

## The work

Take a deep breath. I invite you to take your time with this round. It may take a week, two weeks or four weeks. Whatever it takes. Although grieving can feel overwhelming, full of unexpected emotions, from shock or anger to profound sadness, It's an important step in the healing process. How would you describe your grief? What are you grieving for? How can you express your grief? Writing? Painting? Playing Music? Get it out creatively in some way. Then share it with someone or on your Facebook page. Or burn it with the intention of letting go.

The important thing is that you are giving your grief a physical form and letting it go.

## Notes



I have released a creative form of my grief

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Sign: \_\_\_\_\_

If you are lost for creative expression and you feel connection to this poem, I invite you to copy and share it. Alternatively, you might choose to burn it in a ceremony of release.



I grieve.  
I grieve for lost love. For a future. For dreams.  
For everything it was and what it once seemed.  
I grieve for my plans, for my joy, for my house,  
For my home, for my life, for the one I called spouse.  
I grieve for my kids, for how we have been and I grieve for the sounds of morning routine. For the nights on the couch, for the touch of your hand, for the smell of your neck when we lie in bed.  
I grieve for my time, for my youth, for my innocence,  
I grieve for my wedding day, for my parents and guests.  
I grieve for knowing just who I am,  
I grieve for the man I was back then.  
There's much to grieve for and I'm doing just that.  
Let me grieve and sink into that hole in my heart.  
This grieving will end, that I do know,  
For now I'll just grieve for a minute or so.

# Well Done!



You are now pass the middle point.

Are you ready for the final push?

Let's go!

## Round 5

# Forgiveness

The moment I forgave my ex,  
I forgave myself.

The moment I forgave myself,  
I forgave my ex.

I felt amazing telling my ex that I forgive her. I felt strong, shedding my victimhood, my ego, my sadness. I could feel my freedom coming around the corner.

Forgiving my ex did wonders to our communication. She no longer needed to treat me like a charity case. I didn't need to blame her for anything. We became two adults with a shared love. Our kid.

## The work

How does your ex make you feel? Why?

Is it her, or are you letting yourself feel like this because of your ego/perception?

Can I see how the story that I'm telling myself is justifying me and vilifying her?

Can I come up with behaviors or words that I keep repeating although I'm only getting a painful result?

What is the risk/cost of: being negative? Fighting, court, lawyer fees?

What is the risk/cost of: being positive, vulnerable, soft, generous?

Write down how your ex hurt you. Are you still a victim?

What keeps you from forgiving?

What will it take to forgive your ex? How will it feel like?

Try this: every time you feel upset, hug yourself. Big squeeze. Tell yourself you love yourself. Talk to yourself like

## Notes

I forgive my ex

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Sign: \_\_\_\_\_

## Round 6

# Thankfulness

Sometimes I think about all the times my Ex annoyed me. Then I thank her for ending the relationship. To be honest, good on her. It wasn't easy but it was the right thing to do.

I finally understand that the real reason behind my separation was lack of growth.

My ex is a mirror. I can finally acknowledge it. By forgiving I made myself equal. By thanking I made myself stronger.

My ex-partner is better as my ex than she was as my wife.

## The work

Ask yourself: What do I have to be grateful for?

Can I see myself letting go of the past and start to create my future?

Forgiveness is needed when someone done you wrong. Thankfulness is given when someone did you right. What does my ex do right? What can I thank her for?

Am I able to change my perception of the situation? Can I think of the situation as a blessing? Try to to just that. How does it feel?

Can you think of times when you felt the relationship isn't going well? Can it be that your ex partner was strong enough to end a relationship that didn't serve you?

What will it take for you to thank your ex? What will it feel like?

## Notes

I thank my ex

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Sign: \_\_\_\_\_

## Round 7

# Freedom

I remember feeling amazing. The best I've felt in years. I was drunk on self love and didn't want to share it with anyone.

This is my time to create my future. It's like getting a second chance in life.

I'm so excited making decisions and actioning things I'm getting real high from it.

My separation gave me freedom.

## The work

Can I celebrate my relationship for what it was? Can I see it was a learning experience?  
Make decisions about your future. Will you seek truth? Happiness? Both?  
Remember that feelings are fleeting.  
You might want to get into a healing relationship. Keep learning. It's time to re-invent yourself.

## Notes







It's great to see you on the other side.

I hope this workbook helped you in your healing journey.

I'd love to hear your feedback.

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**“Rebuilding when your relationship ends”**

by Dr. Bruce Fisher Dr. Robert Alberti

**MKP Men's groups:**

<https://mankindproject.org/mens-groups/>

**Dads support groups:**

<https://www.parentsbeyondbreakup.com/dids>