

Amanda Eliasch

After 20 years of sometimes happy and sometimes very unhappy marriage, two wonderful sons, a fair settlement – and now an ex-husband as best friend – I have been a single girl for a year. And I've had a lot of fun, too. But even if you had lived with an axe murderer for 20 years, you would still feel a bit naked down one side where he used to be, and it does take an adjustment period to be just you again. Here, then, are the survival tips that got me through the last year...

Maintain your grooming, for self-esteem and to show the world that you are not a victim. I now have my growing blonde locks in curls, and always wear bright red lipstick, have my claws buffed to perfection and smell wonderful. Even the most miserable mouth looks much better jungle red, and since I started the red lipstick, I have never been kissed so much.

Don't think that everyone always wants to hear all your troubles. It's only a divorce, and they happen all the time. Sometimes individuals spend their whole lives lonely and miserable, but a divorce makes two people much happier than they were. I never had so much fun as now. I can do just as I please whenever I like, all the time, and I do it every day. I would have written a diary, but I have been too busy doing it to write about it. If I do moan, it's usually to a pair of close girlfriends, and I have written a book with all of

our ranting and ravings in it. We had so much fun being miserable that it nearly ruined things.

Learn to drive or get back behind the wheel. Once I had made up my mind that nothing would stop me, it didn't. I love my little car – and although early journeys out of my comfort zone made my painted lips look like a drawstring bag, I am now liberated and even drive around the block to go for a bite. Whatever it takes for you to get out, just do it.

Love. Now come on, that would be telling, wouldn't it? Well, OK, yes, I recommend as much of that as you can cope with or get away with. Thank God for red lipstick.

Don't use lack of money as an excuse. Obviously, having money affords comfort, but I know people on very tight budgets who still do it all. I hear things like, 'Oh, if I had her money, I could look amazing,' but it costs next to nothing to be clean and tidy, to brush your teeth and be fragrant. A divorce on any level is not an excuse to become a grey blanchmange that lives in chaos.

Embrace culture. In London, I love going to watch movies at the BFI, or around town when they're running the Film Festival. Then there's the LSO, the mainstay of British culture, giving the opportunity to listen to Piotr Anderszewski or Evgeny Kissin at the piano. I've always adored church music and oratorios, so I often go to chapel at my sons' schools, and I'm always popping into the Serpentine Gallery. But no experience affirms life as much as going on the swings in Hyde →



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