



## **Season 3, Episode 27 - Transcript**

### *Before the Divorce*

Nicole:

Hey, friend, we have been having some pretty solid chats week over week but I also want to call out some of the great chats that we've been having in my DMs. And you guys have been sending me some awesome messages in my inbox. And I'm just so thankful for how supportive and kind and loving and vulnerable you all have been with me, I have had some conversations with you recently, as I've been sharing what starting over is like for me, both in divorce, but also in being a single mom, you know, because I have my kids full time and in starting over just sort of figuring out how I want to enter this world, in this new phase of my life.

And a lot of you have shared that you're going through your own version of starting over, even if it's just re entering the world post pandemic. And one of the questions that's been coming into my inbox a lot this week, particularly after I've shared that I've, you know, met someone, and I'm kind of, you know, in a much better place, even though I'm still recovering and engaging with this divorce process. But what I wanted to share was the question that kept coming up, which is Nicole, like, how do I even position myself for a breakup? Right, not just a divorce, you know, but if I realized that I have a transitional season ahead of me that I need to move from where I am to where I want to be, what do I do? How do I even get to a place where I can make those moves, you know, whether it's just acquiring the courage, but also acquiring the steps and things that I need to get to that next place.

And I wanted to touch base on that a little bit. And I think maybe later on in the season, I might tap a couple of my friends who can come on here and chat about some of those actual logistics that you need to have ready so that you're able to prepare yourself, you know, not just for divorce, but literally like, you know, quitting your job or ending a friendship or anything of that sort. But I wanted to speak to some of the things that I was going through, and have gone through and am going through, you know, we're gonna keep it real, you know, that really, you have helped me embrace this process. Because even though it's a process that I did not want, and that caught me off guard, and that, you know, is unexpected, and not how I saw my life planning out at all. I have to embrace it, because it's here. And it's easier said than done and it

took me a while to be able to say that sentence. But I wanted to talk about that. How do we embrace the difficult things that are in front of us? And what tools do we need to actually be able to survive this process and even better thrive.

So friend, if you are thinking that you're in a place where the relationship you're in right now doesn't serve you or your future, that's the first step. The fact that you're even saying to yourself, you know, what, I have questions about whether or not this is going to be all that I need it to be, so that I can be my best self. And what I found is that that is the first thing you have to reconcile and that question I'm telling you can take you years to answer. So if you've been wrangling with that, for the first year of your marriage, like I was all the way through for over a decade, or if it's just something that's come up in the past few months in the past few weeks, I want you to know that there's nothing wrong with having that question. One, it doesn't mean you're gonna get a divorce. Make no mistake, I loved being a wife, I am a proponent of marriage. And I am not a quitter by nature. I wasn't sure if I was in the right marriage early on. However, I was married for over a decade after that. And it wasn't a not good marriage the entire time, whether it was the right fit marriage, you know, hindsight is 2020. But I do want you to know that I believe that sometimes having questions come up means that you're able to target the things that you need to know to fix, to possibly be exactly where you're supposed to be within the marriage.

As a matter of fact, you know, a lot of studies have shared that. If you have a relationship where you aren't talking about problems, that's a much bigger indicator that you will get divorced than a relationship where you actually are discussing your problems and having problems because it means that things are in the open. And we're not being naive about the fact that things aren't okay. So, so don't sit there and think that just because you're even considering what it would look like to make changes in your life, that you are headed for divorce, that may not be the case. But you do need to get answers for how you feel about that. So for me, it took years to get those answers. And that's part of why it took me so long to actually be where I am today. I was experiencing different things within my marriage and I knew what they were but I always felt like maybe I could change them, which I think is you know, this is my own personal trauma, my own personal trigger and may resonate for some of you. I am such a fixer that is my nature you know call it control freak, call it you know, anxiety, you know, there's lots of different manifestations of you know what it is I'm being candid about it because it doesn't serve me too, to be shameful about the fact that I have those attributes. I see a problem, I see someone struggling, I see someone having hardship in their life and I am ferocious about providing solutions, to the point where I need to. And I have learned that I need to mind my business and let people fail sometimes, because that is the best way to serve them.

But in my marriage, it was really important for me whenever my partner would communicate that there was something that needed change, or fix or a struggle, or something of that sort, that I was doing what I could both from a proverbs 31 biblical standpoint, you know, to try to be that checklist of wife, but also engaging in therapy and, you know, moving homes and, you know, creating financial wealth and doing all the things that I thought might aid in creating a better environment. So that's kind of the first piece, if you feel like there is a checklist of things that

could be in the way of helping you really see your marriage for what it may be good and bad. Make a list and get those things out of the way. And the reason I say this is and understand and I should throw out a disclaimer here, I'm not speaking to a marriage or relationship that has physical violence. I'm not speaking to a marriage or relationship that has serious and massive addiction that is unchecked. I'm not talking about a marriage relationship that has severe emotional or financial abuse, or any type of child abuse or anything of that sort. Those are categorically and entirely intolerable. And you absolutely should seek support, there are domestic violence hotlines, you can speak to a peer, you can head to a fire station, you should get help, because those are not safe circumstances for your life and well being and you should leave immediately.

And I say that unwaveringly and without question, I know, it's not easy to do. And I know it's easier said than done but your life is worthy, and you are deserving. And if you are in a situation where you are feeling unsafe, and you make plans for what would happen to you, that means that you need to go to safety, just to have the mental clarity about the next steps. And that is something that you should pursue. Now what I'm speaking to is a marriage that is not emotionally or mentally fulfilling, and may still have elements of emotional abuse or elements of anger, or tantrums or mental instability, or narcissism or things of those sort, where there may be an incompatibility issue, or there may be an evolution issue where the relationship is just reaching its expiry, because you're evolving into different people.

Or honestly, for some people not evolving, you know, that's, that's also a very real thing. So that checklist that I'm discussing, really, for me, what that was about speaking from my own experience was, I wanted to make sure that I had done everything. That if my partner came to me, you know, and said, Look, I don't know about this marriage, I'm unhappy, that I'd be able to look them in the face and say, I got nothing left, I got nothing left. And I don't know if this is the place that I need to be any more for my well being because I have done it all. And so that for me, that list included therapy that included making sure finances weren't in the way because you know, the number two reasons that people get divorced is money and infidelity. So being faithful was important to me, as well as making sure that I, you know, that we weren't worried about finances, you know, and that was something that, you know, wasn't an issue in our relationship. So I knew that we weren't arguing about the money. That wasn't the problem, that you know, all of our needs, you know, in a material sense, at least were being met. So, and of our children as well.

So knowing this, you know, creating the time to be together, all those bullet points, you know, if you find yourself saying, Look, I haven't really done a lot of these things to the best of my ability. Well, then the next question becomes, you know, well, what does it look like for me to have an ideal life outside of this marriage. And understand that these are all exercises you can do within this within where you are right now. Now, this part, I really, really, really want you to hear me out on. There is a fantasy outside of marriage that will not be a reality. Hear me, friend, the fantasy is not your reality. If you think that you're going to get divorced, or break up or quit your job, and suddenly become a billionaire, and not have kids and lose all this weight, and finally start that

business and be a superhero. Those things could happen, but they're not going to happen overnight. You will go down before you go up. You will experience hardship before you experience greatness. You will have a moment in the valley before you reach the mountaintop. And I want to let you know that you will survive all of those hard things because we do hard things well, because it is hard to be in that marriage. It is hard to be in that breakup. It is hard to be in that job. But it is also hard to start over. It's about which one is fruitful. It's about choosing the right hard for you. So I don't want you to glamorize what you think this other world would be like. But also know that you should be honest with yourself about elements that exist there that you do not have.

So for me, when I found myself outside of my marriage, the one thing that I recognized that I had that was amazing and unexpected and priceless to me, even though there was so much that I felt like I'd lost, was peace. I had peace of mind, a peace that was inexplicable, a piece that felt God sent. A joy that was absolutely freeing. I didn't have a worry or concern about what I'd be able to do in the future, because I felt limited by where I was. I had a peace of mind where I could rest easy knowing that ultimately, as complicated as things were, it would be okay. And for me, that was a tremendous thing where I said, I could never let this go again. That's how I knew that, you know, moving forward would make sense for me, because I had peace.

After you've got a sense on, have I done the things for where I am, and after you get a sense of do I have an idea of where I'll go, the next piece are just the steps. And I want to give these steps from my therapist, because she told me that there are three things you're going to need to survive a divorce, if this is going to be the thing that is in front of you. And those three things were this. You're going to need friends. I have to let you know that difficult relationships, oftentimes, especially if there are anything like mental health issues, or narcissism or emotional abuse, or any of those things that you may be encountering. They can be very isolating. So you'll find yourself sort of going home and coming back or going to work and doing these things. And really, your family becomes all that you are. And you find yourself spending less and less time with friends, or maybe less time with close family members. And you realize that, you know, your world was very limited to where you were. And for me, I think it was surprising because the minute I found myself in a divorce situation, I was shocked at how much love was around me.

Oh, y'all, I truly did not realize how I wasn't leveraging the love that God had already put into place. And I do not lack. I lack nothing, y'all in terms of love, and I am so grateful for it. Because I know that that is a true privilege and a blessing. I am surrounded by friends and family. Just abundant, abundant, abundant love. And I want to let you know that friends are a critical element of getting through this time. They will stand in the gap, they will tell you the truth, they will remind you who you are. Because in this season of transition, you will feel like you are losing sight of self. But it's only because you're losing sight of who you once were in a situation that did not serve you. So it's not that you're losing who you truly are, it's that you're stepping into who you will need to be. And your friends can help you be a compass towards that because they see you as your best self.

And so friends are a critical element to and frankly also they help with things like moving or giving you a break with the kids, or you know that phone call or a shoulder to cry on. And you know, my friends already know when I tell you I don't think I could have gotten through this season without them. And I'm just so so blessed and so thankful for the friends that I have. Another thing you're going to need without question is a great therapist. Now I know so many of you are like therapy is expensive. I don't know if I can afford it. I want to let you know there are tools like [openpathcollective.org](http://openpathcollective.org). It is a online resource that helps you find us licensed and certified therapists that often work on a sliding scale sliding scale means that they can adjust their price point to your income meaning you can find therapists who are willing to have sessions with you for as little and I say little but I recognize that money is different for everyone and I want to honor that privilege that I have there. But \$30 a session and I know \$30 it used to be a tank of gas y'all but you know \$30 isn't a little bit of money. But when you talk about your health and well being being priceless you know it may be well worth spending.

Also if you have health insurance, even if it is a government resource health insurance, there often is a mental health and behavioral services that is an element of that as well that will give you a limited number of sessions you know around particular issues. If you are an employee of a company, there are health insurance benefits said are often there as enhanced benefits that can give you some access to mental health resources. But without a doubt, you know, friends and family are great, but they are not a licensed clinical therapist. And for me, being able to I've been in therapy for eight years, and I'm a big proponent of it, but you know, the things that I've required assistance with have shifted through the years. Childhood, business, parenting, but you know, in this and also my relationship, but you know, now I'm, I'm really in therapy for the first time as an adult to learn and grow and become who I am as an adult. And therapy has really helped me with that it's given me language, to define some of the experiences that I've had in my relationship and outside my relationship that really has helped me shape my new relationship, not bringing those things in. And also shaped, you know, how I'm going to approach my future, you know, and the people around me.

So therapy is just a huge tool, because it's such a journey with highs and lows, and you're going to need it, and you're going to need to embrace it, honestly. So so many people are in therapy, and oftentimes, we want to dictate how the process goes. And the best way to have effective therapy is to sit in it with humility, to be able to say, Listen, I'm here to grow. And I am here to accept. And I am here to learn. And that means sitting there and sharing a situation honestly as it is, and then allowing that conversation to organically develop in a way that allows you to hear difficult truths. Know that your therapist is never there to cause you harm. And your therapist is never there with an intention to say things that are deliberately going to cause you discomfort, because they want you to feel that. They're there to be an insightful light based on their professional experience to help direct you to an understanding of self that can help you engage in the world in a way that is meaningful, fruitful and beneficial to you.

So, you know, if my therapist says something to me, where I'm like, Oh, girl, what are you trying to attack me on today, you know, I'm able to say to myself, you know, because I really love and

engage in therapy, and I really want to be my best self. Oh, if I'm feeling some type of way about that, that means that she hit on something that I really need to embrace and unpack, you know, and I say that like, oh, that made me feel a feel, I think I need to unpack that. And so you know, therapy is tremendous. And you will need some sort of clinical support. It's a real must to help get through this time.

And then the last thing that my therapist said you need after friends and therapy is faith. And you guys know I'm a God girl. I say that, you know, clearly and it means that I am accepting because Jesus is and it means that I am loving of you as you are where you are LGBTQIA every letter, every color, every faith, you name it, the alphabet, I love every single interview from your nose to your toes, unwaveringly, as you are. I support you as well. But it also means that I am very clear on the calling of my life and who I answer to and who I belong to. And my faith is driven by the Lord. And I'm so so grateful, because I've seen and experienced things that have transformed me, including during this process. And, and I can tell you that having faith, whatever that means for you, even if that's faith in the future, or a manifestation process, I obviously am a proponent for Christianity, because it's a language that I understand. But I don't want to limit the journey that you're on with your faith and understanding of the world and your experience of it. And I want you to know that having faith means that you are able to have belief outside of self that things can work in your favor.

I really want you to hear me when I say that. It's critically important when it feels like the chips are down, that you have belief that things will work in your favor outside of yourself. If you think that the world only works, your favor, someone does something for you. Or if you are dependent on another situation, or that you feel fundamentally incapable of good things coming forth. It's really hard to find the happy in the hard. And you deserve to have that happy. Frankly, you're going to need it if you're going through any type of transition or breakup, work career, marriage, you name it. And so having faith at least for me, knowing that after I've done everything I can when I rest my head that God's got it, no matter how it turns out, y'all, I could end up, actually I'm not even gonna speak this over my life. Listen, like I the worst of the worst could happen to me and as long as I have God, my babies and my health, I have everything and having that faith keeps me fueled. It gives me the fuel to keep going, for my babies, for my business for our friendship here. And I want to let you know that I'm not a perfect Christian, Lord knows I'm a hot mess. I'm not perfect in my practice of faith. I don't always make it to church, sometimes I'm in the balcony, I'm definitely in the overflow parking lot. And you better believe it's late service. I'm definitely the type of Christian who says a cuss word who, you know, does all the things that we're supposedly not supposed to do, but he loves me just the same. And I want you to know that faith has truly been something that I've embraced and leaned into, you know, especially on those hard days when I just don't understand how things are playing out. And I don't know why I am where I am. Faith has really kept me going.

And so friend, I just wanted to have this one to one chat with you, because so many of you have been in my DMs and so we've been talking about it, you know, Nicole, how do I know if it's right to go? How do I know if I need to say how do I get the courage because I know I need to go?

How do I do it? I just want you to know that I'm gonna say the same thing to each of you and I want to say it here today. You are good enough friend, if you stay. You are good enough friend, if you go and it's going to be hard to stay and it's going to be hard to go. You just have to choose your hard.

Friend, you are deserving. You are worthy. And you are so so capable of doing hard things well. If nothing else, borrow my belief until you find your own.