

The Effects of a Life Transition Such as Divorce
on the Nature of Possible Selves, Life Satisfaction, and Coping

by

Shabnam Ziabakhsh

B.A. (Psychology), University of British Columbia, 1990

THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF
THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF
MASTER OF ARTS
in the Department
of
Psychology

© Shabnam Ziabakhsh 1993

Simon Fraser University

November, 1993

All rights reserved. This work may not be reproduced in whole or in part
by photocopy or other means, without permission of the author.

APPROVAL

Name: Shabnam Ziabakhsh

Degree: Master of Arts

Title of Thesis: The Effects of a Life Transition Such
as Divorce on the Nature of Possible
Selves, Life Satisfaction, and Coping

Examining Committee:

Chair: Dr. Elinor Ames
Associate Professor

Dr. Anand Paranjpe, Professor
Senior Supervisor

Dr. Marlene Moretti,
Associate Professor

Dr. E. Boyanowsky,
Associate Professor
Criminology Department
Simon Fraser University
External Examiner

Date Approved:

1993-11-25

ABSTRACT

This project examines the restructuring process of the identity system after divorce. Erikson's theory of identity formation and his notion of the "evolving configuration of roles" are concepts from which the present study extends. The identity system was assessed through Hazel Markus' "possible selves", and by examining the participants' past and current goals. The restructuring process was inferred on the basis of comparison between divorced and married mothers. It was predicted that married and divorced women will differ in the number and nature of possible selves and goals which they generate. It was also predicted that low and high functioning divorcees (their level of functioning being determined by the Life Satisfaction Index), would also generate different types of possible selves and goals. There were no significant differences between the groups in terms of the number of possible selves mentioned. In accordance with our hypothesis, married and divorced women differed in the nature of possible selves and goals they generated. Married women were more involved in parenting and marital roles; divorced women were more involved in occupational and wage-earner roles; and divorced women were also more concerned with self-growth and maintenance of their sense of independence as opposed to married women. No important differences appeared between low and high functioning divorcees in terms of possible selves and goals mentioned. Participants also identified the most distressful event that they had experienced along with the coping strategies that they had used in order to deal with such events. The results showed that both groups of women use numerous strategies in order to deal with distressful situations.

DEDICATION

I would like to dedicate this work to my parents, soudabeh and Ardeshir, and my sister Sepideh, for their loving support and encouragement through the years.

Thank you.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank Dr. Anand Paranjpe for his support, guidance, and intellectual stimulation. I would also like to thank Dr. Marlene Moretti for her support and helpful comments along the way. In addition, I would like to thank Joan Foster, and Jeremy Jackson for helping me with data analysis. Thanks also goes out to Dr. Ethor Boyanowsky for his helpful comments and suggestions.

I would like to also thank the many people who have assisted me, or have helped me to get in touch with participants, namely, Kris Longpre, Maryam Taghavi (my wonderful coder), Maryam Osanlo, Ahmad Dorodian, Farzaneh Moghadam, Ardeshir Darabi, Ali-Reza Emdadi, Amir Akhavan, Kaveh Taheri, Shahriar Yazdanipour, Stewart Muglich (for answering all my questions), Sepideh Ziabakhsh (for asking me all the questions), and Hossein Farrokhmanesh (for putting up with me).

A special thanks also goes out to all the mothers who took the time from their busy lives to participate in my study.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Approval	ii
Abstract	iii
Dedication	iv
Acknowledgements.....	v
List of Tables.....	viii
I. INTRODUCTION.....	1
Change vs. Sameness.....	1
Erikson's Identity Formation.....	3
Divorce and the Process of Self-Transformation.....	5
Women's Identity After Divorce.....	8
Possible Selves.....	9
Present Study	14
Hypothesis	15
II. METHOD	17
Subjects	17
Measures.....	18
Procedure	22
III. RESULTS.....	24
Demographic Characteristics.....	24
Possible Selves	24
Goals.....	33
Life Satisfaction	36
Life Satisfaction and Possible Selves	37
Life Satisfaction and Goals	42
Distressful Events	44

Coping Strategies	46
Coping with Divorce	52
IV. DISCUSSION	55
Review of the Data	55
Theoretical Implications	67
Limitations and Future Directions	69
REFERENCES	71
APPENDIX A	75
APPENDIX B	76
APPENDIX C	77
APPENDIX D	78
APPENDIX E	84
APPENDIX F	86
APPENDIX G	89
APPENDIX H	90
APPENDIX I	91
APPENDIX J	93
APPENDIX K	95
APPENDIX L	96

LIST OF TABLES

Table	Page
1 Demographic Characteristics.....	24
2 Cell Means and P Values of Relative Frequency of Hoped-for Possible Selves.....	26
3 Cell Means and P Values for the Two Most Important Hoped-for Possible Selves.....	28
4 Cell Means and P Values for the Two Most Important Feared Possible Selves.....	28
5 Cell Means and P Values of Likelihood Ratings of Hoped-for and Feared Possible Selves.....	29
6 Cell Means and P Values of Capability Ratings for Hoped-for and Feared Possible Selves.....	30
7 Cell Means and P Values of Number of Hoped-for and Feared Possible Selves.....	31
8 Cell Means and P Values of Frequency of Behaviors Motivated by Hoped-for Possible Selves.....	32
9 Cell Means and P Values of Frequency of Past Goals.....	34
10 Cell Means and P Values of Frequency of Current Goals.....	36
11 Cell Means and Relative Frequency of Hoped-for Possible Selves.....	38
12 Cell Means and Relative Frequency of Feared Possible Selves.....	39
13 Cell Means of likelihood Ratings of Hoped-for and Feared Possible Selves.....	40

14	Cell Means of Capability Ratings for Hoped-for and Feared Possible Selves.....	41
15	Cell Means of Number of Hoped-for and Feared Possible Selves, Age, Yrs Married, Yrs Divorced, and number of Children.....	42
16	Cell Means of Frequency of Past Goals.....	43
17	Cell Means of Frequency of Current Goals.....	44
18	Frequency Counts of Most Distressful Events.....	45
19	Cell Means and P Values of Stressfulness Ratings.....	46
20	Frequency Counts of Coping Strategies Used by Married and Divorced Women.....	47
21	Cell Means and P Values of Helpfulness Ratings of Coping Behavior.....	50
22	Cell Means of Helpfulness Ratings of Coping Strategies.....	52
23	Frequency Counts of Coping Strategies Used by Divorced Women to Deal With Divorce.....	53

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This study deals with the reorganization of one's sense of identity after a major life-transition, in this case divorce. At first, the identity issue will be discussed in light of change vs. sameness - with emphasis on Erik Erikson's work on identity formation. Further on, self-transformation after divorce will be elaborated with emphasis on adaptive coping. Finally, Hazel Markus' concept of "possible selves" will be discussed which is one of the means by which "identity change" can be investigated and explored.

Change Vs. Sameness

As individuals, we all have the capacity to grow and change. The transitions from childhood to adolescence, and later on to adulthood and old age, are accompanied by major physical and psychological changes. The concept of change as well as sameness have been the subject of philosophical speculation since the time of early philosophers. What remains the same in individuals and what accounts for their sense of continuity and sameness is yet an unsolved puzzle, and a philosophical issue at the very least. However, philosophers and researchers have been more successful in describing the aspect of the self that is malleable and is subject to change - and it is this aspect of the self that the present study is concerned with.

William James (1840/1964), also being concerned with the change-sameness issue, distinguished between the self as *knower* (I) and self as *known* (Me), or the Thinker and Thought. He viewed the *I* - that which at any moment is conscious - as

the basis of sameness in individuals. In contrast, the *Me* was considered to be the aspect of the self that changes and alters. James's *Me* or self as known, was further divided into three constituents: the material *Me*, the social *Me*, and the spiritual *Me*. Furthermore, James put these constitutes in a hierarchy of importance, having the material *Me* at the bottom, and the spiritual *Me* on top. According to James (1840/1964) the *Me*, in its widest possible sense,

is the sum total of all that he CAN call his, not only his body, and his psychic powers, but his clothes and his house, his wife and children, his ancestors and friends, his reputation and works, his lands and horses, and yacht and bank account (p. 41).

According to James, self is a multifaceted entity in which the various facets are systematically related to one another, and that they are all organized into a whole - giving the person a sense of self-sameness and continuity.

Like James, Erikson (1968) argues that there is an *I* or *ego* which is stable and non-changing and accounts for the self-sameness and continuity of individuals. He sees the *ego* as an organizing agency which examines, selects, and integrates the self-images that are acquired in the course of life (abandoned as well anticipated selves). Even though Erikson elaborates on how the individual maintains a sense of sameness, the notion of change becomes a focal issue in his theory. In brief, as an individual goes through the life cycle one meets various challenges, one tends to redefine oneself in relation to the world, and in doing so gains a new sense of self and identity. Erikson's notion of "evolving configuration of roles" which will be discussed next, also elaborates further the nature of change.

Before proceeding, it is important to understand Erikson's theory of identity formation where the concepts of self-transformation and change are manifested at the very heart of his theory.

Erikson's Theory of Identity Formation

Erikson's notion of identity has been defined as the central organizing principle of the personality system (Paranjpe, 1975). This principle manifests itself throughout the life-cycle by meeting certain challenges at various points in the life-cycle. The process of identity formation involves the development of ego-strengths which successively emerge spanning the whole life-cycle from birth to old age. Erikson divides the life span into eight stages or critical periods (Erikson, 1968). Each stage is a turning point in the sense that it is a period of heightened vulnerability and potential, at which the result will be in gaining ego-strengths, or maladjustment.

Each stage is characterized by a dialectic: 1. basic trust vs. mistrust; 2. autonomy vs. shame or doubt; 3. initiative vs. isolation; 4. industry vs. inferiority. 5. identity vs. identity confusion; 6. intimacy vs. isolation; 7. generativity vs. stagnation; 8. Integrity vs. despair or disgust (Erikson, 1968). A successful outcome of these critical periods results in development of ego strengths of hope, will, purpose, competence, fidelity, love, care, and wisdom, for each of the respective stages. And the sense of identity that is gained from each emerging ego-strength is respectively characterized in the following statements: "I am what hope I have and give"; "I am what I can will freely"; "I am what I imagine I will be"; "I am what I can learn to make work"; "I am where I belong"; "I am what I love"; "I am what I want to transmit to the next generation"; and "I am what survives of me".

Although adolescence is the period in which the question of identity becomes the main focus, identity remains a process that forms throughout the life-cycle. For example, developing a sense of trust is the basis for later developing a sense of confidence in being oneself, and of becoming what other people trust one will be. The sense of identity is not gained or maintained once and for all; it is subject to

change, modifications, and reorganization as the person moves through the life stages.

To elaborate a little further, in Erikson's (1959) own words, "the process of identity formation emerges as an evolving configuration - a configuration which is gradually established by successive ego-syntheses and resyntheses throughout childhood; it is a configuration gradually integrating constitutional givens, idiosyncratic libidinal needs, favored capacities, significant identifications, effective defenses, successful sublimations, and consistent roles (P. 71)"

Erikson also suggests that through the process of identity formation the individual is driven toward a widening social radius. That is, the social world of the individual expands as the child separates himself or herself from the mother and identifies more and more with play-mates, school-mates, friends, significant others, various social roles, colleagues, other generations, and even one's nation. The reorganization and redefinition of the identity system comes into play at every stage where the individual's relation to the world changes and modifies. This reorganization becomes essential in order to give the individual a sense of continuity and maintain psychological well-being. Erikson's (1959) concept of identity as an evolving configuration of roles, and as a process involving a continual redefinition (reorganization) of the images of the self (abandoned as well as anticipated selves), accentuates the ever so *evolving* nature of social selves. Indeed, the successful organization of the personality within itself and into the social system (the process of identity formation) is viewed to lead the individual to psychological gain, an essential sense of well-being, a sense of direction, or sense of identity.

Erikson's (1968) concept of identity emerging as an "evolving configuration", and James's constituents of *Me* arranged in a hierarchical order, suggest a structural aspect of the concept of the *self* (in particular the social self). The structure of the social self refers to the organization of identifications or roles in a hierarchical or

other kinds of order (e.g., core vs. peripheral). Hierarchical or other type organization of social roles is viewed as necessary for integrating the personality and avoiding conflicts that may occur when the individual has too many conflicting roles (Paranjpe, 1975; Erikson, 1968). Gordon (1968) addresses the *plural* view of the social self, and its organization along the lines of central vs. peripheral elements (or in terms of a hierarchy). He also views the elements of the person's self-structure as changing during identity formation in early socialization and in transformations in later stages of life. Gordon further regards the analysis of the priorities of these elements as providing relevant information in terms of self-conceived social identity. Caspary (1987) defines the core self as "what is deepest and most central in us". He also points out that we continuously assimilate new materials to the core-self, and allow the core self to alter, which results in what he calls *self-transformations*.

Resynthesis or reprioritizing of roles is an important way to deal with the "normal" developmental changes that the person goes through. Such restructuring is even more crucial at times of major crises such as loss of employment or spouse, forced displacements and the like. These life transitions may necessitate radical re-definitions of the self and perspectives on life.

Divorce and the Process of Self-Transformation

Divorce is a major life transition that leads to revisions of roles and role priorities and the restructuring of the identity system. In particular, the task of the divorced person is to (1) separate oneself from the attachment figure (or break away from previous roles that were connected to it), and (2) to assume new roles. The first task is seen as a process of individuation from a former spouse, and the second task involves a reconstruction of one's identity and sense of self (Brown, 1976).

Mitchell (1983) takes an object relations approach and states that the formation and resynthesis of identity after divorce involves the redirection of narcissistic libido formerly cathected on the self-object or the attachment figure - in this case the spouse. That is, in order to find oneself after divorce, one must let go of identification with the attachment figure, and find out who one is without the spouse. Furthermore, Erikson (1959) points out that only after a reasonable sense of identity has been established that real intimacy with a person of the other sex is possible, and that "the condition of a true twoness is that one must become oneself" (p. 95). Although Erikson may not have had divorce in mind when he wrote this phrase, this statement can also apply to the divorce situation in the sense that one must let go of the twoness in order to find oneself again (for the second time, perhaps this time with a different flavor). Hence, after divorce, the boundaries of the self (or the extension of narcissistic libido to other people) are modified so that increasingly, the self is oneself.

The second task of the divorced is to assume new roles. Many authors describe post-divorce distress in terms of role disruption. Hart (1976) vividly describes the disorientation that accompanies rolelessness after divorce. Her study suggests that membership in the divorced club allows members to interpersonally articulate and validate a new role as "divorced person" which until that time had been ignored by participants. Those subjects actually benefit from assuming the "divorced person" role. Hunt's (1966) book titled "The World of the Formerly Married" also provides a concise report on the community and subculture of the divorced, and its role in the social adjustment of the divorced.

Many authors view divorce as a role transition period. Brown and Foye (1982) argue that divorce involves: loss of well-established and often highly valued positions or roles (such as married person or homemaker); demands to assume new, often unfamiliar or undesired roles (such as wage-earner); major restructuring of

continuing roles (for example, move from co-parent to single-parent); and finally reprioritizing roles and positions in order to avoid conflicts (for example, becoming a dedicated worker without compromising one's parenting role).

Fiske (1980) argues that after a major life change, a person would go through a period of moratorium for self-repair, and if all goes well, he or she may even emerge as a stronger person. Such a moratorium provides the opportunity to rearrange and to re-center various role commitments. According to Fiske, the first commitment should be to self-discovery and rediscovery, and second would be to renew the commitments to work and love. Bohannan (1970) suggests that the process of gaining or regaining one's identity after divorce involves resuming the parenting role - which involves continuing to provide love and care for the children, and also determining ways in which children would be able to deal with the aftermath of divorce. It also involves finding a new community and social ties. Finally, it involves finding one's autonomy and individuality as a person - finding a new sense of identity.

Coho (1986) suggests that reestablishment of the concept of self finalizes the end process of normal grieving over divorce, and it is this reestablishment of concept of self which promotes adaptation. He also suggests that psychopathology may occur when an individual is unable to reestablish or resynthesize the identity. The reestablishment of the sense of identity is followed by a sense of wholeness and completeness - having a sense of autonomy, accompanied with a sense of direction in life, and a sense of continuity in time (Erikson, 1959). According to Brown (1976), achieving autonomy must be the goal of the divorced, and until the individual reaches this goal, he or she would never experience a state of true happiness and well being. He further argues that remarriage after gaining autonomy has the possibility of being based on strength and subsequently surviving.

Again this only reaffirms Erikson's (1959) notion that the condition of a true twoness must be that the person becomes oneself first.

Woman's Identity After Divorce

As mentioned previously, some theorists view the achievement of autonomy to be the single most important role of the divorced person on the road to recovery and adaptive coping (Brown, 1976). However, Josselson (1987) points out that for women, a central aspect of identity is the commitment to a self-in-relation rather than to a self that stands alone. In terms of woman's identity, Erikson (1965) argues that a major part of a woman's identity is formed on the basis of her choice of the men she wants to be sought by. He suggests that intimacy may precede identity for a woman and that a woman cannot define who she is until she chooses who she will be in relation to her mate-to-be. Indeed recent research has shown that the concepts of autonomy, independence, and abstract achievements do not describe the focal issues of growing up female (Gilligan, 1979, 1982; Josselson, 1973, 1982; Schiedel & Marcia, 1985). Therefore, whether the main concern of divorced women would be to reach autonomy and independence becomes questionable.

Josselson (1987) argues that for women losing a relationship represents more than losing a loved one. Since women's sense of identity is deeply tied to the significant relationships that one has, after such loss the woman learns to stand alone, to set individual goals, and to become more aware of "who she is". Her study further shows that the most dramatic examples of growth and change, within the sample of women who she interviewed, was found among those whose first committed relationships ended badly. In other words, the more a woman has committed herself to the well-being of another, the less need she has to reflect on her own deeper self. Josselson also comments that she does not believe that

marriage holds back growth, and that those women who are leading fully interdependent lives are no less psychologically healthy and more content than those who are not. However, those who do have interdependent lives seem to have done less self-exploration, and "are less sharply defined" (Josselson, 1987, p.180).

O'Connell (1976) provides data to show that the traditional woman's sense of "personal identity" really gets developed when her role as a mother and wife is no longer as demanding. Therefore, the woman with a sense of "reflected identity" - identity by association with the significant others - is really in a moratorium stage. Other research has also shown that as women grow older (and when their roles as mothers and wives are not as demanding) they become more autonomous and more achievement oriented (Stevens & Truss, 1985; Baruch, 1967; Reinke, Holmes, & Harris, 1985; Helson & Moane, 1987). Hence, divorce appears to be a disruption that may in fact force the individual to establish her sense of "personal identity", sense of individuation and autonomy, sooner than it may have been otherwise. Therefore it appears that the achievement of autonomy is an important task for the divorced women, at least for those who are on their way to recovery.

Possible Selves

One of the means by which the process of restructuring of the personality can be examined is through the use of what Markus and Nurius (1986) refer to as *possible selves*. "Possible selves are derived from representations of the self in the past and they include representations of the self in the future." (p.954) Possible selves represent what we want to be in the future (hoped-for selves), and what we want to avoid becoming (feared selves). According to Markus, the concept of the self is an expansive phenomenon that reaches in time and it is not restricted to the "now-self". Indeed what we are now is ultimately tied to what we were before, and

to what we want to be later on in life. For example, a graduate student's possible selves may be: to become a Ph.D., to be a mother, to be financially secure, to be unemployed, and so on. These possible selves directly reflect the student's sense of self in the past, the future as well as in the present. Hence, possible selves are not only important because they provide incentives for future behavior, but also because they provide an evaluative and interpretive context for the current view of the self.

The notion of self through time is not a new concept. For example, James (1910) distinguished between "potential social *Me*", "immediate present *Me*", and the "*Me* from the past". Freud's (1952) notion of "ego ideal" also refers to a future state that motivates behavior. Erikson (1968) spoke specifically of the "abandoned" and "anticipated" selves. Erikson's view of identity definitely reaches in time, and it involves the integration of abandoned as well as anticipated selves into the current personality system. What all these theorists point out is that the concept of self and identity formation are characterized by complex dynamic processes that extend from the past, to the present, and on to the future. *What we are* is ultimately understood and tied to *what we were*, and *what we want to be* (and what we will be). In a way the person's identity or sense of self is the combination of structured roles, plans, goals, concerns, hopes, fears in the present, the past and the future (Cantor, Markus, Niedenthal, & Nurius, 1986; Markus & Wurf, 1987).

Possible selves are thus viewed as the elements of the personality system that give structure and meaning to the future in the individual's domain of investment and concern (Markus & Wurf, 1987). Future selves, in a way, reflect the "now self", as much as the self in the future, since much of our significant behavior in the present can be seen primarily as an effort to approach or avoid various possible selves (Cross & Markus, 1991). Moreover, future selves are not resistant to change, since they are less tied to behavioral evidence and less bounded by social reality, whereas present self is more likely to be bound by social constraints and be resistant

to change. Markus and Nurius (1986) point out that possible selves may in fact be the first elements of the self-concept to reveal changes and self-transformations. Therefore, possible selves seem to be an appropriate tool to investigate the changes that may occur as a result of a major life transition, such as divorce.

One study (Carson, Madison, & Santrock, 1987) has looked at the difference between possible selves of children who come from divorced and intact families. They found that compared to adolescents from intact families, adolescents from divorced families anticipate later marriages, and have a greater willingness to leave faltering marriages. This study gives support to the hypothesis that divorce can influence the nature of possible selves, and that possible selves may play a role in mediating the effects of stressful life events (Markus & Nurius, 1986).

No study to date has looked at the possible selves of divorced individuals in particular. However, one study (Porter, Markus, and Nurius, 1984) came close, and looked at the possible selves of individuals who have recently experienced a life crisis (such as loss of a relationship, death of loved one, and so on). The participants of this study were first divided into two groups - those who indicated that they had recovered from a crisis, and those who indicated they had not. When the two groups were questioned about now or current self (i.e. how do you describe yourself?), there were no significant difference in terms of how they described themselves. However, when the groups were asked about their possible future selves, the two groups responded quite differently. The poor recovery respondents thought that it was possible for them to be unpopular, nonaggressive, unimportant, weak, depressed, and unable to fit in. In addition, they thought that it was probable for them to be a failure, to die young, and to have a heart attack. These individuals had a negative current self, and even more negative possible selves. On the other hand, those in the recovered group, even though they had current selves that reflected that they were not doing well (and it was not different from the poor

recovery group), had very positive possible selves such as being motivated, independent, rich, creative, trusted, active, powerful, intelligent, and attractive. Indeed, the result of this study suggests that possible selves are responsive to change, and may be the seeds of self-transformations.

Other studies have looked at possible selves of adults throughout the life span. Cross and Markus (1991) found differences across age groups in the categories of possible selves mentioned most frequently and in respondents' evaluations of these possible selves. For example, the pattern of hoped-for selves generated by the youngest group (age group 18-24) appeared to reflect the many transitions, such as marriage, family, and choice of career that they were facing. On the other hand, the middle age group (40-59 years) expressed concern with successful performance and maintenance of roles and responsibilities already begun.

Cross and Markus (1991) also looked at the relationship between life satisfaction and possible selves. They found that those low in life satisfaction generated different types of hoped-for selves than those with higher life satisfaction. In specific, respondents low in life satisfaction (regardless of their age group) generated more *personal* hoped-for selves (e.g. to be happy; to be at peace). This striving for *personal* hoped-for selves may have represented a reaction to dissatisfaction with one's self and current levels of happiness. Hoped-for selves reported by respondents low in life satisfaction included "the happy self" or "being content". In contrast, those high in life satisfaction were freed from these concerns and were able to pursue other possible selves, such as occupation, family-oriented, or health selves. Additionally, Hooker (1992) found that older adults were significantly more likely to have possible selves in the realm of health than were college students. Hence, hoped-for selves may indeed reflect what is missing in the person's life, or what the person is most concerned about at a particular life-stage.

At this point, one can speculate on the pattern of possible selves that are likely to emerge for the divorced individual. If indeed possible selves reflect what the individual is striving to gain, or what is missing in the person's life, the coping literature on divorce can shed some light on this matter.

Berman and Turk (1981) have looked at problems and coping strategies of the divorced. They found that divorced individuals are mostly concerned with contacts with their former spouse, burdens of single-parenting, establishing interpersonal relations, dealing with practical problems (such as cooking and cleaning), and finances. Their results also showed that involvement in social activities, expressing feelings, and developing autonomy are highly related to greater post-divorce adjustment. Spanier and Casto (1979) argue that establishing a new life-style is more problematic for the divorced individual than adjusting to the dissolution of the marriage. They further argue that establishing a new life-style consists of high social interaction, economic success, and sexual involvement. Individuals having problems adjusting to a new life-style reported much depression, loneliness, frustration, low self-esteem, and low self-confidence.

Brown (1976) points out several steps that are essential for what he called a successful process of adjusting to divorce. The steps in this process, roughly in order, are: feelings of loss and grief, acceptance of divorce, management of day-to-day activities, efforts to develop new social relationships, accepting and managing change, understanding why the marriage broke down, establishment of some long-term goals, and the development of autonomy. He further argues that establishment of autonomy, or the focus on individuation is absolutely essential to the satisfactory completion of the adjustment process.

Hence, the possible selves of the divorced individuals, at least the ones who are on the road to recovery, will reflect their attempt in building a new life-style with attention given to developing a sense of autonomy and individuality. In short,

the possible selves will reflect the divorced individuals' attempt in restructuring their sense of self and identity.

Present Study

In the present study, the restructuring of the identity system after the process of divorce was investigated. The restructuring of the identity system was inferred on the basis of comparison between divorced and married mothers. To be specific, the possible (hoped-for and feared) selves of divorced single mothers were compared to those of their married counterparts. It was predicted that the differences between divorced and married women's possible selves will reflect distinctions in the structure of their identity system.

To recapitulate and elaborate further some of the previous discussion, it can be speculated that after the process of divorce, high functioning divorcees (those who are coping well) would resynthesize or restructure their sense of identity, and would develop a sense of autonomy. This would result in a sense of completeness, a sense of direction, and a feeling of satisfaction with oneself. In specific, their focus will be on resuming their commitments in love and work: recontinuing the parenting role, developing social relationships, and focusing on work and career. They would also be concerned with self growth, and with maintaining their individuality. Hence, their possible selves will reflect their concern for work, parenting, social relationships, and self-growth.

Low functioning divorcees (those who are having trouble coping), are presumably the ones who have not yet restructured their sense of identity, and have not yet developed a sense of autonomy. As the result, they would lack a sense of direction, and experience unhappiness with themselves. They would either become obsessed with finding a partner, so they would not have to take responsibility for their own lives, or they would, having fear of being rejected, become withdrawn into

themselves. Research has shown that depressed people seem to be more introspective and self-absorbed than people who are happy (Wood, Saltzberg, & Goldsamt, 1990). As it was mentioned previously, Cross and Markus (1991) also showed that people with low life satisfaction generate more personal hoped-for selves. Hence, low functioning divorcees may also generate more personal, internal, self-focused types of possible selves.

Pyszcznski and Greenberg (1987) proposed that a course of depression and self absorption may follow stressful life events since such events often constitute disruption or failures in the pursuit of one's goal or standard. According to Pyszcznski and Greenberg, such disruptions activate the process of self-regulation, which requires focusing attention on the self. The process of self-regulation entails comparing one's current self with a goal and standard. If there is a discrepancy, the person either adjusts one's behavior to meet the standard, or if one expects to fail, one abandons the goals and standard. The period of self-absorption (and the process of self-regulation) can also be seen as the time needed for (or process of) restructuring one's sense of identity, finding a new sense of direction in life, and reprioritizing goals for the future. If all goes well, the person after this period of self-absorption may in fact re-discover a new-found sense of identity and autonomy.

Hypotheses

The following hypotheses are made based on prior discussions:

- (1) Divorced women's hoped-for and feared possible selves would be significantly different from their married counterparts.
- (2) Divorcees with high life-satisfaction (high functioning) would have possible selves that would be closer to their married counterparts, than divorcees with low life satisfaction (low functioning).
- (3) High functioning divorcee's possible selves would be in the areas of work

- (3) High functioning divorcee's possible selves would be in the areas of work (career), parenting, developing new social/intimate relationships, and achieving autonomy (independence), compared to low functioning divorcees and married women.
- (4) High functioning divorcees would have fewer feared selves than low functioning divorcees. But, they would have more feared selves and less hoped-for selves than their married counterparts.
- (5) Low functioning divorcees would have fewer possible selves than married and high functioning divorcees - reflecting their lack of direction.
- (6) Low functioning divorcees' possible selves would be more personal, and self-focused, than married and high functioning divorcees' possible selves. For example, "being happy", "find life worth living", "love myself".
- (7) Married people would predict their hoped-for selves to come true more often than divorced people.
- (8) High functioning divorcees would predict their hoped-for selves to come true more often than low functioning divorcees.
- (9) There would be a positive correlation between life-satisfaction and adaptive coping behaviors (namely, involvement in social activities, expressing feelings, and establishing autonomy - e.g. becoming independent; working outside employment).

CHAPTER II

METHOD

Subjects

Subjects were 119 women - 44 married and 75 divorced or separated. The mean age of the participants was 36.7 years, their ages ranging from 20 to 54 years. The mean length of time the subjects (both married and divorced) were married was 9.1 years (ranging from 1 to 33 years); the divorced (separated) participants were divorced for 6 years on the average (ranging from 1 to 23 years). In order to avoid comparing subjects with and without children, only mothers were chosen. The mean number of children they had was 1.9. In order to ensure that the married group did not include women with shaky marriages, married subjects were asked to rate the degree to which they felt confident about staying married. On a 10 - point Likert Scale, the married subjects scored on the average 8.4 (10 being extremely confident). Among the participants, 10% had elementary schooling, 31% had high-school diplomas, 36% had some years of training in a vocational college, 15% had a four year university degree, and about 7% had some graduate or professional training. About 27% of the participants worked part-time and 43% worked full-time outside of home (see Appendix G for background information). There were no significant differences between married and divorced subjects in terms of their age, number of children, level of education and, outside employment. The subjects were contacted through variety of means such as poster advertisement, newspaper ads (see Appendix A and B), single mothers' support groups, and social networks. Subjects were not paid for their participation.

Measures

Possible Selves Questionnaire

The Possible Selves measure used by Cross and Markus in their 1991 study was selected for use in the present study (see Appendix D). This is an open-ended questionnaire where respondents list their hoped-for and feared possible selves, and indicate the two most important of these selves. The participants are also asked to rate these possible selves (using a 7- point Likert scale) on various measures, such as "how likely they feel these selves would come true", and "how capable they feel in accomplishing or avoiding these selves". They are also asked to indicate any behaviors that they have engaged in that were specifically motivated by these possible selves.

The coding of the possible selves consist of assigning particular categories to the hoped-for and feared possible selves. Cross and Markus (1991) used 11 categories, however, the present study used 15 categories which seemed essential to the purpose of the present study (see Appendix I for a detailed description of these categories). These categories are: *Personal, individuality, marital/love, family/children, friendships, occupation, abilities/education, leisure, life/style, material/finance, physical/self, physical/other, disaster/accident, charity/social cause, and retirement.*

The categories *personal* and *individuality* possible selves were designed primary for this study to measure the perception or concern for self-growth and independence, respectively (see Appendix I for a more detailed description). Cross and Markus (1991) used a general category for family, which in the present study this category was split in to *marital/love* and *family/children*, in order to allow us to examine the restructuring of the personality system after the breakdown of the marital relationship. Other categories such as *retirement* and *disaster/accident*

(which was omitted in Cross and Markus' study) simply emerged in our study due to the frequent mention of these categories by our participants. The same 15 categories were also used in coding of the behaviors motivated by possible selves.

Life Satisfaction Index

Neugarth and Havighurst's (1961) Life Satisfaction Index (see Appendix E) was originally designed to measure well-being in old age. However, this measure has been used by other researchers in order to evaluate the life satisfaction of variety of people - both young and old (Cross and Markus, 1991). The LS index examines the individual's own evaluation of his or her present or past life, in terms of satisfaction and happiness. This measure consists of 20 attitude items for which only an "agree", "disagree", or "?" is required (see Appendix L for coding). The range of scores that can be obtained is from 0 to 20 - the higher the score the higher the life-satisfaction. The mean score on LS index has been computed to be 12.4 with the standard deviation of 4.4 (Neugarth & Havighurst, 1961).

LS index is composed of four factors: (1) Resolution and fortitude - the extent to which respondents accept personal responsibility for their lives; (2) Congruence between desired and achieved goals - the extent to which respondents feel they have achieved their goals; (3) Self-concept - respondents' concept of self - physical, psychological and social attributes; (4) Mood tone - respondents' overall happiness and level of optimism.

The validity of this measure was determined by comparing the Life Satisfaction scores of the participants with a clinical psychologist's assessment of the participants' life satisfaction. The correlation between LS ratings and the clinical psychologist's ratings of life satisfaction was .64 (Neugarth & Havighurst, 1961). The correlation of .64 between LS index and clinical rating of Life satisfaction was

interpreted by investigators as providing a satisfactory degree of validation for the LS index (Neugarth & Havighurst, 1961).

LS index was used in this study in order to distinguish between low and high functioning divorcees - "functioning" meaning how well they are coping with divorce. Life satisfaction has been seen as a major component in evaluating coping. Clarke-Stewart's and Bailey's (1990) Adjustment rating (for divorced men) was composed of "mood" and "satisfaction with life" measures. Katz (1991) used a Depression Adjectives Check List (for divorced mothers) which is composed of 34 adjectives expressing feeling of well-being and satisfaction with oneself, and one's life. Berman and Turk (1981) have also used a satisfaction measure (among other measures) in order to assess adaptive coping. In general, questions dealing with general life satisfaction and happiness have often been used to measure adjustment after divorce (Chiriboga & Thurnher, 1980; Keith, 1986; Mitchell, 1983).

Coping Behavior Questionnaire

In order to investigate whether or not divorced women perceive divorce as having caused them considerable distress, and to examine the perceived stressfulness of divorce (as compared to other distressful events), respondents were asked to state the most distressful event that they have so far experienced in their lives (see Appendix F). Through investigating the raw data 17 distressing events were distinguished, which later were used as categories in order to code the distressful events (see Appendix K). Respondents also rated the stressfulness of their most distressing event on a 7- point Likert scale (1 being not at all stressful, to 7 being extremely stressful).

The second section of this questionnaire consists of an index that was generated from Berman's and Turk's (1981) Coping Strategies and Resource Inventory (CSRI). CSRI consist of 53 coping strategies that the subjects score on a

4-point scale. Six factors were generated from CSRI: Social activities, learning, personal understanding, expressing feelings, autonomy, and home and family activities. Items that require involvement in social activities (e.g., dating), expressing feelings (e.g., crying), and developing autonomy (e.g., establishing a new life) were positively correlated with greater post-divorce adjustment (Berman & Turk, 1981). The items of the present index were taken from the six factors that were derived from the CSRI - items were randomly taken from each of the six factors, creating 17 items all together.

The present index consist of 17 items or lists of coping strategies. The respondents were asked to indicate the coping strategies that they have used (or they will use in the future) by responding "yes" or "no"; they were also asked to rate the helpfulness, or effectiveness of each coping strategy on a 7-point Likert scale (1 being not at all helpful and 7 being extremely helpful).

In the last section of the Coping Behavior Questionnaire, participants were asked to indicate (on a 7- point Likert scale) whether their goals have changed since the distressful event (1 being, has not changed at all, and 7 has changed significantly). Participants also indicated the goals they have had before the distressful event (past goals), and the goals they hold currently (current goals). The same 15 categories that were used to code possible selves were also used to code "past goals" and "current goals" (see Appendix I). Stressfulness of divorce was also rated on a 7- point Likert scale. And lastly, in an open-ended question, divorced participants were asked to indicate any coping strategies they have found helpful in coping with the process of divorce. By examining the data, 47 categories were generated in order to code these coping strategies (See Appendix J).

Inter-Rater Reliability

Coding computed across all the self-generated items (possible selves, most distressful events, and coping behaviors) generated a high inter-rater agreement - Kappa of .88. Values of kappa greater than .70 are generally regarded as showing excellent inter-rater agreement (Barko, 1991).

Procedure

The subjects were contacted by variety of means. The search for participants was initially done both through acquaintances of the experimenter (serving as contact persons) and through poster advertisement. Various single mothers' support groups were also approached (such as YWCA's and neighborhood houses' support groups). As a last resort, newspaper advertisements (in The Province) were used, where most of the participants were recruited from.

Subjects who were recruited by means of poster advertisements and newspaper ads contacted the experimenter over the telephone. These persons were sent a questionnaire with a stamped envelopes through mail, and were asked to mail back the questionnaire to the university once they had completed it. The subjects who were recruited by the experimenter's acquaintances were contacted indirectly - meaning that the subjects were not contacted through the experimenter. These subjects received the questionnaires by a contact person (or the experimenter's acquaintance), but they too were asked to mail back the questionnaire to the university. This was done so that the participants would freely answer the questions without worrying about the confidentiality of their responses. Participants who were in single mothers' support groups were also contacted indirectly. First, the experimenter contacted the group leaders (by phone or in person), and then the group leaders were given questionnaires with stamped envelopes so they would distribute among their group-members.

The questionnaire booklet contains the three measures that were outlined previously. In addition: A cover letter (Appendix C) - which explains the experiment to the participants and assures confidentiality and anonymity of the questionnaire; background information (Appendix G); and a closing statement (Appendix H). The three measures in the questionnaire follow the cover letter in the order of: Possible Selves (Appendix D), LS Index (Appendix E), and Coping Behavior (Appendix F). The questionnaire ends with background information (Appendix G), and closing statement (Appendix H). On the average, the questionnaire takes about 30 minutes to complete.

The questionnaires were retrieved through the mail by the experimenter. Approximately 400 questionnaires were distributed by the experimenter, however, it is unclear as to how many of these questionnaires in fact were given to participants since many of these questionnaires were given to contact people and support group leaders. 145 questionnaires were retrieved. The return rate of the questionnaire is approximately estimated at 40% - which is expected in this type of research. Approximately, 10 questionnaires came from support groups (7%); 54 questionnaires were recruited by contact persons (37%); and the majority, about 81 questionnaires, came from poster and newspaper ads (56%).

Of the 145 questionnaires that were returned, 26 were omitted from the study. Of the twenty six, 11 were not used since they came from married women who were divorced previously. An additional four were also omitted from this study since they came from married women who were about to get separated from their husbands. Another 7 questionnaires were also not used because the respondents were either never married, or they were living common-law. An additional three were discarded because of insufficient data, and the last questionnaire that was omitted belonged to a widow. The remaining questionnaires were 119.

CHAPTER III

RESULTS

Demographic Characteristics

Table 1 shows demographic characteristics of the participants. As it can be seen, there are no significant differences between married and divorced women in terms of their age, level of education, working status, and number of children.

Table 1

Cell Means of Demographic Characteristics

	<u>Married</u> (N=44)	<u>Divorced</u> (N=75)	<u>(P) Diff. betw Means</u>	
Age	35.8	37.3	.29	NS
Education	2.9	2.7	.23	NS
Work	2.2	2.1	.54	NS
Num. of Children	1.8	2.0	.23	NS

Note: Level of education was measured on a 6- point scale (0 - no schooling, to 5 - graduate level); work was assessed on a 3- point scale (1 - unemployed, to 3 - full-time employment).

Possible Selves

It was predicted that divorced women's hoped-for selves will be significantly different from their married counterparts (Hypothesis 1). MANOVA was conducted in order to investigate whether there is an overall significant difference between married and divorced women's hoped-for possible selves. The results

showed that there is an overall significant difference, $F(14,104) = 3.9, p \leq .0000$.

This supports Hypothesis 1 - divorced women generate different types of hoped-for selves than married women.

ANOVA was also conducted in order to investigate differences between married and divorced women's particular hoped-for possible selves. However, in order to control for the family wise error rate, if the MANOVA was non-significant the ANOVA was not conducted. For the ANOVAs, only the categories of possible selves that were of interest - namely categories that expanded from the themes of love, work, and self-growth (see introduction) were used. Therefore, comparisons were made on *personal, individuality, marital/love, family/children, occupation, and ability/education* possible selves - these categories were used for analysis of variance throughout this study.

Table 2 shows relative frequency means of hoped-for possible selves. The relative frequency of each category was calculated by dividing the number of selves in a category by the total number of hoped-for selves listed by the respondent. This was done in order to control for differences in the number of selves mentioned by each subject (since some mentioned many possible selves, and some mentioned only a few). As it has been shown in Table 2, married women mention significantly more family/child related hoped-for selves than divorced women, $F(1, 117) = 26.1, p \leq .0000$. For example, some of the hoped-for selves that were mentioned are: "Being a grandparent"; "raise my son to be self-confident"; "mother of two more children"; and "being a great parent."

Contrary to Hypothesis 6, which states that divorced women would have significantly more personal (self-focused) possible selves than married women, the results showed no significant differences between the groups in terms of the frequency of *personal* as well as *individuality* hoped-for selves, with $F(1, 117) = .53, p > .05$, and $F(1, 117) = 2.4, p > .05$, respectively. Some of the examples of personal

hoped-for selves that were mentioned are: " Being a happy and stable person"; "being in touch with myself"; "being more self-confident"; and "to find myself". Some of the individuality hoped-for selves are: "Being an independent woman"; "to always be financially independent"; and "regardless of any relationship with a man, always be 'me'".

Divorced women mention more marital/love and occupation related hoped-for selves than married women, but these differences only approached significance, $F(1, 117) = 2.9, p \leq .09$, and $F(1,117) = 2.9, p \leq .09$, respectively. It appears that divorced women, more so than married women, tend to care for having romantic relationships and successful careers in their lives. Some examples of the hoped-for selves mentioned in these two categories are: "Have a good relationship with a man"; "a happily married old-lady"; "being loved by someone special"; "to remain married until my death"; "having my own business"; "become a successful author"; "be a supervisor"; and "have continued success in my career".

Table 2

Cell Means and P Values of Relative Frequency of Hoped-for Possible Selves

<u>Category</u>	<u>Married</u> (N=44)	<u>Divorced</u> (N=75)	<u>(P) Diff. betw Means</u>	
Personal	.08	.09	.47	NS
Individuality	.01	.03	.12	NS
Marital/Love	.06	.09	.09	NS
Family/Children	.24	.13	.0000	***
Occupation	.10	.15	.09	NS

*** $P < .001$.

Post hoc within-group comparisons were made in order to examine which category of hoped-for selves is mentioned significantly more than other categories. T-tests were conducted between the most frequent category and the second and third most frequent categories of hoped-for possible selves. Each comparison was made using a .025 alpha level, in order to control for the family-wise error rate. The results showed that married women mention family/child related hoped-for selves significantly more than occupational selves, with $t(43) = 5.5, p \leq .0000$; family/children hoped-for selves are also mentioned significantly more than marital/love related selves, $t(43) = 8.8, p \leq .0000$. Therefore, it appears that for married women, their families and children are more important to them than their careers and their relationships with their husbands. On the other hand, divorced women mention family/child hoped-for selves as much as occupational related selves $t(74) = 2.3, p > .05$. Hence, for divorced women, their families and children do not constitute the most significant aspects of their lives.

In terms of feared possible selves, it was predicted that divorced and married women would generate significantly different types of feared selves (Hypothesis 1). However, contrary to our hypothesis, MANOVA showed no overall significant differences between married and divorced women's feared possible selves, $F(13,102) = .65, p > .05$.

Frequency tables chi-square tests were conducted to compare married and divorced women's two most important hoped-for and feared possible selves. Table 3 shows that married women mention family/children hoped-for selves significantly more often than divorced women, $X^2(1, N = 119) = 15.5, p \leq .0001$. Divorced women mention the occupation related hoped-for selves to be significantly more important to them than their married counterparts, $X^2(1, N = 119) = 6.9, p \leq .01$. No significant differences exist between married and divorced women in terms of their most important feared possible selves (see Table 4).

Table 3

Cell Means, and P Values for the Most Important Hoped-For Possible Selves

<u>Category</u>	<u>Married</u> (N=44)	<u>Divorced</u> (N=75)	<u>(P)</u>	
Self (Personal + individuality)	6	19	.13	NS
Marital/Love	13	14	.17	NS
Family/Children	30	24	.0001	***
Occupation	7	28	.01	**
Ability/Education	2	5	.63	NS

P<.01, *P<.001.

Table 4

Cell Means, and P Values for the Most Important Feared Possible Selves

<u>Category</u>	<u>Married</u> (N=44)	<u>Divorced</u> (N=75)	<u>(P)</u>	
Self (Personal + individuality)	10	21	.53	NS
Marital/Love	3	7	.63	NS
Family/Children	12	23	.69	NS
Occupation	1	5	.29	NS

Respondents were also asked to rate how "likely" they feel their two most important hoped-for and feared possible selves are to come true. The ratings were initially made on a 7- point Likert scale, but the ratings were combined for the two most important hoped-for selves, creating a single rating on a 14-point scale - 1 being not at all likely, to 14 being extremely likely. The ratings for the two most important feared selves were also combined to create a single rating. Table 5 shows the cell means of likelihood ratings for hoped and feared selves.

It was predicted that married women would rate their hoped-for selves to come true significantly more than divorced women (Hypothesis 7). The results showed that married women appear to be more optimistic than the divorced, in terms of perceiving their hoped-for selves as becoming reality, however this difference only approach significance, $F(1, 117) = 3.6, p < .06$. There were also no significant differences between married and divorced women in terms of the likelihood ratings of feared selves. In general, hoped-for selves were perceived more likely of becoming reality than feared selves - this shows clearly sample's inherent optimism.

Table 5

Cell Means and P Values of Likelihood Ratings of Hoped-for and Feared Possible Selves

	<u>Married</u>	<u>Divorced</u>		
<u>Possible Selves</u>	<u>(N=44)</u>	<u>(N=75)</u>	<u>(P) Diff. betw Means</u>	
Hoped-for	11.3	10.4	.06	NS
Feared	6.9	7.0	.94	NS

Table 6 shows "capability" ratings - in other words how capable the respondents feel in accomplishing or avoiding the two most important hoped-for and feared possible selves. Again, the ratings for the two most important hoped-for selves were combined to give a single rating on a 14-point Likert scale (1 being not at all capable and 14 being extremely capable). The same procedure was also carried out for the two most important feared selves. The results shows no significance difference between capability ratings of the divorced and married for the hoped-for possible selves, meaning that both married and divorced women feel equally capable of accomplishing their respective hoped-for selves. On the other hand, divorced women appear to feel significantly more capable of avoiding feared selves than their married counterparts, $F(1, 108) = 3.8, p \leq .05$.

Table 6

Cell Means and P Values of Capability Ratings for Hoped-for and Feared Possible Selves

	<u>Married</u>	<u>Divorced</u>		
<u>Possible Selves</u>	<u>(N=44)</u>	<u>(N=75)</u>	<u>(P) Diff. betw Means</u>	
Hoped-for	11.4	11.0	.41	NS
Feared	8.6	9.8	.05	*

* $p \leq .05$.

It was predicted that divorced women would have a smaller number of hoped-for possible selves than married women, and that married women would have fewer number of feared selves than divorced women (Hypothesis 4). Contrary to this hypothesis, the number of hoped-for and feared selves that were generated by

the divorced and married respondents did not significantly differ from each other, $F(1, 117) = .51, p > .05$, and $F(1, 117) = .62, p > .05$, respectively. Table 7 shows that both married and divorced women generated almost the same number of possible selves. In general, hoped-for selves were generated more than feared selves, possibly showing once more individual's inherent optimism.

Table 7

Cell Means and P Values of Number of Hoped-for and Feared Possible Selves

<u>Variables</u>	<u>Married</u> (N=44)	<u>Divorced</u> (N=75)	<u>(P) Diff. betw Means</u>	
Number of hoped-for Selves	7.8	7.4	.48	NS
Number of feared selves	4.5	4.9	.43	NS

MANOVA showed an overall significant difference between married and divorced women's behaviors that were motivated by their hoped-for selves $F(11,107) = 2.3, p \leq .01$. Table 8 represents frequencies of behaviors that were motivated by the subject's most important hoped-for selves. These behaviors were put into the same categories as the possible selves. ANOVA showed that married women were significantly more involved in family/child related activities than divorced women, $F(1, 117) = 9.9, p \leq .002$. For example, some of the responses were: "Took my child to dinner, movies and baseball"; "I mother my daughter with empathy and guidance"; "I make sure that I tell my children that I love them everyday"; and "had a meeting with my son's teacher."

Married women engage in marital/love related behaviors more than divorced women, however, this difference only approached significance, $F(1,117) = 3.6, p \leq .06$. Divorced women engage in personal related behaviors more often than married women, but this difference also only approached significance, $F(1,117) = 3.2, p \leq .07$. Examples of some of the behaviors mentioned in these two categories respectively are: "I went for a romantic dinner with my husband"; "attended a marriage seminar to enrich our marriage"; "read a lot of self-help books"; and "maintained an awareness of my goals for my personal growth".

Table 8

Cell Means and P Values of Frequency of Behaviors Motivated by Hoped-for Possible Selves

<u>Category</u>	<u>Married</u> (N=44)	<u>Divorced</u> (N=75)	<u>(P) Diff. betw Means</u>	
Personal	.14	.29	.07	NS
Marital/love	.27	.13	.06	NS
Family/Children	.66	.33	.002	**
Occupation	.27	.40	.22	NS
Ability/Education	.20	.36	.14	NS

** $P < .01$.

MANOVA showed no significant differences between divorced and married women's behaviors that were motivated by feared-possible selves, $F(10,108) = .81, p > .05$.

Goals

The frequencies of goals held by the respondents before they experienced a distressing event (past goals) are represented in Table 9. Goals have been coded into the same categories as possible selves, and behaviors motivated by possible selves. Since goals and possible selves are both intended to measure the personality system, it is argued that the same hypotheses that were conjectured for possible selves can apply for goals.

MANOVA showed an overall significant difference between married and divorced women's past goals, $F(8,110) = 18.7, p \leq .002$. ANOVA indicated that divorced women's goals before the distressful event (which is mostly the experience of divorce - see section on Distressful Events) reflected their desire to have or maintain marital/love relations significantly more than their married counterparts, $F(1, 117) = 19.6, p \leq .0000$. In other words, divorced women perceived marital/love relationships to have been a focal point of their lives before they actually got divorced. Some of the goals mentioned in this category are: "Making a good home for my husband"; "to keep my marriage together no matter what, for me and my children"; "I wanted to find a man to take care of me"; "keeping my husband happy over my needs"; and "to simply be a good wife".

Divorced women also rated family/children related goals significantly higher than married women, $F(1, 117) = 6.8, p \leq .01$. Some of the responses were: "to be a good mother"; "bring up the children and have a good life"; and "to have a typical family life". The present findings show that divorced women perceive their past goals as being a wife to their husbands, and mother to their children.

Post hoc within-group comparisons, showed that there are no significant differences between the mention of family/children goals and marital goals for the divorced, $t(74) = 1.3, p > .05$. Family and marital related goals are mentioned significantly more than other four categories of past goals. For the married

participants, family and occupational goals are mentioned more frequently than other categorical goals, however, t-tests showed no significant differences between these two categories and personal and marital goals.

Table 9

Cell Means and P Values of Frequency of Past Goals

<u>Category</u>	<u>Married</u> (N = 44)	<u>Divorced</u> (N = 75)	<u>(P) Diff. betw Means</u>	
Personal	.14	.11	.63	NS
Marital/love	.14	.56	.0000	***
Family/Children	.20	.45	.01	**
Occupation	.20	.16	.54	NS
Ability/Education	.09	.08	.84	NS

** $P < .01$, *** $P < .001$.

MANOVA showed an overall significant difference between married and divorced women's current goals, $F(9,109) = 4.6, p \leq .0000$. This finding is in agreement with Hypothesis 1, that married and divorced women's goals would significantly differ from each other. Table 10 represents the frequencies of current goals that are held by the respondents. According to Hypothesis 6, divorced women should have significantly more personal goals as opposed to married women. The results support this hypothesis. ANOVA showed that divorced women hold significantly more personal goals as opposed to married women, $F(1, 117) = 16.7, p \leq .0001$. It was also predicted that divorced women would be more concerned with maintaining their sense of individuality as opposed to married women (Hypothesis

3). In agreement with this hypothesis, the results showed that divorced women hold significantly more goals related to maintenance of their sense of individuality as opposed to married women, $F(1,117) = 4.8, p \leq .03$. Some of the goals mentioned in these two categories are: "making a good life for 'myself'"; "meeting my needs without sacrifice of others"; "being in touch with myself"; "establishing myself as a person"; "to become a better me"; "to be an independent mother"; and "to be independent and self-sufficient."

Divorced women also hold significantly more education related goals than married women, $F(1,117) = 4.2, p \leq .04$. Some examples are: "Going back to school"; "finishing my degree in nursing"; and "taking evening courses". Married women mention marital/love related current goals more than divorced women, but this difference only approached significance, $F(1,117) = 3.2, p \leq .08$.

Within-group post hoc comparisons were made between the most frequent goal and the second and third most frequent goal mentioned by participants. Each comparison was made using the alpha level of .025 to control for the family-wise error rate. Results showed that for divorced women, there are no significant differences between the mention of personal and family related goals, $t(74) = 1.7, p > .05$. However, there is a significant difference between family and the third most frequent goal - occupational goals, $t(74) = 3.1, p \leq .003$. Therefore, personal and family/children related goals are held significantly more than the other four categories of current goals. For the married respondents, the most frequently mentioned current goal was the family/children related goals. T-test showed a significant difference between the family/children and marital/love goals, $t(43) = 3.2, p \leq .003$.

Table 10

Cell Means and P Values of Frequency of Current Goals

<u>Category</u>	<u>Married</u> (N=44)	<u>Divorced</u> (N=75)	<u>(P) Diff. betw Means</u>
Personal	.14	.59	.0001 ***
Individuality	.02	.15	.03 *
Marital/Love	.23	.11	.08 NS
Family/Children	.46	.41	.68 NS
Occupation	.14	.24	.19 NS
Ability/Education	.04	.17	.04 *

* $P < .05$, *** $P < .001$.

Divorced women also perceive their goals to have changed significantly more than their married counterparts. On a 7-point Likert scale (1 being not at all changed, to 7 changed significantly), divorced women with a mean value of 5.7, perceived a greater change than married women with a mean value of 4.6, $F(1, 115) = 9.3$, $p \leq .003$.

Life Satisfaction

The LS score ranges from 1 to 20 - 1 being the extreme end of dissatisfaction with life, and 20 being the extreme score of complete satisfaction. The mean score for the married respondents is 12.7 which is significantly greater than divorced women's mean of 10.7, $F(1, 117) = 6.1$, $p \leq .01$. Hence married women as a group seem to be more satisfied and happier than their divorced counterparts.

Life-Satisfaction and Possible Selves

Respondents were put into four groups based on their marital status and LS scores. Based on a median split of the LS index scores (median = 11.4), four groups were created: low functioning married, high functioning married, low functioning divorced, and high functioning divorced. Only interaction effects (marital status x LS) and life-satisfaction main effects will be reported here, since marital status main effects were discussed previously (see section on Possible Selves).

It was predicted that high and low functioning divorcees would generate different categories of possible selves (see Hypotheses 2, 3, and 6). For the hoped-for possible selves, MANOVA showed a non-significant life satisfaction effect, $F(14,102) = 1.0, p > .05$, and interaction effects, $F(14,102) = .79, p > .05$. Therefore, low and high satisfied women do not differ from each other in terms of the hoped-for selves they generate. At the same time, there appears to be no significant difference between particular groups of women. For example, low and high functioning divorcees tend to generate the same types of hoped-for selves. Table 11 represents the cell means of the relative frequency of hoped-for possible selves.

Table 11

Cell Means of Relative Frequency of Hoped-for Possible Selves

<u>Category</u>	<u>Married</u>		<u>Divorced</u>	
	<u>Lo LS</u> (N=16)	<u>Hi LS</u> (N=28)	<u>Lo LS</u> (N=40)	<u>Hi LS</u> (N=35)
Personal	.11	.06	.10	.08
Individuality	.02	.01	.04	.03
Marital/Love	.07	.06	.10	.07
Family/Children	.26	.23	.13	.12
Occupation	.16	.07	.14	.16
Ability/Education	.07	.06	.06	.06

MANOVA showed an overall significant life satisfaction effect for the feared possible selves generated by the respondents, $F(13,100) = 1.9, p < .03$. Therefore, low and high satisfied women tend to generate different types of feared possible selves. However, there was an overall non-significant interaction effect, $F(13,100) = .82, p > .05$, meaning that there are no significant differences between low and high functioning divorcees versus married women in terms of the feared selves they generate (contrary to Hypothesis 3, and 6).

Table 12 represents cell means for relative frequency of feared possible selves. ANOVA showed that there is a main life satisfaction effect for education/ability feared possible selves. Women with low life satisfaction (regardless of their marital status) have significantly more feared possible selves in the realm of education and ability than women with high LS, $F(1,112) = 6.7, p \leq .01$. For example, some of the feared selves are: "Never finishing my degree"; and "Not being able to do my paintings".

Table 12

Cell Means of Relative Frequency of Feared Possible Selves

<u>Category</u>	<u>Married</u>		<u>Divorced</u>	
	<u>Lo LS</u> (N = 16)	<u>Hi LS</u> (N = 28)	<u>Lo LS</u> (N = 40)	<u>Hi LS</u> (N = 35)
Personal	.13	.10	.22	.14
Individuality	.00	.00	.03	.02
Marital/Love	.04	.07	.06	.03
Family/Children	.15	.15	.13	.14
Occupation	.02	.04	.04	.03
Ability/Education	.03	.00	.03	.00

Means of the likelihood ratings are represented in table 13. Respondents were asked how likely their two most important possible selves are to become reality. The ratings for each possible selves were combined to create a single rating on a 14- point Likert scale (1 being not at all likely, to 14 extremely likely). There is a main (LS) effect for the likelihood rating of hoped-for selves. Women with high LS tend to give significantly more higher ratings for the hoped-for selves than women with low LS, $F(1, 115) = 8.0, p \leq .006$. High functioning women perceive their hoped-for selves as more likely to become reality as opposed to low functioning women. It was predicted that high functioning divorcees will rate their hoped-for selves to come true more than low functioning divorcees (Hypothesis 8). The results showed that low functioning divorced women tend to be the group that are the least hopeful about their hoped-for selves, however this interaction effect

only approached significance, $F(1,115) = 3.1, p \leq .08$. There were no significant differences between the groups in terms of ratings for the feared possible selves.

Table 13

Cell Means of Likelihood Ratings of Hoped-for and Feared Possible Selves

	<u>Married</u>		<u>Divorced</u>	
	<u>Lo LS</u>	<u>Hi LS</u>	<u>Lo LS</u>	<u>Hi LS</u>
<u>Possible Selves</u>	<u>(N=16)</u>	<u>(N=28)</u>	<u>(N=40)</u>	<u>(N=35)</u>
Hoped-for	11.0	11.5	9.5	11.5
Feared	7.2	6.8	7.3	6.7

The capability ratings - how capable the respondents feel in accomplishing or avoiding the two most important hoped-for and feared possible selves - were also made on 7-point Likert scales. The ratings were combined to create a single rating on a 14-point Likert scale for each hoped-for and feared selves. Table 14 shows the results for the capability ratings. The results showed a main life satisfaction effect, $F(1, 115) = 9.0, p \leq .003$, for the capability ratings of hoped-for selves. Women with high LS tend to feel significantly more capable of accomplishing their most important hoped-for selves than women with low LS. The results also showed an interaction effect for the capability ratings of hoped-for selves, $F(1, 115) = 3.9, p \leq .05$. Divorced high LS women feel the most capable of any group in accomplishing their hoped-for selves, $F(1,115) = 7.8, p \leq .006$. Divorced women with low LS feel the least capable of all the other groups, however this only approached significance, $F(1,115) = 2.8, p \leq .10$.

Table 14

Cell Means of Capability Ratings for Hoped-for and Feared Possible Selves

	<u>Married</u>		<u>Divorced</u>	
	<u>Lo LS</u>	<u>Hi LS</u>	<u>Lo LS</u>	<u>Hi LS</u>
<u>Possible Selves</u>	<u>(N=16)</u>	<u>(N=28)</u>	<u>(N=40)</u>	<u>(N=35)</u>
Hoped-for	11.1	11.6	10.0	12.2
Feared	8.7	8.5	9.3	10.3

It was predicted that high functioning divorcees would have fewer feared selves than low functioning divorcees, but they would have more feared selves than their married counterparts (Hypothesis 4). It was also predicted that low functioning divorcees would have fewer possible selves in general (Hypothesis 5). Contrary to our hypotheses, there were no significant differences between the four groups in terms of the number of hoped-for and feared selves that were generated (see table 15).

A 2 x 2 ANOVA was also done on variables such as age, number of years the respondents were married and divorced, and number of children (see table 15). There were no significant difference between the four groups in terms of the variables just mentioned.

Table 15

Cell Means of Number of Hoped-for and Feared Possible Selves, Age, Yrs Married, Yrs Divorced, and Number of children

<u>Variables</u>	<u>Married</u>		<u>Divorced</u>		
	<u>Lo LS</u> (N=16)	<u>Hi LS</u> (N=28)	<u>Lo LS</u> (N=40)	<u>Hi LS</u> (N=35)	
Num. of Hoped-for Selves	7.6	8.0	7.5	7.2	NS
Num. of Feared Selves	4.4	4.6	5.5	4.1	NS
Age	36.3	35.6	35.9	38.9	NS
Yrs Married	11.5	10.1	7.6	9.0	NS
Yrs Divorced			5.2	7.1	NS
Number of Children	1.8	1.9	2.0	2.1	NS

Life Satisfaction and Goals

Respondents were put into four groups (low LS married, high LS married, low LS divorced, and high LS divorced). Only main LS and interaction effects are reported, since main marital status effect was reported in the previous section (see section on Goals).

MANOVA conducted on the respondents' past goals showed an overall non-significant LS main effect, $F(8,108) = 1.1, p > .05$, and a non-significant interaction effect, $F(8,108) = .73, p > .05$. Therefore, low and high functioning women (regardless of their marital status) did not generate different types of past goals, and in specific, low and high functioning divorcees did not differ from each other in terms of the past goals they generated. The frequency of past goals held by each group is represented in Table 16.

Table 16

Cell Means of Frequency of Past Goals

<u>Category</u>	<u>Married</u>		<u>Divorced</u>	
	<u>Lo LS</u> (N=16)	<u>Hi LS</u> (N=28)	<u>Lo LS</u> (N=40)	<u>Hi LS</u> (N=35)
Personal	.12	.14	.10	.11
Marital/Love	.25	.07	.60	.51
Family/Children	.19	.21	.48	.43
Occupation	.12	.25	.20	.11
Ability/Education	.06	.11	.08	.09

MANOVA conducted on the current goals did not show a significant LS main effect, $F(9,107) = .49, p > .05$, and interaction effect, $F(9,107) = .25, p > .05$. Again, there appears to be no significant difference between low and high functioning women, and in specific, there are no significant difference between high and low functioning divorcees' current goals. Table 17 represents cell means for current goals held by the respondents.

Table 17

Cell Means of Frequency of Current Goals

<u>Category</u>	<u>Married</u>		<u>Divorced</u>	
	<u>Lo LS</u> (N=16)	<u>Hi LS</u> (N=28)	<u>Lo LS</u> (N=40)	<u>Hi LS</u> (N=35)
Personal	.12	.14	.60	.57
Individuality	.06	.00	.18	.11
Marital/Love	.18	.25	.15	.06
Family/Children	.44	.46	.38	.46
Occupation	.12	.14	.22	.26
Ability/Education	.06	.04	.20	.14

In terms of the perception of goal changes, the results showed an interaction effect, $F(1,113) = 6.9, p \leq .01$. High functioning divorcees perceived the most amount of change, $F(1, 113) = 8.9, p \leq .004$; and high functioning married women perceived the least amount of change, $F(1,113) = 3.8, p \leq .05$.

Distressful Events

Respondents were asked to indicate the most distressful event that they have experienced so far in their lives. Table 18 shows the frequencies of events that were mentioned by married and divorced women. "Death of loved ones" was mentioned by married women as the most distressful event by, 18.2%. Another 18.2% mentioned "illness of others", and 13.6% mentioned "marital problems" as being the most distressful events they have experienced. Divorced women mentioned "Divorce" more frequently than other events - 44% of divorced women mentioned

divorce as being the most distressful event that they have experienced; 14.7% mentioned "death of loved-ones"; and 10.7% mentioned "messy divorce/custody issues".

Table 18

Frequency Counts of Most Distressful Events

Distressful <u>Events</u>	Married (N=43)	Divorced (N=75)
Being a single Parent	0	5
Divorce/breakup with boyfriend	4	33
Marital problems/extramarital affair	6	2
Messy divorce process/custody issues	0	8
Abusive love relationship/family violence	0	5
Childhood abuse	0	5
parents' divorce	1	1
Illness/self	2	5
Illness/other	8	2
Death of family member	8	11
Accidents	1	1
Financial problems	1	5
Adjustment to new environments	4	0
Business failure/problems at work	3	1
Childbirth/pregnancy	3	1
Problems with children/problem child	2	3
Legal problems	0	1

Respondents were asked to rate the stressfulness of the most distressing event that they have experienced so far, as well as the stressfulness of divorce. The ratings were made on a 7-point Likert scale (1 being not at all stressful, and 7 extremely stressful). As can be seen from Table 19, divorced women rated the most distressful event they have experienced as being more stressful than married women, $F(1, 114) = 9.1, p \leq .003$. On the other hand, married women rated divorce as being significantly more stressful than divorced women, $F(1, 116) = 5.9, p \leq .02$.

Table 19

Cell Means and P Values of Stressfulness Ratings

<u>Category</u>	<u>Married</u> (N=44)	<u>Divorced</u> (N=75)	<u>(P)</u>	
Most Distressful Event	6.5	6.8	.003	**
Divorce	6.5	5.9	.02	*

* $P \leq .05$, ** $P \leq .01$

Coping Strategies

Respondents were given a list of 17 coping strategies and were asked to indicate the coping strategies which they utilize. Table 20 lists the frequencies of each coping strategy that was used by married and divorced women. Not surprisingly, frequency tables F-tests showed that divorced women use significantly more "dating" coping strategies than married women, $F(1, 107) = 18.4, p \leq .0000$.

Divorced women also use the "establishing a new life" coping strategy significantly more often than married women, $F(1, 112) = 28.1, p \leq .0000$.

The most frequent coping strategy used by married women was to "understand what went wrong". The same strategy was also used most frequently by divorced women. However, using McNemar test showed no significant differences between "understand what went wrong" and other coping strategies. For example, a test between a frequently used strategy "become more independent" and the least mentioned strategy "dating" yielded a non-significant result, $X^2(1, N = 74) = 2.1, p > .05$. It appears that both married and divorced women use a variety of coping strategies in order to cope with stress.

Table 20

Frequency Counts of Coping Strategies Used by Married and Divorced Women

<u>Coping Strategy</u>	<u>Married</u> (N=44)	<u>Divorced</u> (N=75)	<u>Sig</u>
Get angry	33	66	NS
Going to school	25	52	NS
Learning about self	34	68	NS
Crying	37	66	NS
Doing things w/children	40	67	NS
Social activities	32	56	NS
Learning new skills	36	62	NS
Positive attitude about life	40	67	NS
Dating	4	38	***
Keeping house organized	39	69	NS
Developing new friendships	34	65	NS
Becoming more indep.	38	70	NS

Understand wt was wrong	43	72	NS
Blowing up	24	40	NS
Outside employment	30	52	NS
Establishing a new life	19	67	***
Taking care of home	42	71	NS

*** $P \leq .001$

It was predicted that there will be a positive correlation between life-satisfaction and adaptive coping behaviors such as being involved in social activities, expressing feelings, and establishing autonomy (Hypothesis 9). Pearson correlations were done between life satisfaction and coping strategies. Alpha level of .002 was used for each correlation in order to control for the family-wise error rate. The results were non-significant; there were no significant correlation between life satisfaction and any of the coping strategies for divorced women. Contrary to Hypothesis 9, there was not a positive correlation between LS and involvement in social activities, expressing feelings and establishing autonomy.

In terms of the perceived *helpfulness* of coping strategies, MANOVA showed that married and divorced women differ in terms of the perceived helpfulness of the coping strategies, $F(17,39) = 2.0, p \leq .03$. Table 21 represents the results. Each rating was done on a 7-point Likert scale (1 being not at all helpful to 7 being extremely helpful). ANOVA showed that divorced women perceive "dating" to be significantly more helpful than married women, $F(1, 73) = 5.2, p \leq .03$. Divorced women also perceive "becoming more independent" and "establishing a new life" as being significantly more helpful as opposed to married women, $F(1, 107) = 7.6, p \leq .007$, and $F(1, 91) = 5.8, p \leq .02$, respectively. On the other hand, married women view "understanding what went wrong" to be significantly more helpful than their divorced counterparts, $F(1, 113) = 9.6, p \leq .002$.

From Table 21 it can be seen that married women perceive taking a "positive attitude about life" as being the most helpful strategy ($\underline{M}=6.1$) and "doing things with the children" as being the second most helpful strategy ($\underline{M}=5.8$). However a t-test showed no significant difference between helpfulness rating of these two strategies for married women, $t(36) = 1.1, p > .05$. However a t-test between "learning new skills" ($\underline{M}=5.3$) and "positive attitude about life" ($\underline{M}=6.1$) showed a significant difference, $t(35) = 3.1, p \leq .004$.

Divorced women view "taking a positive attitude about life" ($\underline{M}=6.1$), and "becoming more independent" ($\underline{M}=6.0$) to be the most helpful of all strategies. A t-test between the helpfulness ratings of "taking a positive attitude about life" ($\underline{M}=6.1$) and the third most helpful strategy "learning new skills" ($\underline{M}=5.7$) showed a significant difference, $t(65) = 2.3, p \leq .02$. Therefore, divorced women tend to perceive coping strategies such as "becoming independent" and "taking a positive attitude toward life" as being significantly more helpful in dealing with stressful events as opposed to other coping strategies.

Table 21

Cell Means and P Values of Helpfulness Ratings of Coping Strategies

<u>Coping Strategy</u>	<u>Married</u> (N=44)	<u>Divorced</u> (N=75)	<u>(P)</u>	
Get angry	3.3	3.9	.13	NS
Going to school	4.6	5.1	.34	NS
Learning about self	5.8	5.7	.76	NS
Crying	4.4	4.6	.57	NS
Doing things w/children	5.9	5.5	.26	NS
Social activities	5.3	4.8	.17	NS
Learning new skills	5.3	5.7	.20	NS
Positive attitude about life	6.1	6.1	.84	NS
Dating	2.0	3.3	.02	*
Keeping house organized	5.4	5.7	.47	NS
Developing new friendships	5.2	4.9	.36	NS
Becoming more indep.	5.3	6.0	.007	**
Understand wt was wrong	5.8	4.6	.002	*
Blowing up	2.1	2.4	.46	NS
Outside employment	4.9	4.9	.96	NS
Establishing a new life	4.6	5.7	.02	*
Taking care of home	5.0	5.4	.29	NS

* $P < .05$, ** $P < .01$.

For divorced women, there appeared to be a positive correlation between life satisfaction and the perceived helpfulness of a number of coping strategies:

"learning about self", $r(73) = .36, p \leq .002$; "doing things with children", $r(73) = .36, p \leq .002$; "social activities", $r(73) = .33, p \leq .002$; and "taking a positive attitude towards life", $r(73) = .34, p \leq .002$. Alpha level for each test of significance was set at .002 to control for the family-wise error rate. In agreement with Hypothesis 9, there appears to be a positive correlation between life satisfaction and the perceived helpfulness of "involvement in social activities" coping strategy. However, expressing feelings coping strategies (such as "getting angry", "crying", and "blowing up"), as well as establishing autonomy coping behaviors (such as "becoming more independent", "outside employment", and "establishing a new life") did not positively correlate with life satisfaction (Hypothesis 9).

Respondents were again put into groups based on their marital status and life satisfaction scores. A two-way analysis of variance was conducted on the helpfulness ratings (see Table 22). Only LS and interaction effects are reported, since marital status main effects were discussed previously.

There is a main (LS) effect for the rating of "doing more things with the children" coping strategy. Women with high LS tend to find this coping strategy significantly more helpful than women with low LS, $F(1, 105) = 6.0, p \leq .02$. There is an interaction effect (M status x LS) for the rating of "social activity" coping strategy, $F(1, 98) = 5.4, p \leq .02$. Divorced women with low LS tend to give significantly lower ratings to the effectiveness of this coping strategy than other groups, $F(1, 98) = 12.9, p \leq .0005$.

Table 22

Cell Means of Helpfulness Ratings of Coping Strategies

<u>Coping Strategy</u>	<u>Married</u>		<u>Divorced</u>	
	Lo LS (N=16)	Hi LS (N=28)	Lo LS (N=40)	Hi LS (N=35)
Doing things wt child	5.5	6.0	5.1	6.0
Social activities	5.6	5.2	4.2	5.6

Coping with Divorce

Divorced respondents were asked to indicate any coping strategies that they have used in order to deal with the divorce process. Table 23 lists these coping strategies with their frequency of mention. The three most frequent coping strategies used by divorced women are "support from friends" (mentioned 18.5% of the times), "learning about the self" (mentioned 14% of the times), and "outside employment" (mentioned 11.8% of the times). As it can be seen from the long list of coping strategies in Table 23, divorced women use a variety of strategies in order to cope with the process of divorce.

Table 23

Frequency Counts of Coping Strategies Used by Divorced Women to Deal With Divorce

<u>Coping Strategies</u>	<u>Frequency (N=75)</u>
Support from friends	22
Learning about self	17
Outside employment	14
Developing new friendships	13
Establishing a new life	13
Support from family	12
Positive attitude about life	12
Counselling/support groups	11
Going to school	10
Doing things w/children	9
Becoming more indep.	9
Raising my Children	8
Crying	8
Not fighting the emotions	6
Learning new skills	6
Keeping busy/hobbies	6
Acceptance of situation/moving on	5
Social activities	5
Taking care of legal aspects	5
Being hopeful about future	5
Taking control/developing sense of control	4
Dating	4

Understand wt was wrong	4
Taking care of home	4
Physical activities/exercise	4
Taking one day at a time	3
Maintain relationships with ex-husband	3
Talking about the divorce	3
Loving yourself	3
Keeping house organized	2
keeping healthy	2
Substance abuse	2
Avoid relationships	2
break all ties with ex-husband	2
Taking time off from duties and work	2
Writing in a journal	2
Trying to stay numb- not feel anything	2
Get angry	1
Not being alone	1
Religion/praying	1
Self-help books	1
Use resources available	1
Good financial situation	1
Not talking about the divorce	1
Keeping to myself - avoiding the world	1

CHAPTER IV

DISCUSSION

The results indicate that there are some significant differences between married and divorced women in terms of: their hopes for the future, and the behaviors which are guided by such hopes; their goals (past goals as well as current goals); their level of life-satisfaction; what they are struggling with and find distressful; and finally what coping strategies they use in order to overcome distressful events.

Review of the Data

Possible Selves

It was predicted that divorced and married women's hoped-for and feared possible selves will be significantly different from each other (Hypothesis 1). The result showed that there is an overall significant difference between married and divorced women's hoped-for selves. However, the results did not show an overall significant difference between the groups in terms of their feared possible selves. In other words, married women's hopes for the future significantly differ from their divorced counterparts, but the two groups seem to share the same types of fears.

The result showed that women depending on their level of life satisfaction generate different types of feared possible selves. For example, women with low life satisfaction tend to generate significantly more feared possible selves in the realm of ability and education as opposed to women with high life satisfaction. In other words, women with low life satisfaction have a greater fear of failure in education and ability than women with high life satisfaction. It can be argued that the extent of peoples' fears may be a function of life satisfaction, or the elements that may

correlate with life satisfaction - such as self-esteem, self-efficacy, and locus of control. Therefore, people's fears and hopes for the future may be affected by different processes.

In terms of hopes for the future, the results showed that married women mention significantly more *family/children* hoped-for selves as opposed to divorced women. When the respondents were asked about their two most important hoped-for selves, married women once again mentioned family/children hoped-for selves to be significantly more important to them than their divorced counterparts. In fact married women mention family/children related hoped-for selves significantly more than any other categories of hoped-for selves. Therefore, it appears that for married women, their family lives constitute a major portion of their sense of self, and their children are the focal point of their lives. This result is also in accordance with Erikson's notion of *generativity* - in the middle stage of the life-cycle, the individual desires to care for and to give to the next generation, the desire to leave something behind of oneself, and the wish to make a difference.

One can speculate as to why divorced women do not have as many family/child related hoped-for selves as married women. Divorced women go through a period of transition (or moratorium) where they try to find themselves and expand the boundaries of self to include other areas such as occupation, education, and self-growth. Although family and children are still very important for them, unlike married women they have other obligations and other roles that seem to be as, if not more, important.

The wage-earner role is indeed one role that consumes divorced women. When the respondents were asked to state their most important hoped-for selves, divorced women mentioned occupational selves as being significantly more important than married women. However, divorced women are not just concerned with occupation. They generated as many marital/love related hoped-for selves as

their married counterparts. It appears that divorced women do care about having relationships or possibly getting married again, but this may not be as important as other aspects of their lives. Divorced women also generate as many family/child related hoped-for selves as they do generate occupational selves. Therefore, divorced women are involved in parenting role - family/children hoped-for possible selves are among the categories of hoped-for selves that are mentioned frequently. Hence, they do care for their children, and they do desire to have romantic relationships, but their priority for the future seems to be in the realm of work.

In search of a new found sense of identity and autonomy, divorced women were expected to generate more personal and individuality related selves as opposed to married women (Hypothesis 3 and 6). Since divorced women did generate significantly more personal and individuality related goals than married women (see below, for the discussion on goals), it may be the nature of the questioning of possible selves that did not allow the participants to state more personal and individuality related selves. This point will be elaborated further in the discussion on goals.

In terms of behaviors that were motivated by their most important hoped-for possible selves, the results showed that once again married women engage in significantly more marital/love and family/child related behaviors than divorced women. Therefore, it appears that married women's sense of identity is closely tied to their roles as mothers and wives, more so than divorced women.

In order to investigate the relationship between life satisfaction and possible selves, respondents were put into high and low functioning groups based on their life-satisfaction scores. It was predicted that low and high functioning divorcees would generate different categories of hoped-for and feared possible selves (Hypothesis 3 and 6). It was also predicted that high functioning divorcees will have possible selves similar to married women (Hypothesis 2). However, the results did

not supports these hypotheses. High and low functioning divorcees did not generate different types of hoped-for and feared possible selves, and high functioning divorcees did not generate possible selves similar to married women. In specific, low functioning divorcees did not generate significantly more personal and self-focused possible selves as opposed to high functioning divorcees (Hypothesis 6); high functioning divorcees did not generate significantly more possible selves in the realm of work, parenting, intimate relationships and achieving autonomy (Hypothesis 3).

One possible explanation would be that level of life-satisfaction (or the way this study determined the participants' level of satisfaction) is not the appropriate means by which low and high functioning divorcees can be distinguished. However, this measure of life satisfaction (LS index) has been used by other researchers and has shown differences between high and low satisfied respondents in terms of the possible selves they generate (Cross & Markus, 1991). Furthermore, life satisfaction has been seen as an important component in determining adaptive coping (Berman & Turk, 1981; Clarke-Stewart & Bailey, 1989; Katz, 1991). Therefore, using the life satisfaction index to distinguish between high and low functioning divorcees may not be unjustified.

Another possible explanation would be that there may, in fact, be no differences between high and low functioning divorcees in terms of the types of possible selves that they generate. That is, low and high functioning divorcees both go through the process of restructuring the identity system, and as a result they generate the same types of possible selves. Therefore, married and divorced women may differ in various aspects of their sense of identity regardless of how well they are coping and functioning. Differences may exist between high and low functioning divorcees in the "interpretation" of possible selves, rather than the nature of possible selves they generate. "Likelihood", "capability", and "perception of change" ratings

are examples of such interpretations. In fact the results have shown that high functioning divorced women felt the most capable of any group in accomplishing their hoped-for selves. Low functioning divorced women felt the least capable of any group in accomplishing their most important hoped-for selves, however this only approached significance. High functioning divorced women also differed from low functioning divorced women in terms of their perception of goal changes (see section on goals). Hence, high and low functioning divorcees seem to be different in the interpretation of their possible selves, rather than the nature of such selves.

There were no specific hypotheses made on the relationship between the capability rating - how capable the respondents felt in accomplishing hoped-for and avoiding feared possible selves - and life satisfaction. However, the same hypotheses that were made about the likelihood ratings can apply to the capability ratings. Therefore, according to Hypothesis 8, high functioning divorcees would feel more capable in accomplishing their hoped-for selves than low-functioning divorcees. As it was discussed previously, and in agreement with Hypothesis 8, high functioning divorcees felt quite strong and capable in accomplishing their goals. One may speculate that once divorced women effectively deal with the process of divorce, they may in fact become stronger persons because of it.

However, there were no significant differences for the likelihood ratings of possible selves among high and low functioning divorcees. The results showed that low functioning divorced women tend to be the group that is the least hopeful about its hoped-for selves becoming reality, however this interaction effect only approached significance. Contrary to Hypothesis 7 and 8, married women did not expect their hoped-for selves to come true any more than divorced women did; or high functioning divorcees did not expect their hoped-for selves to come true significantly more often than low functioning divorcees. The results showed that highly satisfied women (regardless of their marital status) perceived their hoped-for

selves as more likely to become reality than low functioning women. It appears that their level of optimism depends on their level of life satisfaction rather than their marital status.

High and low functioning divorcees did not differ in their likelihood ratings but they did give different results for the capability ratings. One possible explanation is that the perceived likelihood of an event happening has a chance factor attached to it, while one's capability in achieving a certain goal is hardly a matter of chance. By chance or wishful thinking alone one might expect to reach a desired goal or state. However, when one is asked about her capability in accomplishing or avoiding possible selves, there is no longer a chance factor present, and the person has to rely only on her own resources. Research has also shown that adjustment to divorce is followed by a gain and increase in self-efficacy - the extent to which one feels capable in producing a desired result (Dasteel, 1982). Therefore, low and high functioning divorcees may in fact use the same chance factor in their likelihood ratings. On the other hand, high functioning divorced women may see themselves as being more capable of achieving their desired goals, as opposed to low functioning divorcees, who by their group definition are not "doing so well", and they do not feel as capable in achieving their goals.

Contrary to Hypothesis 5, low functioning divorcees did not have fewer possible selves than other groups. The results showed that the four groups did not differ in terms of the number of hoped-for and feared selves that they generated.

Goals

Respondents were asked to indicate the goals they had held before they experienced distressful events (past goals), and later to indicate the goals they hold now (current goals). Even though "possible selves" may serve as goals and guidelines for future behaviors (Markus & Nurius, 1986), it was believed that by

taking a more direct approach and inquiring about the participants' goals, it would be possible to examine the very aspects of self that have transformed. The wording of the question itself suggests that people reset their goals in order to deal with distressful events (see Appendix F). Hence, by asking the participants to point out their past and current goals, the respondents were expected to indicate the very aspects of the self that they perceive to have changed and altered. Some of the differences between the results obtained from possible selves and goals may be due to the directness of the goal measure. It can be argued that the goal measure is a more sensitive measure for detecting change and transitions, since it reflects only the aspects of the self that have changed and altered.

No specific hypotheses were developed regarding the types of goals that would be generated by the divorced and the married. However, since both possible selves and goals tend to measure pretty much the same thing, it appears to be appropriate to use the same hypotheses that were held regarding possible selves. The results showed that divorced women's past goals reflected their desire to have or maintain marital/love relationships, significantly more so than married women's past goals. Divorced women also perceived to have had significantly more family/child related goals in the past, than married women. T-tests also showed that the two most frequent past goals mentioned by the divorced are marital/love and family/child related goals. In other words, divorced women's sense of self (in the past) were closely tied to their roles as parents and wives, more so than married women.

Married women's past goals were in variety of areas such as family/children, occupation, personal and marital/love. The results showed no significant differences between the frequency of mention of these goals for the married women. Therefore, married women, unlike divorcees, identified with many roles, and did not see themselves as being merely wives and mothers.

What was surprising within the present finding is that divorced women's past goals did differ from those of married women. It was assumed that divorced and married women should have the same past goals. Both groups were married (in the past), and they do not differ significantly in age, level of education, and work experience. However, the results showed that divorced women's past goals reflected their desire to be wives and mothers more than married women's past goals. One explanation would be that divorced and married women were in fact never quite like each other in the past. That is, a woman whose sole goals are to be wife and mother is more likely to get a divorce than a woman who has such other goals as occupational and personal. Perhaps these women become disillusioned with the roles that they had valued so highly, and as a result they have sought to change these very roles.

Another explanation would be that since divorced women's lives have drastically changed (from being married women to single mothers), they perceive an even greater change by conceiving that their lives once consisted of solely the elements that no longer exist. That is, being a wife and mother may not have been the sole elements that existed in these women's lives, but since their roles as the wife and mother have changed, they perceive an even greater change by pointing out that their goals were to be solely wives to their husband and mothers to their children. Reconstruction of memory or fabrication of the past are not new concepts, and many theorists have in fact looked at these reconstruction processes (Greenwald, 1980; Snyder & Uranowitz, 1978; McFarland, Ross, & DeCourville, 1989). Reconstruction of the past may consist in large part of characterizing the past as either different from or the same as the present. In the present study, the divorced women may have in fact perceived the past as being a lot more different than it really was.

In terms of current goals, divorced women hold significantly more personal and individuality related goals than married women. This finding is in accordance with Hypothesis 6 with the difference that divorced women as a group tend to generate more self-focused types of goals. Divorced women also hold significantly more education related goals than married women. T-tests showed that personal and family related goals are mentioned significantly more often than any other goal categories. Hence it appears that divorced women tend to be concerned with self-growth, developing their sense of independence and autonomy, educating oneself, and being mothers to their children. This finding is in accordance with Hypothesis 3, with the exception that divorced women in general (not just high functioning divorcees) tend to have goals in areas of self-growth, work (career), and parenting.

For married women, the two most frequently mentioned current goals were in the areas of family/children and marital/love. In fact, their goals reflected family and children significantly more so than marital/love related goals. Married women tend to be first mothers to their children and then wives to their husbands. This finding is in accordance with married women's nature of possible selves. It appears that for married women, families and children tend to be the focal aspects of their lives and sense of self.

The relation between life-satisfaction and past and current goals were also investigated to examine possible differences that may exist between low and high functioning divorced and married women. As in the case of possible selves, there were no significant differences between high and low functioning divorcees' past and current goals.

To summarize, divorced women's goals seem to have changed more than married women's. The result also showed that divorced women perceive a significantly greater goal change than married women, and in particular, high functioning divorcees perceive the greatest change, and high functioning married

women perceive the least amount of change. One possible explanation for this result is that happily divorced women have completed the restructuring process of their sense of identity, and feeling quite capable in adjusting to their new roles, perceive the most amount of change. At the same time, happily married women, being satisfied with "who they are" experience the least amount of change. As it has been suggested before, "establishing a new life" is one of the most important and most difficult steps of the divorced person in the road to recovery (Spanier & Casto, 1979).

Life Satisfaction

The results showed that married women tend to be significantly more satisfied with life than divorced women. Divorced women's lower life satisfaction may be attributed to many problems that these women must face in everyday life. Being a single parent, and being a sole provider of a family (in many cases) may have indeed contributed to their lower sense of life satisfaction. Being a single parent, going through a messy divorce with custody issues, and having financial problems are all problems that divorced mothers are faced with, and may in fact contribute to the mother's lower level of life satisfaction.

Distressful Events

The most frequently mentioned distressful events by married women are: "Death of loved ones" and "illness of loved ones". Divorced women mention "divorce", "death of loved ones", and "messy divorce" more frequently than other events. In terms of the perceived stressfulness of their most distressful event, divorced women gave significantly more higher ratings than married women. However, married women rated divorce to be significantly more stressful than divorced women. Perhaps, before the fact, things always seem scarier than they

really are. Divorced women who have already gone through the process of divorce do not find divorce as stressful as married women who could only imagine how stressful it might be.

Another explanation would be that women who find divorce less stressful tend to get divorced more than women who find divorce very stressful and so decide to remain married. However, only married women who thought they would remain with their spouses were included in this study to ensure that divorced women are being compared with happily married women. Therefore, it would be improbable that all married women would remain in a relationship due to the perceived degree of stressfulness of divorce. That means that many of the married women might truly experience marital "bliss", and perhaps these are the women who would stand to lose a great deal of what they value if they were to go through the process of divorce.

Coping strategies

The most frequent coping strategy that was used by married women was "to understand what went wrong". However, t-tests showed no significant differences between this strategy and others. Married women do use a variety of strategies in order to deal with distressful situations. In terms of helpfulness ratings, married women found the "to understand what went wrong" strategy to be significantly more helpful in dealing with distressful situations than divorced women. For the married, the two most helpful of all strategies seem to be coping strategies such as "taking a positive attitude towards life" and "doing things with the children".

Divorced women use significantly more "dating" and "establishing a new life" coping strategies than married women - which is hardly surprising. Divorced women used "to understand what went wrong" and "become more independent" strategies more frequently than other strategies. However, there were no significant

differences between these two strategies and other coping behaviors. In terms of the perceived helpfulness of these coping strategies, divorced women perceived "dating", "becoming more independent", and "establishing a new life" strategies as being significantly more helpful than married women. Divorced women also found strategies such as "taking a positive attitude towards life" and becoming more independent" more helpful than other coping strategies. Divorced women also indicated such strategies as "getting support from friends", "learning more about themselves" and "seeking outside employment" as helping them specifically to deal with the process of divorce.

It appears that divorced women, like married women, do use a variety of means in order to cope with the divorce process. The differences that have occurred between married and divorced women in terms of coping behaviors are due to the differences in the nature of the problems that are facing married and divorced women. Divorced women are faced with a variety of challenges that married women do not have to deal with. As was discussed in the introduction, divorced women have to restructure their sense of self, by establishing new lives, becoming autonomous individuals, and resuming their commitments in love and work (Fiske, 1980). Therefore, divorced women tend to find strategies such as becoming more independent, establishing a new life, and dating as being more effective than married women.

Relations between life-satisfaction and coping behavior were also investigated. Contrary to Hypothesis 9, there were no significant positive correlations between life satisfaction and adaptive coping behaviors such as expressing feelings, and establishing autonomy. However, there was a positive significant correlation between life satisfaction and the perceived helpfulness of involvement in social activities. In agreement with Hypothesis 9, low functioning divorced women tend to give significantly lower ratings to the effectiveness of

"involvement in social activities" than other groups. It can be argued that getting involved in social activities may be means by which divorced women can effectively deal with distressful events.

To summarize, it appears that married women tend to deal with distressful situations by trying to understand the reason and the nature of the problem at hand. Divorced women tend to cope with distressful events (such as divorce and other problems that are associated with divorce) by trying to establish a new life, becoming more independent, dating, taking a positive attitude about life, getting support from friends, seeking outside employment, and many other more strategies - all of which suggest means by which the person would be able to restructure one's life and sense of identity, in the road to recovery.

Theoretical Implications

The present findings do give support to Erikson's notion of identity as an evolving configuration of roles (Erikson, 1968). A successful organization of the identity (or the process of identity formation) entails the individual to reorganize and to redefine both abandoned and anticipated images of the self. This reorganization can be seen through reprioritization of roles. The reprioritization or the restructuring of roles in this study was inferred on the basis of group comparison. The reprioritization of roles was examined through the nature of possible selves and past and current goals that were generated by divorced and married women. The differences that emerged between married and divorced women, in terms of possible selves and goals, suggested the restructuring of the identity system after a major life transition. For example, married women were more involved than divorced women in parenting and marital roles. On the other hand, divorced women were more involved in the occupational role as opposed to married women. This is not to say that their roles as mothers have been minimized,

but that their roles have simply expanded to cover other areas in their lives, such as occupation, education, and most importantly self-growth. Hence, divorce is certainly not the beginning of the end, rather the experience of divorce maybe an opportunity for growth and change.

The present study also gives support to our basic thesis that divorced women would go through a period of self-absorption or self-regulation where the individuals are able to restructure their sense of identity, find new directions in life, and reprioritize goals for the future. The differences that did emerge between married and divorced women in terms of their past and current goals point out the fact that divorced women appear to be more self-focused. Divorced women also tend to be more concerned with self-growth and maintenance of their sense of independence. Therefore, as it was stated before, divorce may provide the opportunity for women to grow and become more autonomous and independent individuals.

The present findings also provided information about the nature of women's identity. As it was suggested by Josselson (1987), women's identity is relational. The present result clearly showed that married women's lives mostly consisted of their families, children, and marital relationships - in other words, their sense of self was tied to their significant relations in their lives. Hence, something like divorce, may in fact force a woman to set individual goals, to become independent, and become more aware of "who she is". Josselson also states that women who go through a divorce or a breakup would gain a sharper sense of who they are, as opposed to women who lead interdependent lives. This is not to suggest that divorced women are much happier than married ones, or that one must go through divorce in order to find oneself. However, if women are faced with divorce, and if they are able to adapt and deal with it effectively, it provides them with the opportunity for change, growth, and a second chance to start again.

The present study also demonstrated that possible selves can indeed be used as tools in order to examine the personality system at times of transition. Markus and Nurius (1986) had suggested that present self may be resistant to change, but possible selves that are less tied to social reality constraints may be very responsive to transitions. Moreover, possible selves also proved to be valuable in studying the identity system. By examining the possible selves that were generated by the respondents, it became very apparent that possible selves are combinations of the individual's hopes, fears, desires, goals, concerns, roles, duties, and efforts for the individual as well as for others close to the *self*. In a way, possible selves reflect more than the person's hopes and fear for the future; they represent an image of the person's life, their sense of self, and identity.

Limitations & Future Directions

In order to improve the present research it would be essential to point out some of its limitations, and to suggest some paths and directions for future research.

Firstly, divorced women were compared to married women on the assumption that these two groups of women are similar to each other with the exception of their marital status. Indeed, married and divorced women were similar in age, and they generally came from the same socio-economic background. However, there is always the possibility that women who seek divorce are different from women who decide to stay married. If there are such inherent differences between these two groups, then married women would not serve as an appropriate comparison group for the divorced. To avoid this possibility, one must conduct a longitudinal study where women are followed through their marriages and subsequent divorces. In that case, the women's possible selves before their divorce would be compared to their possible selves after their divorce. However, since this study was not a longitudinal one, its results should be looked at with caution. On

the other hand, perhaps future longitudinal research will give additional support to the present findings.

Second, in the present study the sole focus was on women, and the results cannot be generalized to divorced men. As many theorists have suggested, women's identity seem to be quite different from men's sense of identity (Erikson, 1965; Josselson, 1987). Hence, the pattern of role reprioritizing that may emerge for divorced men may be quite different than that of divorced women. It would be very interesting to examine the restructuring process of identity for divorced men, and to look at possible differences and similarities that may exists between divorced men and women.

Last, in this study the results showed no clear cut distinctions between high and low functioning divorcees. Life satisfaction index was used in order to put divorcees into these two categories. However, LS index may not have been a sensitive enough measure in order to distinguish between low and high functioning divorcees. Perhaps some sort of coping measure specially designed for divorced women in order to examine their coping behavior would be a more appropriate tool to utilize. Perhaps in future research a better measure can be used in order to look at possible differences that may exist between low and high functioning divorcees in terms of their possible selves and goals for the future. This may even have some clinical implications, in the sense that understanding the restructuring process of the high functioning divorcee's sense of identity may in fact assist the low functioning divorcees to reach a better state of being.

References

- Barko, J.J. (1991). Measurement and reliability: Statistical thinking considerations. Schizophrenia Bulletin, 17(3), 483-489.
- Baruch, R. (1967). The achievement motive in women: Implications for career development. Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 5, 260-267.
- Berman, W.H., & Turk, D.C. (1981). Adaptation to divorce: Problems and coping strategies. Journal of Marriage and the Family, Feb, 179-189.
- Bohannon, P. (1970). The six stations of divorce. In P. Bohannon (Ed), Divorce and after (pp. 29-55). New York: Doubleday & Company.
- Brown, B.B., & Foye, B.F. (1982). Divorce as a dual transition: Interpersonal loss and role restructuring. In V.L., Allen, & E., Van de Vliert (Eds.), Role transitions: Explorations and explanation, (pp. 315-329). New York: Plenum Press.
- Brown, E.M. (1976). Divorce counselling. In D.H. Olson (Ed), Treating relationships (pp.399-429). Lake Mills: Graphic Publishing.
- Cantor, N., Markus, H., Niedenthal, P., & Nurius, P. (1986). On motivation and the self-concept. In R.M. Sorrentino & E.T. Higgins (Eds.), Handbook of motivation and cognition. New York: Gilford.
- Carson, A.D., Madison, T., & Santrock, J.W. (1987). Relationships between possible selves and self-reported problems of divorced and intact family adolescents. Journal of Early Adolescence, 7(2), 191-204.
- Caspary, W. (1987). The concept of a core-self. In P. Young-Eisendrath & J. Hall (Eds), The book of the self. New York: New York Univ. Press.
- Chiriboga, D.A., & Thurnher, M. (1980). Marital lifestyles and adjustment to separation. Journal of Divorce, 3, 379-390.
- Clarke-Stewart, K.A., & Bailey, B.L. (1989). Adjusting to divorce: Why do men have it easier? Journal of Divorce, 13(2), 75-94.

- Coho, A.C. (1986). Patterns of meaning in self and social others during divorce. Dissertation Abstract International, 8613046.
- Cross, S., & Markus, H. (1991). Possible selves across the life span. Human Development, 34, 230-255.
- Dasteel, J.C. (1982). Stress reactions to marital dissolution as experienced by adults attending courses on divorce. Journal of Divorce, 5, 37-47.
- Erikson, E.H. (1959). Identity and the life cycle. New York: International Press.
- Erikson, E.H. (1965). Inner and outer space: Reflections on womanhood. In R.J. Lifton (Ed.), The woman in America. Boston: Houghton-Mifflin.
- Erikson, E.H. (1968). Youth, identity and crisis. New York: Norton.
- Fiske, M. (1980). Changing hierarchies of commitment in adulthood. In N.J., Smelser, & E.H. Erikson (Eds.), Themes of work and love in adulthood (pp.238-264). Cambridge: Harvard Univ. Press.
- Freud, S. (1925). Collected papers. London: Hogarth Press.
- Gilligan, C. (1979). In a different voice. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Gilligan, C. (1982). Adult development and women's development: Arrangements for a marriage. In J.Z. Giele (Ed.), Women in the middle years: Current knowledge and directions for research and policy. New York: Wiley.
- Gordon, H. (1968). Self conceptions: Configurations of content. In C. Gordon & K.J. Gergen (Eds.), The self in social interaction (pp. 115-136). New York:Wiley.
- Greenwald, A.G. (1980). The totalitarian ego: Fabrication and revision of personal history. American Psychologist, 35(7), 603-618.
- Hart, N. (1976). When marriage ends: A study in status passage. Cambridge: Univ.Printing House.
- Helson, R., & Moane, G. (1987). Personality change in women from college to midlife. Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 53(1), 176-186.

- Hooker, K. (1992). Possible selves and perceived health in older adults and college students. Journal of Gerontology, 47(2), P85-95.
- Hunt, M.M. (1966). The world of the formerly married. New York: McGraw-Hill.
- James, W. (1964). The self. In C. Gordon & K.J. Gergen (Eds.), The self in social interaction (pp. 41-49). New York: Wiley. (Original work published 1840)
- James, W. (1910). Psychology: The briefer course. New York: Holt.
- Josselson, R. (1973). psychodynamic aspects of identity formation in college women. Journal of Youth and Adolescence, 2, 3-52.
- Josselson, R. (1982). Personality structure and identity status in women as viewed through early memories. Journal of Youth and Adolescence, 11(4), 293-297.
- Josselson, R. (1987). Finding herself: Pathway to identity development in women. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publisher.
- Katz, R. (1991). Marital status and well-being: A comparison of widowed, divorced, and married mothers in Israel. Journal of Divorce, 203-218.
- Keith, P.M. (1986). Isolation of the unmarried in later life. Family Relations, 35, 389-395.
- McFarland, C., Ross, M., & DeCourville, N. (1989). Women's theories of menstruation and biases in recall of menstrual symptoms. Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 57(3), 522-531.
- Markus, H., & Nurius, P. (1986). Possible selves. American Psychologist, 41(9), 954-969.
- Markus, H., & Wurf, E. (1987). The dynamic self-concept: A social psychological perspective. Annual Review of Psychology, 38, 299-337.
- Mitchell, V.J. (1983). Syndromes of marital inadequacy and women's identity after divorce: An object relations approach to adults. Dissertation Abstract International, 8413516.
- Neugarten, B.L., & Havighurst, R.J. (1961). The measurement of life satisfaction.

Journal of Gerontology, 6, 134-143.

- O'Connell, A. N. (1976). The relationship between life style and identity synthesis and resynthesis in traditional, , and non-traditional women. Journal of Personality, 44, 675-688.
- Paranjpe, A.C. (1975). In search of identity. New York: Halsted Press/Wiley.
- Paranjpe, A.C. (1984). Theoretical psychology: The meeting of east and west. New York: Plenum Press.
- Porter, C., Markus, H., & Nurius, P.S. (1984). Conceptions of possibility among people in crisis. Unpublished manuscript, University of Michigan.
- Pyszczynski, T., & Greenberg, J. (1987). Self-regulatory preservation and the depressive self-focusing style: A self-awareness theory of the development and maintenance of depression. Psychological Bulletin, 102, 122-138.
- Reinke, B.J., Holmes, D.S., & Harris, R.L. (1985). The timing of changes in women's lives: The years 25 to 45. Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 48(5), 1353-1364.
- Schiedel, D.G., & Marcia, J.E. (1985). Ego intimacy, sex role orientation, and gender. Developmental Psychology, 21(1), 149-160.
- Snyder, M., & Uranowitz, S.W. (1978). Reconstructing the past: Some cognitive consequences of person perception. Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 36(9), 941-950.
- Spanier, G.B., & Casto, R.F. (1979). Adjustment to separation and divorce: An analysis of 50 case studies. Journal of Divorce, 2(3), 241-253.
- Stevens, D.P., & Truss, C.V. (1985). Stability and change in adult personality over 12 and 20 years. Developmental Psychology, 21(3), 568-584.
- Wood, J.V., Saltzberg, J.A., & Goldsamt, L.A. (1990). Does affect induce self-focus attention? Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 58(5), 899-908.

APPENDIX A**Poster Add**

ARE YOU A MARRIED WOMAN,

OR A SINGLE MOTHER,

WITH CHILDREN STILL LIVING AT HOME?

**IF THE ANSWER IS YES, AND YOU WOULD LIKE
TO FILL OUT A TAKE-HOME QUESTIONNAIRE (takes about 20 minutes)
PLEASE CALL ME, AND NOT ONLY HELP A GRADUATE STUDENT
FINISH HER THESIS, BUT ALSO HELP PSYCHOLOGICAL RESEARCH.**

Thank you.

**p.s. Questionnaire will be mailed to you with a stamped
envelope so you can mail it back.**

**call 228-1612
(can also leave messages)**

APPENDIX B**Newspaper Add****Divorced Single Mothers****Wanted**

Please help a graduate student finish her thesis & also help psychological research & our community by filling out a questionnaire (takes about 20 minutes). The questionnaire will be mailed to you with a stamped envelope so it can be mailed back to SFU (it's totally anonymous). Call Shab at 228-1612.

Married Women With Children**Wanted**

Please help a graduate student finish her thesis & also help psychological research & our community by filling out a questionnaire (takes about 20 minutes). The questionnaire will be mailed to you with a stamped envelope so it can be mailed back to SFU (it's totally anonymous). Call Shab at 228-1612.

APPENDIX C

Cover Form

SELF PERCEPTION STUDY

In this study we are interested to investigate how people in different life stages and different circumstances perceive themselves, their future, and their lives.

Your participation in this study is greatly appreciated. This questionnaire is anonymous, so please do NOT put your name or any other identification on this questionnaire and the envelope. The result of this study will also remain confidential, and it will be used for research purposes only. Once the study is done, this questionnaire will be discarded to reassure confidentiality.

When the questionnaire is answered, please mail it using the stamped envelope that has been provided for you. Please answer the following questions as honestly as you can. You do NOT have to answer any of the question that you feel is inappropriate, and you may withdraw your participation from this study at any time if you so desire.

Please start answering from the next page and follow the sequence of questions without changing the order.

Thank you for your time and assistance.

APPENDIX D
Possible Selves Questionnaire

POSSIBLE SELVES

Probably everyone thinks about the future to some extent. When doing so, we usually think about the kinds of experiences that are in store for us and the kinds of people we might possibly become. Sometimes we think about what we probably *will* be like, other times about the ways we are *afraid* we might turn out to be, and other times about what we *hope* or *wish* we could be like.

One way of talking about this is to talk about *possible selves* - selves we might possibly be. Some of these possible selves seem quite likely, for example, "being a grandparent", or "vacationing in Florida". Others may be only vague thoughts or dreams about the future, like "traveling in space", or "winning the lottery". In addition, we may have possible selves that are feared or dreaded, such as "having cancer", or "being a bag lady". Some of us may have a large number of possible selves in mind while others may have only a few.

TURN TO NEXT PAGE PLEASE

In the space below, please list all the **hoped-for** *possible selves* that you currently imagine for yourself. Come up with as many as you can.

TURN TO NEXT PAGE PLEASE

In addition to having hoped-for possible selves, we may have images of ourselves in the future that we fear or dread. Some of these feared possible selves may seem quite likely, like "being in poor health", while others may seem quite unlikely, like "being a bag lady". Some of us may have a large number of feared possible selves in mind, while others may have only a few.

In the space provided below, please list the **feared possible selves** that you currently imagine for yourself.

TURN TO NEXT PAGE PLEASE

Please go back to your list of **hoped-for** and **feared possible selves** and indicate the TWO hoped-for selves that are MOST important to you, and the TWO feared selves that are MOST important to you. Write the two most important selves in the space provided below.

HOPED-FOR SELVES

#1. _____

#2. _____

FEARED SELVES

#1. _____

#2. _____

The following questions concern the TWO MOST important hoped-for & feared possible selves that you mentioned above.

1. How **LIKELY** do you think these **hoped-for** possible selves would come true? Choose a number between 1 and 7.

Hoped-for self #1:

1
2
3
4
5
6
7

not at all likely
Extremely likely

Hoped-for self #2:

1
2
3
4
5
6
7

not at all likely
Extremely likely

2. How CAPABLE do you feel you are in accomplishing these hoped-for possible selves?

Hoped-for self #1:

1 2 3 4 5 6 7
Not at all capable Completely capable

Hoped-for self #2:

1 2 3 4 5 6 7
Not at all capable Completely capable

3. Think about the role these hoped-for possible selves have played in your life this month. We often do things or don't do things to make a possible self more likely to come true (for example, going on a diet to become the "thin" possible self). Please list anything you have done (or not done) in the last month to make these possible selves come true.

Hoped-for self #1: _____

Hoped-for self #2: _____

Following questions are about the TWO MOST important feared selves:

4. How LIKELY do you think these Feared possible selves would come true?

Feared self #1:

1 2 3 4 5 6 7
not at all likely Extremely likely

Feared self #2:

1 2 3 4 5 6 7
not at all likely Extremely likely

5. How CAPABLE do you feel you are in avoiding these feared possible selves?

Feared self #1:

1 2 3 4 5 6 7
 Not at all capable _____ Completely capable

Feared self #2:

1 2 3 4 5 6 7
 Not at all capable _____ Completely capable

6. Think about the role these feared possible selves have played in your life this month. We often do things or don't do things to avoid a feared possible self to come true (for example, quit smoking so the "cancer victim" possible self would not come true). Please list anything you have done (or not done) in the last month in order to avoid a feared possible self to come true.

Feared self #1: _____

Feared self #2: _____

APPENDIX E

LS Index

Here are some statements about life in general that people feel differently about. Would you read each statement on the list, and if you agree with it, put a check mark in the space under "AGREE". If you do not agree with a statement, put a check mark in the space under "DISAGREE". If you are not sure one way or the other, put a check mark in the space under "?".

	AGREE	DISAGREE	?
1. As I grow older, things seem better than I thought they would be.	_____	_____	_____
2. I have gotten more of the breaks in life than most of the people I know.	_____	_____	_____
3. This is the dreariest time of my life.	_____	_____	_____
4. I am just as happy as when I was younger.	_____	_____	_____
5. My life could be happier than it is now.	_____	_____	_____
6. These are the best years of my life.	_____	_____	_____
7. Most of the things I do are boring or monotonous.	_____	_____	_____
8. I expect some interesting and pleasant things to happen to me in the future.	_____	_____	_____
9. The things I do are as interesting to me as they ever were.	_____	_____	_____
10. I feel old and somewhat tired.	_____	_____	_____
11. I feel my age, but it does not bother me.	_____	_____	_____
12. As I look back on my life, I am fairly well satisfied.	_____	_____	_____

	AGREE	DISAGREE	?
13. I would not change my past life even if I could.	_____	_____	_____
14. Compared to other people my age, I've made a lot of foolish decisions in my life.	_____	_____	_____
15. Compared to other people my age, I make good appearance.	_____	_____	_____
16. I have made plans for things I'll be doing a month or a year from now.	_____	_____	_____
17. When I think back over my life, I didn't get most of the important things I wanted.	_____	_____	_____
18. Compared to other people, I get down in the dumps too often.	_____	_____	_____
19. I've gotten pretty much what I expected out of life.	_____	_____	_____
20. In spite of what people say, the lot of the average person is getting worse, not better.	_____	_____	_____

APPENDIX F
COPING BEHAVIOR

In everyday life people experience variety of events or situations that are distressful. In your life, what has been the MOST distressful event that you have experienced so far?

How STRESSFUL do you rate the event that you mention above?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Not at all stressful Extremely stressful

TURN TO NEXT PAGE PLEASE

Many people experience traumatic or stressful situations in life. In COPING with such events we use variety of strategies, resources, and behaviors in order to deal with such stressful situations. Below, there is a list of such strategies or behaviors that are often used by people in distress. Please indicate the behaviors or resources that you normally use in dealing with distressful events.

LIST OF COPING STRATEGIES	DID YOU (or would you) USE THE STRATEGY? Yes / No	HOW HELPFUL DO YOU FIND THE STRATEGY (using 1 to 7 scale) 1 = not helpful at all 7 = extremely helpful
1. Allowing myself to get angry	_____	_____
2. Going to school/ taking evening courses	_____	_____
3. Learning new things about myself	_____	_____
4. Crying	_____	_____
5. Doing more things with the children	_____	_____
6. Getting involved in social activities	_____	_____
7. Learning new skills	_____	_____
8. Taking a more positive attitude toward life	_____	_____
9. Dating	_____	_____
10. Keeping an organized stable household	_____	_____
11. Developing new friendships	_____	_____
12. Becoming more independent	_____	_____
13. Trying to understand what went wrong	_____	_____
14. Blowing up	_____	_____
15. Working: outside employment	_____	_____
16. Establishing a new life for myself	_____	_____
17. Taking care of my home	_____	_____

COPING BEHAVIOR CONT'

As a way to cope with situations some people change and reset their GOALS in life. Has your goals changed since the distressful situation that you have experienced?

1
2
3
4
5
6
7

Has not changed at all Has changed significantly

IF your goals have changed since the distressful situation, please briefly state what were your major life goals BEFORE the distressful situation, and what are your goals NOW?

BEFORE: _____

NOW: _____

What distressful situation did you have in mind when you answered the questions on the PREVIOUS page? _____

Going through the process of DIVORCE is one of the many events that can cause considerable distress for the individual. If you were to confront divorce, how stressful do you rate it?

1
2
3
4
5
6
7

Not at all stressful Extremely stressful

IF you have gone through a divorce, what were the strategies that helped you cope with the process? (Note: if applicable, you could write some of the same strategies that are on the previous page)

APPENDIX G

Background Information:

Please take some time to fill out this background information in order to assist us in understanding the characteristics of the participants in this study. Thank you.

1. What year were you born? _____

2. What was the highest level of school that you finished and got credit for? (put a check mark beside the correct answer)
 - None _____
 - Elementary school _____
 - High School Graduate _____
 - Business, vocational, or technical school past high-school _____
 - University graduate _____
 - Graduate work or professional degree _____

3. Are you working at present?
 - No, unemployed _____ Yes, part-time _____ Yes, full-time _____

4. What is your present marital status?
 - Never been married _____
 - Married _____
 - Separated, but not divorced _____
 - Divorced, but not remarried _____
 - Divorced, and remarried _____
 - Divorced, remarried, and separated/divorced again _____

- 5a. If MARRIED now how many years have you been married? _____

- 5b. If DIVORCED (or separated) how many years have you been divorced/separated? _____ and how many years were you married?

6. How many children do you have? _____

7. If MARRIED at the present, please answer the following question: How CONFIDENT do you feel that your children would have both their mother and father present (together) to care for them in years to come? Draw a circle on this continuum.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Not at all									Extremely
confident									confident

APPENDIX H

Closing Statement

IN CLOSING...

In order to improve this questionnaire, we would appreciate it if you take some time to tell us your thoughts about this questionnaire. In specific:

- What were the questions that you found confusing or vague? (indicate the title of the section)
- How long did it take you to fill it out? was it too long? was it tiring?
- Please indicate any other thoughts you have.

If you wish to find out about the results of this study, or have any other questions concerning this study you can write to:

Shabnam Ziabakhsh
Psychology Department
Simon Fraser University
Burnaby, B.C.
V5A 1S6

THANK YOU FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION IN THIS STUDY.

Comments:

APPENDIX I**Categories for: Possible Selves/Behaviors/Goals**

- 01- PERSONAL:**
- . main focus is the self and only the self
 - . frequent mention of *me, my, self, I, being, to be, myself, ego.*
 - . desire to reach a state for the self that is not material or physical
 - . Desire for self-growth or self improvement (other than cat. 02)
 - . mention of personality character
- 02- INDIVIDUALITY:**
- . focus is the self and only the self
 - . desire to keep and maintain one's individuality and independence
 - . desire to separate the self and accept the self
 - . desire to be independent and autonomous - financial independence
- 03- MARITAL/LOVE RELATIONS:**
- . desire to have and/or maintain or strengthen a love or marital relationship
 - . mention of "sig other" that is not tied to health or finances, but rather tied to emotions and feeling (romantically tied)
- 04- FAMILY/CHILDREN RELATIONS:**
- . mention of "family", "children", and/or "grandchildren"
 - . desire to strengthen maintain relations - not in a romantic way
 - . mention of family members that is NOT health related
 - . desire for the family member to reach a state that is not health related
- 05- FRIENDSHIPS:**
- . the desire to have, maintain, and/or improve friendships that are not tied romantically
 - . friendships outside of the family circle; social activities/socialization
- 06- OCCUPATION:**
- . mention of having, maintaining, and/or expanding an occupation or career
 - . mention of having success in one's business
 - . mention of changing one's occupation
 - . any related work experiences or relationships with colleagues, associates.
- 07- ABILITIES/ EDUCATION:**
- . mention of educating oneself - taking courses, getting a degree
 - . any school related comments

- . desire to have or improve a particular ability
 - . mention of hobbies, either improving old ones or learning new ones
- 08- LEISURE:**
- . concerns with leisure activities for the self and others
 - . does not include activities that require special abilities or talents (for example some hobbies that require such abilities would not be in this category and they will be in cat 07)
 - . mostly travel related activities
- 09- LIFE-STYLE:**
- . desire to have or maintain a particular life-style;e.g. live on a farm.
- 10- MATERIAL/FINANCE:**
- . concerns with ownership of materials and goods.
 - . concerns expanding already existing goods
 - . any sort of financial concern, or anything to do with finances
- 11- PHYSICAL/SELF:**
- . concerns the physical (not emotional) well being of the self
 - . concerns any health matters about the self
 - . concerns any change, improvement, maintenance of any physical characteristics about the self.
 - . any mention about the physical characteristic of the self
- 12- PHYSICAL/OTHER:**
- . concerns the physical (not emotional) well being of loved ones
 - . concerns any health or physical matter that does not concern the self
- 13- DISASTER/ACCIDENT**
- .avoid any natural or manmade disasters or mention of accidents/disaster
- 14- CHARITY/SOCIAL CAUSE**
- . desire to give to charity or contribute to a social cause
 - . being concerned for the community at large or any particular social issue
 - . thinking globally
- 15- RETIREMENT**
- . mention of retirement - planning, preparing, or desiring retirement

APPENDIX J**Categories for Coping Strategies**

- 01- Get angry
- 02- Going to school
- 03- Learning about self/ soul searching
- 04- crying
- 05- Doing things with children
- 06- Social activities/ socializing
- 07- Learning new skills
- 08- Taking a positive attitude
- 09- Dating
- 10- Keeping a stable household
- 11- New friendships
- 12- Independence
- 13- Understanding what went wrong
- 14- Blowing up
- 15- Working outside of home
- 16- Establishing a new life/starting over
- 17- Taking care of my home
- 18- Support from family
- 19- Support from friends
- 20- Physical activities/exercise
- 21- Taking care of the legal aspects of the divorce/custody etc.
- 22- Counselling/therapy/support group
- 23- Keeping healthy
- 24- Not being alone
- 25- Maintaining relationship with X/ be in agreement
- 26- Being hopeful about the future/things will get better
- 27- Substance abuse
- 28- Religion/praying
- 29- Keeping busy/hobbies
- 30- Acceptance of the situation/ moving on/ stop blaming self or other
- 31- Taking control of the situation/developing a sense of control
- 32- Self-help books
- 33- Raising children/ Being a mother
- 34- Avoid romantic relationships/avoid getting involved
- 35- Talking about the divorce
- 36- Using all resources available
- 37- Love yourself
- 38- Break all ties with the X

- 39- Good financial situation
- 40- Taking time off from duties/work
- 41- One day at the time
- 42- Not fighting the emotions/ letting it out
- 43- Not a stressful divorce
- 44- Writing in a journal my feelings
- 45- Trying to stay numb/ avoid feeling emotions
- 46- Not talking about the divorce
- 47- Keeping to myself/ avoiding the world

APPENDIX K**Categories for Most Distressful Events**

- 01- SINGLE PARENTHOOD - raising children and supporting children
- 02- DIVORCE/ BREAK UP WITH A BOYFRIEND
- 03- MARITAL PROBLEMS/EXTRAMARITAL AFFAIRE
- 04- MESSY DIVORCE PROCESS/CUSTODY ISSUES
- 05- ABUSIVE LOVE-RELATIONSHIP/FAMILY VIOLENCE
- 06- GENERAL ABUSE/ CHILDHOOD ABUSE
- 07- PARENT'S DIVORCE
- 08- ILLNESS/SELF
- 09- ILLNESS/OTHER
- 10- DEATH OF A FAMILY MEMBER
- 11- ACCIDENT
- 12- FINANCIAL PROBLEMS
- 13- ADJUSTMENT TO NEW ENVIRONMENT
- 14- BUSINESS FAILURE/ PROBLEMS AT WORK
- 15- CHILDBIRTH/PREGNANCY
- 16- PROBLEMS WITH CHILDREN OR A PARTICULAR CHILD
- 17- LEGAL PROBLEMS/PROBLEMS WITH THE LAW

APPENDIX L

Coding Sheet for LS Index

Key: Score 1 point for each responses marked X

	AGREE	DISAGREE	?
1. As I grow older, things seem better than I thought they would be.	X		
2. I have gotten more of the breaks in life than most of the people I know.	X		
3. This is the dreariest time of my life.		X	
4. I am just as happy as when I was younger.	X		
5. My life could be happier than it is now.		X	
6. These are the best years of my life.	X		
7. Most of the things I do are boring or monotonous.		X	
8. I expect some interesting and pleasant things to happen to me in the future.	X		
9. The things I do are as interesting to me as they ever were.	X		
10. I feel old and somewhat tired.		X	
11. I feel my age, but it does not bother me.	X		
12. As I look back on my life, I am fairly well satisfied.	X		

- | | AGREE | DISAGREE | ? |
|--|--------------|-----------------|----------|
| 13. I would not change my past life even if I could. | X | | |
| 14. Compared to other people my age, I've made a lot of foolish decisions in my life. | | X | |
| 15. Compared to other people my age, I make good appearance. | X | | |
| 16. I have made plans for things I'll be doing a month or a year from now. | X | | |
| 17. When I think back over my life, I didn't get most of the important things I wanted. | | X | |
| 18. Compared to other people, I get down in the dumps too often. | | X | |
| 19. I've gotten pretty much what I expected out of life. | X | | |
| 20. In spite of what people say, the lot of the average person is getting worse, not better. | | X | |