A LISTENER GIFT FROM THE WE CHAT DIVORCE PODCAST

The Brave Choice

Reclaiming Your Independence After Betrayal & Divorce

A reflection guide inspired by our Divorce Explored conversation with
Gabrielle Stone — best-selling author of Eat, Pray, #FML

When a marriage ends in betrayal, Gabrielle Stone says there are really only two paths in front of you: shut down and put up a wall to protect yourself — or make the bold choice to be vulnerable, and walk toward what's next. This guide is for anyone standing at that fork. It won't rush your grief or pretend the pain didn't happen. It's here to help you take the next brave, grounded choice — emotionally and financially — that brings you back to yourself.

The Two Paths

THE WALL

Shut down. Protect yourself with everything you have. Stay where it feels safe — even when it keeps you small.

THE BRAVE CHOICE

Acknowledge the fear — and choose to walk through it anyway. Stay open. As Gabrielle puts it, there is a lot of magic at the end of that path.

Reflect

- Which path have I been standing on this week — the wall, or the brave choice?
- What is one fear that has been quietly making my decisions for me?
- If I trusted that I was fully capable, what would I do differently tomorrow?

"The most magical stuff happens when you can see the fear and say: I'm going to choose to walk through it."

— GABRIELLE STONE

Independence Is Built One Brave Choice at a Time

Gabrielle didn't become independent all at once. A solo trip she never planned — six countries in a month — forced her to realize how capable she already was. "Of course I could buy a car. Of course I could buy a house. I can actually do anything by myself." You don't need a plane ticket to start. You need one brave choice, then the next.

Small Brave Steps to Reclaim

Check one to focus on this week. None is too small — each one proves capability to yourself.

- ☐ Make one financial decision on my own — and let it be enough that I decided it.
- ☐ Open and read one account statement I usually avoid.
- ☐ Do one thing solo I'd normally bring someone along for (a meal out, a day trip, a class).
- ☐ Name one "redo" I'm secretly excited about in this next chapter.
- ☐ Say yes to one invitation or community that moves me forward, not backward.

KNOW YOUR NUMBERS — THE OTHER HALF OF INDEPENDENCE

Gabrielle's first marriage was financially controlling — someone else balanced, budgeted, and paid. Real independence meant becoming diligent about knowing everything herself. Financial clarity isn't about having all the answers today; it's about no longer looking away.

A few honest questions to sit with:

- Do I know what we own, what we owe, and what income actually supports my life?
- Where have I been deferring financial decisions — and is that still serving me?
- What is one number I've been afraid to look at, that I could look at this week?

Don’t Not Do It Because You’re Scared

That line became the heart of the conversation. The fear you feel isn’t a stop sign — it’s often the exact signal pointing at your next growth. Divorce, as Gabrielle says, can be a hard ending that makes room for a beautiful new beginning: a redo, a square one, a life you get to design on purpose.

A Few Permissions Worth Giving Yourself

- ☐ I have permission to grieve the life I thought I’d have — and still feel excited for what’s next.
- ☐ I have permission to make decisions without asking anyone else first.
- ☐ I have permission to be a beginner at the things I’m learning to do alone.
- ☐ I have permission to build community and friendship as its own kind of homecoming.
- ☐ I have permission to make the rest of my life the best of my life.

MY ONE BRAVE CHOICE

Before you close this guide, decide on one brave, grounded choice you’ll make in the next seven days — emotional or financial. Say it out loud. Tell one person who’ll cheer you on. The magic Gabrielle describes lives on the other side of that first step.

Clarity is power. Independence is freedom.

When you’re ready to see your numbers clearly, the MDS Financial Portrait™ gives you verified figures, expert analysis, and a clear plan for what comes next — so your fresh start rests on facts, not fear.

You’re also welcome in the free MDS Community: a supportive private space with expert guidance, resources, workshops, and live Q&A.

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