

WHAT'S GREAT ABOUT THIS?

What's great about this? Nothing.

That was my answer years ago when a friend asked me what was great about my divorce. At the time I was focused on the feeling of loss and how I had failed. But then he challenged me to find the silver lining. To find an empowering meaning. To find what was great about it.

Once again I said "nothing." Then he asked, what COULD be great about it? What have you learned? Where have you grown? Who have you been able to help because of what you've been through?

Now some answers started to percolate in my head: we settled instead of going to court, we put our children's needs before our own needs, I was a lot happier which made me a better parent, it cleared the way for me to meet the right partner, I learned how to be better at relationships, I was able to spend more quality time with my children, and I learned who my true friends were.

Don't get me wrong, I'm not saying that getting divorced was great. I'm saying that my divorce was just that, a divorce. It is what it is and nothing was going to change that fact. I could wallow in sorrow and have a pity party for myself or I could learn the lessons from it, integrate those lessons into my life, and then share them with others.

You have the same choice in your life whenever faced with adversity or a devastating loss. No matter how horrible and awful the situation is, it could always be worse. You can always find an empowering meaning and then use what you've learned to grow as a person and to help others.

Whenever something bad happens ask yourself these four questions¹:

1. What really happened?
2. What do I need to learn from this?
3. How can I integrate what I've learned?
4. How can I share what I've learned to help other people?

I've used these questions to help my children overcome stress and anxiety about school and I've used them to help others overcome the devastating loss of loved ones. You can use them to overcome any situation. Accept what is, learn the lesson, integrate it into your life, and then take what you've learned and share it with others.

So whatever you have going on in your life or practice right now, ask yourself "What's great about this?"

¹ Thank you to my friend and mentor Steve Linder for sharing these questions, and so many other tools and strategies, with me.