

Elizabeth Cohen:

Welcome to the divorce doctor podcast. I'm Dr. Elizabeth Cohen, the divorce doctor. I'm dedicated to breaking the stigma of divorce through my work. Divorce can be so isolating. Your friends and family might not understand what you're going through, but you're not alone. And divorce is not a failure on this podcast. I speak to real people who've gone through divorce and thrive through it. I talk about the struggles and the successes we explore with my guests, how the pain of divorce brought them realizations about themselves and their situations they wouldn't have had without this experience. I can't tell you how many clients have shared with me. That being reminded they're not alone. Allow them to get up in the morning and keep on keeping on. I hope listening to these people's stories will help you feel less alone with my 15 years of experience, as a clinical psychologist, working with people going through divorce. I know the ins and outs of divorce and love talking about all of it. I'm thrilled. You are here and are ready to get the support you so deeply deserve. So let's dive in

Hey my frustrated and overwhelmed divorcing people. Wait, how did I know how you felt all people going through a divorce feel overwhelmed by both taking care of others and coping with the loss of a relationship? I certainly felt overwhelmed and heartbroken when I was going through my divorce, but you don't have to feel this way anymore. I have created just for you. The ultimate divorce toolkit, you will be led by yours truly, a clinical psychologist who has taught thousands of people, how to thrive post-divorce. If you want to know exactly what to say to your ex, to get what you want affirmations to help you heal from the pain of your divorce tips on how to talk to your friends without feeling needy and a bonus step-by-step guide on how to have the best sex post divorce. Don't wait another minute to download this free ultimate divorce toolkit and get started. It's a game changer. Just go to [drelizabethcohen.com/divorcetoolkit](https://drelizabethcohen.com/divorcetoolkit) to get it right now. Wishing you joy, confidence, and optimism in this next chapter.

Today on the divorce doctor podcast, I have the honor of interviewing Laura Sprinkle. My dear friend Laura is an affiliate partnership strategist who specializes in working with digital course creators. She also hosts the Laura Sprinkle Show, which is an amazing podcast helping people thrive through business. She's the co-author of the bestselling anthology and the author of two books, one about gut health and one a children's book. She lives in Portland, Maine with her daughter and is happily divorced. Laura, thank you so much for joining me today to talk about your experience.

Laura Sprinkle:

Thank you so much for having me. I can't wait; so happy.

Elizabeth Cohen:

So I like to start by asking to kind of think back a little bit and see if you can remember when you first started considering separation as an option for you.

Laura Sprinkle:

Yeah. That is such an interesting question. And I feel like what I want to say is that I don't know that it was ever not an option, if that makes sense. Like, it was something that I feel like I'm not

saying, Oh, I got married and then immediately I was like, we should separate. I feel like there was always this little nugget of, is this really right for me kind of in the back of my mind. And then I didn't really take it seriously until the moment when I really asked for it. I didn't really know I was going to even ask for it. I kind of just said, I think we should take a break and then I couldn't stop smiling and realized that that was the direction that things needed to go.

Elizabeth Cohen:

Wow. What amazing connection to your body and your experience, right? That like your body was actually saying, yes, this is what I want. And I'm so glad you said that it was there kind of hovering is the word I'm going to use. I think a lot of people have that experience. And did you have the experience of trying to kind of shoo it away a little bit and push it away and then it would kind of keep coming back. Can you share a little bit about that?

Laura Sprinkle:

Definitely. Yeah, it was like, it was never off the table, which I don't, I guess sometimes I think about, is it ever off the table for anybody like mentally or emotionally and kind of wondering, you know, as I, as I venture into new relationships now, and just one, I mean, this is a question for you, you know, I know you are happily remarried and so like, I'm not saying like, Oh, do you ever think about separating your current partner? But like, is there ever, like, do you still have doubts, I guess, going into the new experience and does it feel different, the level of commitment and the level of not having those thoughts? That's my question to you?

Elizabeth Cohen:

Well, that's a really good question. And I think the difference for me now is that if I have any doubts or any questions, I quickly put the focus on me and what's going on for me that I'm having those questions rather than is there something about him that I'm having questions about? Yeah. Right. Because that's a big piece of what I teach is that we can't change another person. And so if I understand why this situation is triggering me, or if I understand why I'm feeling this way, then I can make the right adjustment and the adjustment might be to leave the relationship, but it starts with what's happening for me. Cause we can get so obsessed with doubt. Right.

Laura Sprinkle:

Totally. For sure. Yeah. So, and I'm not sure. Yeah. Looking back on things, I mean, it's so easy of course, to see like, Oh, that was a sign and Oh, that was a red flag and all that. But like, it's hard to know that when you're in the moment and really what that means. Yeah. We did have conversations like, Oh, this is pretty quick. I mean, we knew each other for a long time beforehand, but it's just so fascinating to think about relationships and, and how they can be.

Elizabeth Cohen:

We do have a real prescription for it. I think in our culture that does not fit. Um, what really, it means to bring, to dynamic people with different histories and different needs and different experiences together. And so I love this idea of also just considering doubt as part of the

process versus a sign that something has to, to end and even the idea of taking a break, Laura. So it sounds like that came from you and even putting that out there was so brave. And so, you know, flexible of your thinking because a lot of people, I think, wouldn't feel comfortable doing that. So how did that come about? And would you recommend that to people? The break idea?

Laura Sprinkle:

The break? Yeah. Well, it came obviously when I don't know what was obvious, but it was a really hard moment and it was, it was a moment of like, I don't know how we're going to move forward. And I had binge-watched red table talks a little bit. Okay. So I watched the episodes where they're talking about Will and Jada's relationship. And I don't know if that's where the idea came from because ultimately I know that they stayed together and they may have taken a break. And I don't know if that's right. I do think I said it. Not thinking that, Oh, this is going to end in divorce. I didn't even, yeah. I just didn't know. I just kind of said it I'm just like, I need to, it was more like, I love what you said about, it's not really about the relationship or even about him or the other person. It was really like, I am freaking out on the inside and I need time to even know who I am and what I want. That is why I need this break. I have no idea how it's going to result for us, but I just need to like, get clear for myself, like what, the flipp flopp, I want, I've been using that as my two year old child. So yeah. So it really was like, I just need, yeah. So feel things out.

Elizabeth Cohen:

It's so good, Laura, that you're bringing this up because I think a lot of people feel, especially when they come to see me very black and white about, you know, breaking up and is this the divorce or are we staying together? And for a lot of people, those two options feel really heavy. And so this middle ground of the break of really taking some time to figure out how I feel, we don't even have to put labels to it. I just want to notice what I feel like in this break is a really, really good tip. And so you notice that you were smiling a lot. So what did that tell you?

Laura Sprinkle ([08:27](#)):

Well, it's holding that the break idea was super important that I really needed to follow through on it and not cause it, you know, we were actually on a trip at the time when I said it. And so it could have been easy to get home, fall back into routine, all of that. So, I mean, it did take, you know, it's easy to say and then it's harder to do so it did take some like, no, no, no. It's different. Like when you really out on a break, even though we live together who are not like doing that, you know.

Elizabeth Cohen:

Can you share a little bit, cause I know a lot of people that I work with have this where you're still living together in this, we call it the limbo period. And so I'm wondering like, did you set boundaries? Like how did you manage that if you could share with some people about the time?

Laura Sprinkle:

Yeah. I remember when I first said it, we kind of worked out and so we have a daughter, which I know you said at the beginning. And so we had talked about having this schedule of when you know, who was going to be hanging out with her, then the other person would be not there. It's like so hard to remember now it's like so foreign. But even though it wasn't that long ago, you know, it was a couple of years and that quickly went out the window. It kind of like the schedule with her didn't necessarily stick. I think maybe it's in a little bit, but yeah, it was, it was weird. And, and I did ask because the person who watches cadley is like, it's a little in-home daycare had just gone through it herself. So I kind of asked her about it and yeah, reaching out to other people was so, so helpful around that limbo period. And then I would say it was probably a couple months into that. Yeah. Then we went on this like big family trip and lived abroad for a month, but we specifically got a place with three bedrooms. So we each had our own. Yeah, it was weird.

Elizabeth Cohen:

But it sounds like you really embraced it in the sense that you still want abroad as you had planned, but made it work for where you were during the break. And there's two things you said. I think that is so important for the listeners to understand. One is you just said this was two years ago and I don't even remember. And I think that's really important because when you're going through it, it is so challenging and confusing and you're like this isn't working and, and so much of going through a divorce or separation is temporary, but it's so painful. And it, and the experience is so real in the moment. It's really important to remember that this is not a permanent state. This is really, really temporary. And so I love that reminder that you're giving people that while I'm sure if we were talking when it was happening, it would be very real for you now it's faded. So I think that's hugely important for people. And I love that you asked for support. That's why I do all the work that I do. That's why I have this podcast, because I think that hearing about divorce and hearing about what it's really like and people who've moved through it to a better place is so essential for, to give you that ability to keep going, because it's hard, right? It's hard in those moments where you were, you know, a lot of my clients will talk about like suddenly their partners, ex partners, like really nice to them or does the thing that they've been wanting them to do forever. And you think, Oh, should I really do this? Like, that takes so much energy to stick a stick that out, what you've decided to do.

Laura Sprinkle:

It does. Yeah. I mean, I think that, you know, again, speaking to doubt, it did come up a little bit, but really that feeling of saying, I need a break, not because of you, but because of me and I need to figure out what I want and how to find joy in my life and own that and show my daughter what it really means to follow your own desires and to put yourself first, like in that moment, when I made that decision and asked for that, like ownership of my own happiness, everything changed for me, everything. And so I couldn't go back.

Elizabeth Cohen:

Exactly. And I wonder also you're making the most amazing point that I love, I share this so often with clients, like what are you showing your, your kid, if your kids came to you and was like, you know, I'm not that happy in a relationship, but I'm sticking it out because I committed,

what would you say to them? Right. You'd say, Oh, no, love, follow your dream. Right. So you gave, cadley like the most perfect model of that. And I wonder if saying it the way you did to your ex, if it also helped him be less defensive or less hurt. I mean, we don't know what his experience is, but the fact that you made it about you, I wonder if that helped with your communication.

Laura Sprinkle:

Yeah, I'm not sure. And I honestly don't know if he knew that it was about me. I mean, I honestly don't even know what words I used, but I do think it did. I don't want to speak for him, but knowing our conversations and what I know, I do think it took longer for him to realize I was serious because obviously not obviously, but we had had relationship scuffles if you will, in the past. And you know, we met when we were 20 and had gone through cycles of being together and not. And so I think that it would have been really easy or he probably thought we were going to get home. And then things were just kind of going to go back into the routine of what's for dinner and who's getting the baby and dah, dah, dah. But like I said, in that moment of choosing me, I couldn't go back from that.

Elizabeth Cohen:

Yeah. And it's interesting because in a lot of ways that I see this a lot, he was then separating from someone he didn't necessarily know because this new you who is like my needs matter is not how you had been in the relationship. Right. Right. So I always say like, let's give our ex partners a lot of grace because we shifted and changed and they didn't know that was coming true. Right. He expected you to act how you always did, which was probably in the past, take him back, you know, do it again. And so I just, I have a lot of compassion for that.

Laura Sprinkle:

Oh, for sure. And I've really, you would know more if people say this all the time, so my parents are divorced and they were the best and only, I would say example of really putting kids first, having a good relationship, you know, being friends. I mean, other than like, you know, I think they could go out and be fine, but like now they do. But you know, like they traveled to Bolivia together for one of my weddings, you know, like they're really great. And I don't even know where I was going with that story, but a lot of people say all the time that like, like I am so grateful that it is him, that I, I have to be connected to for the rest of my life because we have a daughter together. Like co-parenting while not always a dream, I'm like pretty awesome. And you know, such an amazing dad. And I'm so grateful in a lot of ways for all that.

Elizabeth Cohen:

And I'm so glad that you mentioned that you, that your parents were divorced because did you feel some people talk about this, like fear of getting divorced because your parents had been divorced? Not really. Maybe because they had showed you such a good model of it.

Laura Sprinkle:

Yeah, I think so. I kind of am speaking for him again when, you know, I shouldn't have, but maybe I shouldn't share this, but you know, just like his parents are also divorced. And so he always thought that he would be kind of interesting.

Elizabeth Cohen:

Yeah. That's interesting. I wonder if it did allow you also to have maybe both of you have a little less of the shame that so many people bring to the divorce because you're actually went through it. So it's interesting. What would you say given the bravery, it takes to go through a divorce. What would you say is kind of was the hardest part? You know, the part that, for me, it was like brings me to my hands and knees, you know, I just feel kind of gutted. Do you recall that?

Laura Sprinkle:

No, not to say that there were never hard times there definitely have been or moments of any of that. Like, I don't want to undermine or say like, Oh, like people are nuts for like feeling badly about divorce. Like I get it like all of that. And at the same time for me, it was wonderful to say it like, it really wasn't the bring me to my hands and knees, like, yes, I felt feelings and cried and it was always at a moment that I wasn't expecting. And it wasn't really, I didn't have a thought process around it. I was just like, I need to let this out right now, maybe. Okay. I remember one time, maybe not official divorce, but it was like just a couple of months ago when I found I'm going through boxes and trying to clean out stuff in my house. And I felt like all of our wedding cards that people had sent us or given us for the wedding and I I'm a recovering pack rat. So like typical me keeps everything. And so there was this moment and I don't, maybe I texted you about it too, but I texted a few people and I'm just like, like, you know, getting rid of stuff is already so hard for me. And, and thinking through like does getting rid of this stuff erase the importance of this decade of my life. Um, not that we were married for 10 years, but knew each other for 10. And, and moving through that, I would say, yeah, was painful.

Elizabeth Cohen:

And I wonder also Laura, that maybe the bringing yourself in things that brought you to your knees might've happened more in the relationship and that the ending of it maybe gave you the relief, right? Yeah, I think so. Yeah. Yeah. But I'm so glad you bring up about, you know, the physical memories and the remnants, because that's a whole other process. I have a client who I work with, who just recently told me, I thought this was so smart. It's fall now. So they were switching clothes from summer to winter for their son. And this is the first summer winter switch that they have two houses. And so it's the task that seems so innocuous, but it is so painful. And so I think it's really important to remember that these little moments pop up. So even if right. And sometimes at least expect it. Right. Exactly. Sure. Yeah.

Laura Sprinkle:

Or like, like not thinking through necessarily, you know, it's like, Oh, and then, okay. Now the divorce is final insurance period is coming up November 1st. So then navigating that, you know, there's like, there's always a new layer probably even without kids, but especially with kids that,

you know, we're going to be connected forever. Right, right. I'm so glad you're bringing that up also because it's making me think of talk to people a lot about the importance of anniversaries just from like smells, all the senses, smells, sight, touch that any first anniversary is like the first time you're having holiday separate, but even every year, if it's the insurance just being reminded of, Oh, I'm not in this partnership anymore. And I always like to tell people to prepare for those things, with talking to friends and doing great. Self-care like knowing that they're coming. So I'm so glad you're bringing that up. So smart.

Laura Sprinkle:

Yeah. For sure. It's an interesting world to navigate. I will say that. I did think, I think this goes back to one of your earlier questions and I'm not saying that I thought I would be divorced, but I feel like there was this moment of like, Oh, I didn't think this was going to be my life. Like, but you know what I mean?

Elizabeth Cohen:

Absolutely, exactly. Right. Everybody has that. And there's actually all, I have to do a whole part in my program about working through and letting go of that fantasy of, because we really have to let go of a whole picture that we had, even if we weren't or unhappy in the marriage. So yeah. It's such an important part of the healing process of divorce. So I'd like to know what was the part of you that this whole experience that you could never see coming, but changed you for the better.

Laura Sprinkle:

Oh wow. That I could never see coming, but changed me for the better is really, I'm going to keep talking about how choosing me was so important and really recognizing that I have to partner with myself first. And if that's not there, then any partnership that I create outside of that, you know, there's a whole lot of be, I would say about like, if you don't love yourself, then you can't love anybody else or dah, dah, dah, dah. And then there's the other side of like, well, that's crap because we're all working on self-love and that doesn't preclude us from having these deep relationships with other people, you know, it's and, and both. And I just know that yeah. If I have a great relationship with myself and teach cadley to do the same, which is so important to me. Yeah.

Elizabeth Cohen:

And are there things that you're doing in your life now because you put yourself first then like decisions that you make, you know, choices.

Laura Sprinkle:

Yeah. I would say that the first thing I did and this was even while we were still living together, I think, um, the first thing I did was hire someone to come clean because that was the whole big thing. So someone's came to clean meal prep. I like went through the whole gamut of different, like trying different meal deliveries and meal prep, people to come. I probably went a little wild with the spending because I was like, that was a big thing was money. So I was just like, nobody

can tell me how to spend my money. Right. And then I'm a day-to-day now I would say, I am still healing and this still comes up. So I'm in a new relationship now. And I would say it's, so comes up the needing to put myself as an important part of my life. And I'll say that's already there, but also just like those constant reminders and I will still get triggered around the money thing. Like if I make a purchase, I still have this feeling of like, Oh, is he going to be mad about it? And then I have to remember, okay, he's not the same person as my ex and I need to feel good with what I'm buying no matter what.

Elizabeth Cohen:

Right. So it sounds like being able to say what you need and connecting to what you feel has allowed you to have more awareness in your current relationship when you're being triggered, which is all we can ever give the people that we're in relationships with. We can't change a hundred percent. We can only own when our shit gets triggered, right. Yeah. So that's amazing. So it sounds like it gave you so much more self-awareness by making that decision to go through a divorce. Amazing. And it's certainly given Cadley so much of having a mama who, you know, believes in herself and puts her, understands that she even has needs.

Laura Sprinkle:

Oh, for sure.

Elizabeth Cohen:

To think about the different kind of mom she would have had if you stayed. So I'd like to ask you what message would you give your past self when you were just venturing down this path? So you could go back.

Laura Sprinkle:

I would say it's worth it. It's worth it. And good job on getting support. I would say as well, because that was, I didn't know you then, but I thought I would have reached out to you. I'm sure. Uh, but I did reach out to my coach and I knew that she had gotten a divorce when her son was about 18 months old and Cadley at the time was nine months old. So I reached out and, and this was when, like, I didn't know what was going to come of it. I didn't know what was going to happen. I reached out when I was just like, I need to book a session. I don't know what, I don't know what I need, but I need support with this and ended up investing a lot more than I thought that I was going to. And this like nine month coaching package, I believe, honestly, we didn't talk about the divorce a lot. I mean, yes. She told me her experience of me and we talked through some of that, but we talked about business a lot and, and yeah, it was so worth it to kind of get that, that perspective and to know other people had done or had not done and, and kind of figure that out for myself. So, yeah.

Elizabeth Cohen:

So you would have told, you would tell yourself it's worth it and that to keep reaching out for support. Yes. So important. Right. And you know, it's so easy to feel isolated or that people don't understand you or your situation is so unique.



Laura Sprinkle:

For sure. And I want to answer that about reaching out to the right kind of support because even, I will say there are people that had been divorced that were not supportive in the same and the way that I needed absolutely like that.

Elizabeth Cohen:

Absolutely. And my ultimate diverse toolkit, which you can get at my website, DrElizabethcohen.com. I have a whole cheat sheet on who to talk to and how to talk to people to get the support you actually need without feeling needy, because it's so important. You can really get derailed when you get, look for support from people who can't give it in the way that you need,

Laura Sprinkle:

Right. Who are putting their emotions and their reactions and expecting you to hold them through your emotional process. There's only less than a handful. I can count them on one hand, if you will, of people and you are one of them that you were like, can I say congratulations? And I was like, hell yeah, you can. This is such a good decision for me. And there are only a few people who had that positivity around it and that's really what I needed and wanted and how I felt to be honest. Like that's why the brought you to your knees and I get it. And I'm not saying everybody's situation is the same. And, but I really felt very positive about it.

Elizabeth Cohen:

Yeah. Well, I'm glad that you were able to find people, even those handful of people who could see that, because then they were really meeting you where you are, and that's a full circle of why you got the divorce. Like it makes sense because you were, you needed to figure out what you needed in the year needed needs, mattered. And so that you need to continue that through the whole divorce process, having people who can really match where you are. I love that. So any messages would that you would want to share with people who were just at the beginning of a divorce and listening to hear stories and understand what other people's experiences are, any messages you'd want to share?

Laura Sprinkle:

I would say along a similar line with the reaching out to the right support, I would follow everything that the wonderful woman that you're listening to Dr. Elizabeth Cohen does, because, because truly so much out there about divorce is like painting this picture of like scariness of difficulty, even like, so we didn't use lawyers for the divorce process. I'm kind of like that kind of person. Anyway, you use a mediator or, Nope. I just researched it myself. And the amount of confusing, legal jargon that they put in this, which is like, it's really not that difficult of a problem or it doesn't have to be, I don't believe that difficult of a process and they make it super confusing and like try to scare you. And obviously, you know, it depends on the relationship. Like I said, I'm so lucky to have such an amazing co-parent who was willing to, to just do it ourselves. And I needed a mediator that would have been fine too. Um, but essentially it doesn't have to be

scary and you see things out there that say, it's scary. Like, that's why, like I didn't look up articles really. Maybe I did a couple of times, but then I was like, this is turning me off because I feel like this is not reflecting my experience.

Elizabeth Cohen:

Yeah. What you're encouraging people to do, which I think is so important is know that there is this positive divorce idea out there. Then there are people like me and colleagues of mine who believed that this is a process you can grow through and that it doesn't have to be scary. And it certainly doesn't have to be shameful.

Laura Sprinkle:

Correct. Totally. It doesn't have to be scary. It doesn't have to be shameful. And, and even if you yourself are not feeling shame about it, which I hope that you're not also know that that doesn't mean that you have to tell everybody at once. I would say that that was one thing that I was so grateful that my coach talked to me about around, like, and this is true divorce, non divorce, anything in your life, right. There's like rings of truth of like first and foremost, these are the most honest with yourself. And then going out from there, like, you don't need to make a big announcement. Like I never posted about it on Facebook. You know, like I told people when I was ready and even my parents, I didn't tell them till six or seven months after we were separated.

Elizabeth Cohen:

So you really let yourself process it and allowed it to be your news to share when you felt ready. I think that's so important and such a good message. I'm so glad you're saying this, this idea of like giving permission to come into your life in this intimate way and not to just give that away to people. For sure. It's kind of sacred information actually.

Laura Sprinkle:

Right. And there are people who have not earned it yet.

Elizabeth Cohen:

Yeah, exactly. I love that.

Laura Sprinkle:

Which does mean that sometimes, you know, there are still people today, but just assume, and I'm not offended by it. I'm just like, Hey, guess what? That's no longer the case.

Elizabeth Cohen:

Right. Oh, well, it's so beautiful to hear your story, Laura, and to hear about really that decision you made to put yourself first. And it's so brave, I call the women in my program, super women, because I really do think it's such bravery. It's easier sometimes to just go with what everyone's expecting and when you do something against the grain like that, it's so brave. So thank you for sharing your story. And I am so glad I get to know you with all the colors of the rate of your

rainbow, that you're fully here and fully expressing all of yourself. So thank you for making that decision and thank you so much for being here.

Laura Sprinkle:

Thank you for having me and thank you for all that you're doing for these rockstar women.

Elizabeth Cohen:

Thank you.