

ANSWERS TO SIX EMOTIONAL ABUSE SURVIVOR QUESTIONS

Hi. This is Natalie Hoffman of [Flyingfreenow.com](https://flyingfreenow.com), and you're listening to the Flying Free Podcast, a support resource for women of faith looking for hope and healing from hidden emotional and spiritual abuse.

NATALIE: Welcome to Episode 251 of the Flying Free Podcast. Today I'm going to share some insider stuff with you. Every month I get together live with the members of the Flying Free community and I answer their questions for two hours, and then I post the video replay on our private forum and I post the audio replay on our private podcast every month. Members also have access to six years' worth of these monthly Q&As when they join Flying Free. It's just one of the many resources you get when you come back into my private community with me to do your personal development work as a Christian woman navigating an emotionally destructive relationship.

So for this episode, I'm going to share with you parts of the September 2023 Live Q&A recording. Now, I've edited out any personal information about any of the members who asked questions, so they're going to be very generic, all right? I've also left out any questions, obviously, that were of a more personal nature, so basically I took a two-hour recording and I edited it down to about forty minutes, and I'm offering it to you right now.

If you enjoy this episode and you get benefit from it, then you are exactly the perfect fit for this program, and you can learn more about how you can be part of it by going to joinflyingfree.com.

The questions we're going to be covering in this episode include the following. There are six questions I pulled out. And by the way, this first one is a question that... I know the back-ends of these people. So I know kind of their backgrounds, and when I give answers, I'm answering them according to what I know about them based on how we've gotten to know each other in the program. But this particular person is someone who has suffered every kind of abuse and she's finally getting out, and she writes this: "I keep feeling like his sadness, loss, and grief over losing me are all my fault." So that's the first question I talk about.

The second one I'm going to address is this one: "All of a sudden my husband has a lawyer and a few other suspicious things going on. I know I need a lawyer now too, but I don't have any money and I don't have any time, and I'm stuck." The third question I'm going to be addressing is, "I'm having a hard time speaking my own opinions without

stumbling over my words.”

The fourth question I'm going to answer is this one: “I feel selfish for wanting a divorce and I feel resentful that it's dragging out.” The fifth question is, “I'm in an abusive marriage and I'm struggling with how not to feel hurt or react to the ways that he is harming me.” And the last one you're going to hear is, “I've spent the last three years dragging my feet about filing for divorce. How do I move forward?” Are you ready? Let's dive in.

Okay, hi. Welcome to our... What month is this? September Q&A. We have a lot of questions that came in, so I can't wait to dig in. First of all, I want to tell you, and this is going to go out in tomorrow's announcement, there are two new classes that I just uploaded this week into the membership site that you can check out. One is called “Raising Emotionally Resilient Kids Even if Your Co-parent Is Destructive,” and that class is in the “Parenting Essentials” course now. I just put it in as a bonus class at the end. Again, direct links will go out in tomorrow's Monday morning member email. And then the next one is “Why Custody Battles Are a Waste of Resources and What You Can Do Instead.” And this class I put into the “Preparation for Divorce” course as a bonus class. [These classes can be found inside of the Flying Free program. Apply to join today!]

Do keep in mind, I did put a disclaimer on this particular class because obviously, if you're divorcing someone who's physically abusive and he's hurting your children physically, you're going to need to have a custody battle for that because you want to protect your children physically, right? So that's a little bit of a different situation than what she talks about in her class, but the basic gist of it is if you are going to be divorcing someone, most of the time, unless there's documented physical abuse, most of the time you're going to end up with a 50/50 parenting sharing situation, custody situation. And since that is probably going to be the case, what you really want to do is be able to teach your children resiliency skills and coping skills for when they have to go into that other environment and you're not there with them, okay? So that's what that class is mostly about.

All right, the next question is, “I continue to struggle with the belief that my husband and his feelings aren't my responsibility. During our separation, I can tell he's upset and devastated. While I know I was very manipulated, controlled, and taken advantage of, there were a lot of good times and happy memories.”

Of course there are. Abuse is not all abuse. In fact, that's part of the abuse is that there are all these good memories. That's intentional, okay? The good memories are the hooks. They're like the juicy worms on the hook that draw you in.

"We spent all of our time together and he is very involved with the kids. In his perspective, we had the perfect marriage."

Well, that's what he communicated to you, right? We can't really know what is going on inside of him except what he says, and unless he's a very trustworthy person of high integrity, we can't even trust what he says, right?

"So in my perspective, I had to play the perfect part in order for it to be that way, and I hit my threshold. I keep feeling like his sadness, loss, and grief are all my fault — that he's my responsibility. What are some other ways I can deconstruct this thought so I don't feel so guilty and selfish all the time because I want a divorce?"

Well, I would just start running his models, right? You're just a circumstance in his model. "Wife sets a boundary." That's the circumstance. His thought about that is, "She has no right to do that. She's my property." Let's say I'm him, okay? "What do I feel when I think that? I feel anger and indignation. And what do I do when I feel anger and indignation? I cuss her out or I criticize her or I don't let her go someplace that she wants to go or I withhold money or I tell her that she's a terrible Christian or fill in the blank. I do all of these things. What is the result for me? My wife files for divorce, and now I'm alone."

Who created that result for him? He did. You had nothing to do with it. You're just a person outside of himself. His wife is divorcing him because he chose to mistreat her. That's what happens to some men who mistreat their wives. Their wives finally say, "I'm not going to be mistreated. I don't deserve to be mistreated like that."

So hopefully next time he will have learned his lesson and he will be better. He probably won't, but, you know, again, that's his business. It's not our business. We are constantly trying to meddle in other people's business and manage them and help make them happy and help make their lives go smoothly. That's really crossing over other people's boundaries. They have a right to be assholes and they have a right to their own consequences for their behavior.

So I guess what I would do if I were you is I would run his models just to see how it's not you, and then I would also, every time your brain goes to, "Oh, but what about poor moochkinoochki?" I would say, "Wait, wait, what about poor..." And then put your name in the blank. "What are we doing for her? How are we helping her emotional life?" Because we can't help his emotional life. We can only help one person's emotional life, and that's the person that has our name. So we need to let go of what we can't control anyway and focus and take back our control of the person that we do have control over

and her emotions and start reworking those thoughts.

Again, you're going to constantly have this thought, "Oh, he's so sad." I did. Once in a while, I still do have that old residual thought. It's like this little shmeggly in my part inside of me that raises her little head and goes, "But what about him? He must be lonely." I have a bigger part, an older part inside of me, that then says lovingly and kindly, "I know. We feel bad for him. It's so sad that he's made these choices in his life. Let's pray that he makes better choices for his future. And then let's move on with what we need to focus on." And then I move on.

So it's just a matter of redirecting your thoughts, redirecting your thoughts. You're never, ever, ever, EVER going to not have thoughts like that. So our job is not to eliminate those thoughts — our job is to learn how to redirect them, okay?

All right, next question: "I seem to be stuck. What I thought would be a fairly civil ending looks like it's turning into something else, and I can't seem to make a move. All of a sudden he has a lawyer and a few other suspicious things going on. I know I now need a lawyer too, but I don't have any money, I don't have any time, and as I said, I just seem to be stuck. Doing this with lawyers is my nightmare."

I would never do this without a lawyer — I'm just saying. I had a friend who had zero money. She had no money saved up. She was divorcing a pastor and she just opened up a line of credit on a credit card, or you could take out a loan at a bank, and then she paid it off after the divorce was over with the divorce settlement. And then there was hardly anything left over, but the pain of staying in that relationship was so huge that she was willing to do whatever it took. And she actually took several years to pull herself out of that hole. She's just now starting to do that. But I'm just saying you can do it even without money if you can take out a line of credit.

"I'm a pretty frugal person, and just thinking that every time I talk to them it's going to be a hundred or so dollars makes me very anxious."

Yeah. But if this was your child... Let's say that your child had been kidnapped and you had to pay somebody \$100 — well, I had to pay \$350 an hour — you had to pay someone \$350 to help you get your child back. Would you get anxious about paying that money or would you be anxious about making sure you got your child back? That's what you have to decide.

When you value yourself and your freedom and your future — and I really encourage you to do that — then the money is not the issue. Your freedom and your future is the

crucial issue. And trust me, paying a ransom fee now to be able to build your own financial future later is a very wise move in a free direction. Whereas if you worry about the money now, that would be like, going back to the child, that would be like going, "Oh, but I really need that money. The kid, mmmm, maybe not so much. Maybe we can just let the kid suffer."

You are just as important as a child that's been kidnapped. Think of yourself that way. Value yourself, treasure yourself, take good care of yourself. Your paying an attorney to help you with this process is part of your ransom fee. That's how I would think about it if I was in your shoes. That's how I thought about it when I WAS in your shoes.

So when we're stuck, it's usually because of some kind of fear. What you described at the beginning, it seems like a freeze response. And so I would dig into using The Model, even. In the action line, we would put, "I freeze and I don't move." What is your belief that's causing you to not move forward with your life? You're in grad school, so that tells me that you're a person who is interested in your future, otherwise you wouldn't be in grad school. That also tells me that you're a person who's willing to do hard things to get where you want to go.

So what is it that makes you open to moving forward with grad school but not moving forward in your personal life? I would dig into those questions, and I can certainly help you with coaching as well. So we can do coaching sometime. I'm talking about in the program — you can volunteer to get coaching.

Okay, the next question: "From years of being a member of a Christian church who handed you your beliefs, who discouraged any negative thoughts, and also from people pleasing all my life, I find it hard to form my own opinions and voice them without stuttering and stumbling with my words."

Okay, I get this, all right? I was also like this, and you guys know, those of you who've been around for a while, you know that I can talk. Obviously, everyone stumbles and stutters sometimes, but I mean, you know that I can communicate, okay? I am a good communicator, but when I was — and even still sometimes — when I'm around my ex or if I am around someone who I feel is threatening to me, I go right back into the stumbling, stuttering thing. So I just want you to know that's normal, okay?

And also that problem where you can't formulate your thoughts or you're not really sure how you should react? So then what happens is you freeze and then your younger self comes to the surface and takes over. Your prefrontal cortex has shut down now, so you're just not able to think clearly. And so now you've got all of these reflex responses

coming up and coming out. And later on, you're just like, "Why did I say that? Oh my word, if I would have been thinking, I would have said this or I would have said that." But of course, when you're in the moment, you were literally not able to access those thoughts because of the trauma.

All right: "It seems sometimes when I do want to say something beyond small talk, I have a thought, and then all the words jam in my head and push to get out all at once, so I speak in broken thoughts and phrases with disjunct meanings. I really want to practice being concise with my speech as recommended by Jordan Peterson, but I get so flustered. I may be sabotaging myself with subtle thoughts like, 'Nobody would want to hear what I have to say,' or 'I can't trust what I'm about to say because my thoughts are not worth much and I don't have much experience standing up for myself.'"

I mean, definitely, those are thoughts to take a look at. "The other part might just be slowing down enough to put thoughts in a logical order before I start. Do you have any tips for practicing voicing myself in clearer ways? I am otherwise great with language, grammar, writing structure when I put things down on paper, but speaking without planning my script is really hard sometimes."

I think it comes from a fear of saying the wrong thing. That's definitely part of it. So I would do some thinking about like, really, is there a right or wrong thing to say? Is there a right or wrong way to say it? What if there actually isn't a right or wrong way? What if it's just showing up? What if just showing up and communicating is all that's required? Or, alternatively, I would even loosen up my thinking even more and say, "Who says I have to say anything at that moment?"

A lot of people will ask, "What do I say when people at church ask me this question?" A common response that I give is you can just say, "I don't feel comfortable talking about that right now." If you don't have an answer for them or you don't know what the answer might be, that's a very valid thing to say: "I don't feel comfortable talking about that right now. Thank you for your concern or your interest in me and my situation. I don't feel comfortable talking about that right now." That's it. And then later on you can think through, "What would I have said?" and you can come up with some canned responses if you want to, but you're not required to answer questions.

This is another thing too: I have this — and I think a lot of us have this — drive that if someone asks us a question, we have to answer it. We don't. We don't have to answer any questions. I'll get people asking me questions on Facebook, like, challenging questions, like they're trying to bait me, and you know what I can do? I can literally just delete the question. I don't have to answer it at all. Or I can just ignore the question and

just leave it hanging out there. I don't have to answer it.

And yes, you know, there's a little part inside of us that says, "Well, if we don't answer it, then they'll think that we're rude." So? So they think we're rude. Run their model: "Person at church doesn't answer my question." That's a circumstance for them. Their thought could be, "Oh, they must be under a lot of stress or strain, or they must be traumatized, or they must be going through a lot of hard things and that's why they didn't answer the question," and then their feeling in their body would be compassion. Or they could choose the thought, "She's dumb. I can't believe she didn't answer my question. She's rude," and then their feeling might be anger or frustration or whatever else.

But what they're making that mean and how they feel in their body is completely up to them, and their choice and has nothing to do with you, and nor can you manage that. Even if you try to answer their questions in a way that will satisfy them and make them feel at ease and be all comfy, even if you do that, half the time it won't work anyway. I don't know if you've noticed that, but people want to believe what they want to believe.

So, I guess, and I think you kind of already hit on it, it's really just what you're thinking about in the situation, and you can step back and examine that after it's over. So the next time you find yourself in a situation where you have to answer a question or you're going to voice an opinion or something... And by the way, I'll just go off on another little rabbit trail: When it comes to just expressing our opinions, I have learned — because I'm a person who likes to express my opinion — but I have learned that when I express my opinion around people who are not open to hearing other new thoughts and ideas, it's like throwing a pearl to swine. They're not pigs — the analogy is just that they just trample on it. They're not interested in it. So why do it? I'm just wasting my pearl.

So I don't really give my opinions unless someone actually seeks me out and asks, "What do you think about this?" and they have a genuine desire to know. If they're baiting me — you know, you can kind of tell if someone's just baiting you — I typically don't want to take the bait. But if they genuinely want to know, I'll give my opinion.

But I have spent time in circles with people, even with my own kids — I have to be careful about this — where I don't give them my opinions. They're talking, chit-chatting, you know, we're sitting around the table at dinner or at an event or something, and we're talking and they share opinions that I'm not really sure I completely agree with, I could say... And sometimes I do, but a lot of times I just sit and smile and just go, "Oh, interesting. That's a fascinating thought," because it is. Their thoughts and their ideas

are just as valid as mine. So unless they're saying, "I really think it's okay for me not to ever wear my seatbelt," yeah, then I'm going to step in and go, "I really wish you would wear your seatbelt. And here are some scientific reasons why it's good to wear your seatbelt," and I'll offer my opinion on that, but otherwise, I just don't give my opinion.

If I was going to a church right now — I'm not — but if I was, I would go and I would give people nothing. I'd give people absolutely nothing unless they were looking for it. I'd help anybody or offer my insights to anyone who wanted them. Otherwise, I would go only to learn and I would take in the meat and I would spit out the bones, okay? That's how I would handle the whole church thing.

Sometimes I think as Christians we think we're not only supposed to answer questions, but we're supposed to have everyone get it right. And if we think we know which is the right thing, then we're going to feel this impetus and this drive to make sure that everyone else knows the right thing too that we know. The bottom line is — as we get older, I think a lot of us start realizing this — we don't have all the right answers anyway. So we can just step back and people are not going to burn in hell because they think that baking whole wheat bread is better than eating the store-processed bread. We don't need to panic and worry about stuff like that. I'm not saying that that's the kind of conversations you're struggling with, but anyway. I think I've beat that one dead now, so let's go on to the next question.

"My husband and I seem to be on the same page about ending the marriage, but when I try to talk to him about telling the kids, he has said he's not ready (back in August) or he doesn't have the bandwidth right now (this past week) or he wants to be very careful how we do it, and then doesn't go any further in talking about what that means to him since I said I wanted a separation last fall."

So I would say that you and your husband are definitely not on the same page about ending your marriage. He says that you are, but his behavior is showing you that he is not on that page. I just want you to notice that and lean into that reality a little bit.

"I'm trying to be patient and understanding, but I also want to be honest with the kids. We are in-home separated, trying to strike a balance, and finding it hard not to feel either A), I'm too selfish because I want to keep moving forward towards divorce..."

I would challenge you to think about why that's selfish because you want to move towards a divorce. I think that it just depends on how we're framing what our divorce is. Like, if you believe, and I think that you probably do, and most of us have or do, that our responsibility is to manage this other adult, grown-ass person's life, then yes, if we

divorce, that's being selfish because now we're not doing what we truly, intrinsically believe that is our life's purpose. So we have to unhook from that root belief that that's our life's purpose. That's not your life's purpose.

You're actually interfering with him who is supposed to be managing his own grown-up life. You're crossing his boundaries and managing him. It's never ever, ever selfish to manage the responsibility that God gave to you to manage and to stop managing someone else's life. That's not selfish. That's called healthy adulting. So I just want to offer that as a new way of thinking about this whole thing, okay?

"...or B), resentful that it's being dragged out and kept a secret from the family."

But you're participating in dragging that out and keeping it a secret. Also notice that. You're waiting, ironically, for the person who's been controlling your life to continue to control your life in deciding when to end the marriage. And you don't have to. You're an adult. You can file for divorce anytime you want to. You can literally go this week. Tomorrow, Monday morning, you can go to your attorney, whoever you've vetted so far — or if you haven't, you can start searching — and by the end of the week, you can have paid the retainer fee down and have that attorney be working towards drawing up papers to file for divorce if you want to. And then it doesn't have to get dragged out anymore. Well, he can still drag it out after that, but now you've got an attorney that will keep the momentum going, all right?

And also, you don't have to keep it a secret from your family. Just because he wants to keep it a secret doesn't mean that you have to keep it a secret. You've got adult children and you're an adult? You can sit down with them and tell them anytime you want to. Right now, he is still controlling your life and your ability to move forward. And you have to decide if you want to continue to let him do that or not.

And I say that with so, so much love and belief in what's possible for you and what I know you're going to do over the course of this next year because you're already on that path. It's just a matter of reframing and tweaking a few little beliefs that you have in your mind that I know exactly what those beliefs are all about, because I did too. And once you tweak those things, you will be set free. You'll be like a horse let out of the gate and you will be galloping down that racetrack on your way.

LISTENER: Before I joined the Flying Free Sisterhood, I had done a lot of foundational work on my own to understand narcissistic abuse and toxic marriages and learning more about the particular situation that I am in. But I needed to do the deeper work in that I really didn't even understand that I'm an autonomous adult. It doesn't matter

how many degrees one has and how successful one is. Until you understand truly that you are an autonomous adult before God, it's an ultimate game changer when you're in a toxic marriage. I really did not understand it until I joined the Flying Free Sisterhood.

And because of it, I now know what I like — or I'm still learning — but I know more of what I like, what I want, what I don't want, and what I will tolerate and won't tolerate. And it's taught me how to do the work first with myself so that therefore, I can have healthy relationships outside of myself. It's changed everything. And so ultimately, I know that my life is never going to be the same. And so there you go.

NATALIE: All right, the next question is, "I am in an emotional, psychological, and verbally abusive marriage. I'm struggling with how not to feel hurt or react to the hurtful jabs, voice raising, blaming words from my husband. He blames me for everything and won't take responsibility for his actions."

I want to know why you don't want to be hurt by that anymore. Like, how is that going to serve you? You'd have to be a psychopath. To not be hurt by someone else's mistreatment, what you'd have to cut off all of your emotion and your normal human things that make you a loving, kind, empathic, warm, caring, human being, and you'd have to turn into a psychopath. I don't recommend that. That's not what you're going to do, okay? But I want you to notice, sometimes we just want to turn off all the pain, but that means that we have to say, "Yes, I just want to be a psychopath now," and I don't think you want that, and I don't want that for you.

So yes, it's always going to hurt when people mistreat you. When people are lying to you, gaslighting you, criticizing you, undermining you, controlling you, mistreating you, doing all of those things, it is going to hurt if you are a human being. So your only recourse is to figure out how to protect yourself as far as unhooking from what you are believing that they're saying.

So when we give their words credibility... So, for example, right now, my ex, he would tell you that I'm a terrible communicator. He's always said that about me. "She's a terrible communicator." Well, there was a time when I believed him. When I believed his words, those words had a deeper sting for me because God has wired me to be a communicator since I was a child. I wrote books when I was a kid, I loved singing, I loved talking, I loved helping people. Who I am today, I've been like that since I was a small child. And I love communicating. I've been writing since I was a child: writing, writing, writing all the time about everything. But my husband was picking apart something that was a strength of mine and eroding it to get me to the place where I was believing that I wasn't a good communicator.

So do you see how an adversary was using my husband to get me at the heart of my purpose in life of what God created me for? And it worked when I gave my ex's words credibility. It was still hurtful when he would say things like that until I realized, "He's lying. The opposite is actually true." I started flipping everything my husband said upside down. Even the things that he accused me of, I realized, "Wait a minute — those are the things he struggles with."

My ex-husband is actually a terrible communicator, for real. He can't write, he has a very hard time speaking his thoughts and articulating his thoughts. All he can do is yell and criticize. If you can't have a rational conversation with him... Have you heard of word salad? Like, narcissists will use word salad? I'm not saying he's a narcissist because I don't know that he would be diagnosed that way, but he did a lot of word salad where it was like words, just words flying out, and it was like, "I have no idea what he..." I would get so confused because I couldn't figure out even where to grab hold of something to actually latch onto and have a rational conversation from that point forward.

So once I realized that and unhooked from it, I remember I was standing in the room and he said something to me, and I remember thinking, "It's a lie. What he's actually telling me is what he struggles with, not what I struggle with." And then I was still hurt in that at that point I still wanted love from him, so I was hurt that I realized he has no love for me at all, but I had unhooked from the pain of believing that his words were true about me.

Now, I know and knew that they were only true about him and not me, and then that alleviated some of the pain. When I was going to school — if we go back to the bully thing — when I was going to school and I had to be around bullies who almost every day were calling me names and doing things to me, that is a painful thing, right? Nobody can ever go to school and be bullied and feel like, "I feel so great. Yippee skippee." That's not possible when we're human beings.

So what I had to do, I couldn't remove myself from that environment, so I had to experience that kind of emotional pain until I grew up old enough where they stopped doing it. Now they ignored me. They no longer did that. And then I kind of made my own path for myself. And then when I graduated from high school, I went to a Christian college where I thrived. And then I had lots of friends and didn't have to worry about ever being bullied. But notice I was able to thrive and blossom in college in an environment where I was supported and seen and heard and respected, but I could not thrive in junior high where I was not supported and not seen and not respected.

And same with an abusive relationship. When you're in an abusive relationship and you're living with the person, you're not going to be able to thrive simply because, well, you're going to rewire something and then they're just going to come back and throw up all... It would be like, you know, if we take the throw-up analogy, it'd be like them throwing up all over you and then you have to go take a shower, and then you come out and you'd like to get some work done, but they throw up on you again, so now you have to go back and take a shower again. You're constantly trying to shower off all of the toxicity. You will only be able to truly thrive when you're living in a home where nobody's throwing up on you anymore. And then you can really go to town and get some things done other than just sitting in a shower all day long trying to clean yourself off.

Okay, so all of that said, let's say that you can't leave. Let's say that you have to live with this person and there's a showering-off process. So then you can learn strategies so that when they vomit on you, you're not standing right next to them if we want to use that analogy. Where they're vomiting in your home — and maybe you have to clean up your home — but you're not taking it on you. It's not able to get to you.

That's what we can work on using The Model. I would hit up the “Healing Your Relationship With Yourself” course because you really need to be best friends with yourself and the “Healing Your Relationship With God” course. [These classes can be found inside of the Flying Free program. Apply to join today!] Once you get those two relationships really solid inside of you and you connect internally with yourself and with God, that's when your external, the people out here, including your daughter, they can do all this drama and you can still stay emotionally regulated. It's still going to hurt — you're still going to have to process through the hurt, but you can stay emotionally regulated and that's where we want to be. Maybe not always, but that's kind of where we want to head, right?

Here's the next question: “I feel like I'm keeping myself stuck, and I'm looking for some advice on how to move forward. I first met with an attorney over three years ago to see if divorce would be a good option for me. I decided that is what I wanted to do, but I spent the next three years dragging my feet about taking next steps. I finally got to the point where I filed in the spring, but my husband is still here. It seems like I always find some sort of reason that I can't move forward with divorce at a certain time. Illness, needed house repairs, kids going away to college, holidays. They all seem like legitimate reasons to push off at the time. Then I find myself wondering if these things are a sign that I should just give it up and stay.”

By the way, we are always looking for reasons to not move forward in our lives. That's

what the brain always does. So the fact that your brain is doing that, it just means you have a normal brain. Spiritualizing it and making it a “sign,” for those of us who are Christians, our brains love that. They love that belief because it will completely undermine you ever moving forward. I'll tell you this — it's so fascinating. If you want to go, like really, really, really want to go, and you're highly motivated and driven to go, everything will be a sign to your brain that you're supposed to go. I promise you. But if you deep down inside want to stay, everything is going to be a sign that you should stay. That's how the brain works, you guys.

We think it's the Holy Spirit. It's actually the brain that God gave us. It's called the reticular activating system, and everyone's brain has it. It's like a part of your brain that looks for what it wants to believe is true or that looks for... This is a good example. If you're looking for a car and you want a certain kind of car, guess what car you're going to notice when you're out on the road? You're going to notice that car. Your brain is going to notice what it's looking for, what it's scanning for. So if you're looking for a sign to stay because you don't actually, deep down inside, really don't want to go, your brain will find all the reasons why you should stay.

So I think it's important just to notice that there's something inside of you that's very strong, that very strongly does not want to leave. So strong that it's kept you for three extra years past when you decided at some point that you were done and you wanted to move on. And if you still want to move on, if your adult self is still like, “You know, I really want to move on,” which is kind of what I'm getting here, but you're not, that means you're letting a younger part of yourself drive your bus.

These are powerful parts inside of us, but we've kind of stepped aside and said, “Okay, you can drive.” And we just have to decide if we're going to let that little guy keep driving or if we're going to maybe address some of the issues that that little person is having inside of us, and then we decide that we're going to drive the bus.

And we might decide we're going to stay. As an adult, we can still make an adult decision. After we've weighed it all out and we've done that inner work inside of ourselves, we might decide, “You know what? I'm making an adult decision to stay. I really like my reasons for staying. I'm going to have my own back on this and let's go — let's do this.” That is a legitimate decision that you can make. All right, let me finish reading the question and she'll tell us more:

“But I know that's not what I want to do. How can I get myself to move forward with what I know I want and need to do? I'm so tired of being in limbo.”

Not tired enough yet, though. Notice that. I promise you when you are really, really tired of being in limbo, you will move yourself out because that's what all humans do. We are highly motivated... It's like my dad. When he had cancer, he made sure he ate healthy salads and stuff. When he didn't, not so much. But he was highly, highly motivated to do that work when he had cancer, and when he wasn't, he didn't.

We always try to avoid the greatest pain point in our lives. Right now, the greatest pain point in your life is leaving. The cost of leaving is too high compared to the cost of staying. And it sounds like maybe the scales are tipping a little bit, but when the cost of staying becomes greater than the cost of leaving, that's when you will actually begin to get some forward momentum.

"Most concerning right now is my financial situation. It only gets worse by the day as long as my lazy husband is here spending all the money."

So also, I'm going to tell you to notice this. If you had pressed forward and paid that hard price... And the price is always there to pay. It's not going to get easier with time. It's going to get more difficult with time. But the price will always be there to pay. It's a high price. It's your ransom fee. But if you had paid it three years ago, you would be three years into rebuilding your financial future. But the longer that we wait, the deeper into a hole that we're digging, and then the higher the price is going to be to get out of that deeper and deeper hole. And also we're setting ourselves further back on building our financial future, all right?

So, and I say that in hopes — because you said you wanted to go — I'm hoping that that might be the thing that maybe tips the balance and helps you have a mindset that thinks, "Wait a minute, I need to take this more seriously now. The holidays, yeah, it's going to be difficult holidays. But I'm willing to pay that price of going through a difficult holiday in order to get out of this pit that I'm in and start building into my future," okay? "Yes, my child is still in college. Yes, we've got this activity going on. Yes, we've got this thing planned, but I can't wait for all of those things to go away because they're never going to go away, And in the meantime, I'm just digging myself deeper."

"If I don't get out soon, I will be in such a financial hole. I won't be able to dig myself out."

There's never ever a place where you can get in so deep that you can't get out. Actually, that is a quote. I didn't say it right, but Corrie Ten Boom said something like that.

"There's never a pit too deep that God's presence isn't deeper still," or "that God's love isn't deeper still," or something like that. So think about Corrie Ten Boom. I mean,

concentration camp, losing her dad, losing her sister. That was a pit that she never thought she'd get out of, and she got out on a fluke.

But anyway, I'm just saying that's a thought: "I will be in such a financial hole that I won't be able to dig myself out." I would notice that thought is very destructive to you, and it's also probably keeping you stuck because it's paralyzing you with fear. And it's just not true. It's not true. Again, I've seen too many women who are in the most dire of straits get out, and you can too.

"But I'm so afraid of conflict with him that I'm keeping myself stuck. So how do I get past this?"

Okay, so now you've told us what you're afraid of. By the way, it's done now for those of you who are listening. So, "I'm afraid of conflict." That is the work that you're going to have to figure out. Like, why are you afraid of conflict? What is conflict going to do? Go there, get specific with your brain, write down the specific conflicts that are going to happen. And then I would just be like, "Okay, what's going to happen? What am I afraid of? Well, he might say mean things to me." Okay. And then what will happen? "And then I will feel bad." Okay. And then what will happen? "And then I will cry." Okay. And then what will happen? "And then I will move on with my life." Okay. So what's the worst thing that could happen? "I could have a bad feeling, cry, and move on with my life. That's the worst thing that could happen."

Unless you're going to die, unless he's going to kill you, you know, then that's a completely different conversation that we're having here. But if we're just worried about conflict, that's something that creates a lot of negative feelings and a lot of fear in us, but it's not going to kill us to have conflict with our ex-spouse. That's part of the pain of getting out.

There's definitely going to be conflict. You're going to be in conflict with your kids. You're going to be in conflict with your family of origin, possibly. You're going to be in conflict with some of your friends who aren't going to like it. You're going to be in conflict with your church who might not like it. You're certainly going to be in conflict with your ex-husband. You're going to be in conflict with his attorney, yes.

But conflict and pain, that's the price that we pay to live our life, to live a life that's worth living. And you can do it. If you want to come and get coaching on your fear of conflict, because if that's really what it is, we could do that. Or you can practice running models. I'd love to see a model on a specific conflict that you're afraid of, like where you put in the "T" line, "I am afraid that my husband will, you know, do this, this, and this,"

or “I am afraid that my kids will do this, this, this, and this,” and let's go there. Let's face that conflict head-on. Let's say that conflict happens — let's find out what the worst thing could happen if that happens.

Okay, there you have it. That is all I'm going to share with you on the outside here, but I hope that that was helpful for you, and I hope that it gave you a little bit of a peek into what we do on the back end of things and a little bit of the work. I also work with people every single day in the private forum that we have. So I'm answering their questions. I jump in there several times a day. That's what I do and I love to do it. I love to help women in the private forum.

So if you are interested in coming and doing this work with us and joining us so that you don't feel alone and you will have so much support and so much love and get your questions answered, get new perspective on what's going on in your own relationship and in your own life, please consider joining us. All you have to do is go to joinflyingfree.com. All of the information is over there on that page, and there's a little application for you to complete. And then once you've completed that application, our team will go through it and then you will receive an invitation to join us. And it's as simple as that. Again, just go to joinflyingfree.com and we'll see you over there.

Hey, beautiful butterfly. Thank you so much for listening. If you liked this episode, be sure to subscribe, and then consider leaving a rating and review so others can find us. To connect with me and get a free chapter of my book, head over to flyingfreenow.com, and until next time, fly free.