

DIVORCE PARTIES, CEREMONIES GROW IN POPULARITY

It happens to nearly half of all couples: divorce. But now, you don't have to cry about it. You can have a party!

It's hard to think of ending a marriage as anything but negative. But more and more people are trying to find closure through celebration.

The big trends? How about a divorce party?

It's an occasion to bring together family and friends to celebrate the start of a new single life. It helps the kids, if you have them, to understand that mom and dad are starting something new but still cherishing the days of their coupling. It helps your friends understand that they actually can be friends with both of you.

Some people have started having actual divorce ceremonies, where there are readings, and maiden names are reclaimed. For some people, it is simply a celebration of getting him or her out of the house.

The Early Show featured a discussion of divorce parties and ceremonies on Thursday, April 9, 2009. Taking part were Charlotte Eulette, director of Celebrants USA (www.celebrantusa.com), a prominent firm in planning and celebrating divorce ceremonies and planning in New Jersey. Also on hand: Laura Dave, who interviewed dozens of party planning splitting couples for her novel, "The Divorce Party."

To read an excerpt of "The Divorce Party," go here:

http://www.amazon.com/Divorce-Party-Laura-Dave/dp/0670018597/ref=sr_1_1?ie=UTF8&s=books&qid=1239273021&sr=8-1#reader

Who? People looking for closure:

Divorce can be messy and it can be heartbreaking. There is no question that it's a difficult decision for any couple to make, but it doesn't have to be ugly. Many couples have found comfort in celebrating their ending by throwing a divorce ceremony or party. What are they? A divorce party can be either elaborate or simple, with close friends and family coming together to celebrate the ending of one era and the beginning of another one.

Some parties are simply a small house party where they toast the new beginnings of the couple. Some parties are elaborate, and include a ceremony that formally recognizes the end of a marriage. Why do these parties exist? So many people are getting divorces that many people feel the need to recognize it. The wedding was a big event, so why shouldn't the divorce be? It's as big of a life changing event as the wedding. Also, there is a certain universality to the feelings that divorce brings. Confusion-which half of the couple should I remain friends with? Do Mommy and Daddy still love each other? This party helps to answer all of those questions. Shame-people who get a divorce often feel like they are a failure, they are ashamed, and often withdraw. These parties blow that all out of the water-they bring the new beginning out into the open, and allows people to talk openly about the end of the marriage. Sadness-instead of wallowing in self pity, these parties allow the host to celebrate a new era of your life beginning anew, perhaps in reclaiming your maiden name.

Right for You? Get affirmation, celebrate new beginnings:

Why throw a divorce party? A lot of friends and family will have questions about the divorce, and this allows them to feel comfortable about the compassion the couple has shown each other. If you know that the splitting couple is celebrating, then there won't be the usual discomfort of hostility in the split. Also, if you have kids it's a great time to show them that although mom and

dad don't love each other any more, there is still plenty of love to go around. By showing compassionate and tasteful divorce party, you can communicate to the world that you two are mature enough to move along without gripes and insults.

When Laura Dave talks about writing the novel *The Divorce Party*, she says she wanted to tackle the subject of divorce from a sociological point of view. Can couples split and still pass along strong marriage and commitment lessons to their children? Can people really split and still maintain a friendship? Is it possible for divorce to be compassionate? She interviewed dozens of couples who were experiencing all kinds of splits, and she eventually concluded that if it was possible that people can find some real closure by celebrating the end of a marriage. Also, by celebrating a new beginning, people are able to focus less on the mistakes of their past and focus more on the growing and maturing experiences in their future.

Party planner and head of the company Celebrant USA, Charlotte Eulette says that you would be surprised how many family and friends will be proud to stand up and cheer for the closure you are seeking. She had her own divorce ceremony, and her mother stood up and gave her an affirmation and a ring to replace her wedding ring. She told her daughter that she would always be married to her friends, and her family. That the commitments of family is an unbreakable circle that Charlotte will always carry with her.

Advice-Do not celebrate until the divorce is completely done:

When Charlotte is planning a divorce ceremony, she starts by asking her clients some simple questions. She asks the couple, or the single person holding the ceremony about their journey to the ceremony. She asks what host or hosts would like the ceremony to communicate. Does the host or hosts want to thank their family and friends, and if so, do they have any ideas as to how? Would they like to have readings, would their children or families speaking?

The most important piece of advice that Laura and Charlotte can tell someone who is thinking about throwing one of these parties or ceremonies? Do not do it when you decide to get a divorce, do it when it's OVER. When the papers have cleared the courthouses, when the alimony is all paid. If any of this is outstanding, chances are you are still going to have some raw emotions to deal with. And chances are it will effect the tone of the party and your guests.