

SHATTERED

I dropped a glass on the floor one day and it shattered into a million pieces. It was a couple of weeks before I felt confident that I had gotten all the broken pieces and could walk through the kitchen in my bare feet. And then one day, several weeks later, my foot found one last tiny shard of glass which buried itself in my big toe. The pain was sudden and intense. Luckily I was able to hop to the bathroom and grab a pair of tweezers and pull out the tiny piece of glass. My toe was tender for several days, but I had a full recovery.

Shattered is what I was after my divorce, but not right away. There was a sense of relief at first. Relief that I didn't have to go home every day and fight about every little thing; relief that I could have my own thoughts and opinions without constant comment or criticism and relief that I could just be me.

Then reality settled in. I had changed my life drastically. I hurt my children and their sense of security in having both mom and dad together in one home. I had ripped apart my sense of loving and being loved, my financial security and lost my house I cared for so lovingly. One day I realized that everything I had been, everything I had, everything I had believed in was shattered into a billion little pieces. How could I ever put myself back together again?

It took me years to feel somewhat whole. I had to rely on my faith, some very good friends and counseling. My children were the only thing that held me together most days.

Little by little, I learned that I could not take the blame for everything. I only had to acknowledge and take responsibility for what was my fault in the breakup of the marriage. I learned that my children loved me simply because I was their Mom and they could count on my love and support always.

I learned to rely on my faith in God and trust that I would get through all that life had thrown at me. I learned to ask for help from close friends and to realize that I couldn't do everything on my own.

I learned to forgive those who hurt me.

But the thing that took me the longest to learn was to forgive myself and to know that I am worthy to be loved.

As I put myself back together over the years, I thought I was doing really well. I had defeated the deep depression and anxiety. I pushed myself to do things on my own and make new friends. I renewed old friendships. I participated in church and school functions with my children. My life was slowly being put back together and repaired.

However, every time I was in a serious relationship, it ended in disaster in one way or another and I would feel shattered all over again. I thought I had it all together. But there was just that one thing that I just wasn't able to do. It was like that tiny piece of glass sticking in my big toe. I had to forgive myself and learn that I could love and be loved.

Thankfully the pandemic came along and it forced me to spend a lot of time alone. I spent my time at my camper reflecting and writing a lot. I had been doing a spiritual study and writing out my response to some question that was asked in the corresponding journal. I don't really remember what the question was but as I was writing my response it suddenly hit me that I didn't need to beat myself up anymore over the divorce, failed relationships, and other things that I felt made me unworthy of love because---I am loved.

I have always been loved by God, my children, my parents, my sister and her family, cousins, so many friends and my fur babies. My list of those who love me is long. I am worthy of love and it is shown to me every single day. It no longer mattered what happened so many years ago. So I chose to finally and totally forgive myself and let go of all the guilt, shame, embarrassment and hurt and embrace the love all around me.

I can honestly say pulling that last "piece of glass" out of my toe has been the best thing for me! I still have my down days on occasion or my lonely days, but I don't feel the deep despair any longer. I am loved and that is all I have ever been looking for in my life.

Ember