

Larry T. Coady

I believe that life's challenges are opportunities for growth and lead to something better, and that it takes courageous conversations to make it happen. Although this is what I believe, there were times when I was not so sure.

When she told me, "I want you to move out," I was stunned. Our relationship was over. She said there was nothing more to talk about. We'd had our share of problems and plenty of counseling, but I'd always assumed that we could make our marriage work. Our sons, ages 12 and 16, depended on us. They did not have a clue that their parents were splitting up.

We talked anyway and decided to stay together through the holidays. We negotiated my move out date and how we'd tell the boys. We told them together that they wouldn't be living with me. There were lots of tears, including mine. The day came. I was in a daze and didn't know where I'd go or what I wanted to do. After two weeks of "camping" with relatives, I escaped with the boys for a ski vacation, long planned. It was one of my best weekends with my sons and I figured out what I wanted. I didn't know if I could ask.

We talked again. I asked for custody. She agreed that I could move back into the house, that she'd move out, and that the boys would live with me. We changed places. I gradually came to appreciate all that she had done for our family.

We talked some more, reached an amicable settlement agreement, and filed for divorce. There were no attorneys involved. The judge approved the agreement and signed the decree. We were divorced, but the lines of communication were still open.

We continued talking, particularly about our sons. We were a united front. We cared about each other and remained friends. I was still adrift emotionally, but even on my worst days, I believed that something better awaited me. Years passed. She trusted me enough to introduce me to a wonderful woman, who wanted to meet a "good man." I now have a great second marriage, grandchildren, and more happiness than I could have imagined.

I'm in a good place!