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Dear Producer/Editor,

**Why is divorce different for older women?**

Older women's losses are greater. They have been married the longest and take the hardest hit both financially and emotionally. Losing both your happy memories of times past, plus the expectation of a secure, comfortable future is devastating, especially when you lack the resilience of youth to help you bounce back. It's harder to start over at an age when you're supposed to be looking forward to winding down, not gearing up. Older women face discrimination both in the job and dating worlds.

In *He's History, You're Not: Surviving Divorce After 40* (GPP Life, an imprint of Globe Pequot Press; April, 2009; \$16.95; Paperback), author Erica Manfred shares her own divorce experience, as well as the advice of experts, including a foreword by licensed psychotherapist Tina Tessina Ph.D., with specific sections tailored to women in their 40s, 50s, and 60s.

This is the first book about divorce to address women of the baby boom generation who are getting divorced in record numbers. In any given year about 250,000 women over 50 get divorced.

At age 58, after 18 years of marriage, Erica Manfred, was dumped for a younger woman. She was lucky enough to have a recently divorced girlfriend to scrape her off the floor, drag her out to get her hair colored, and teach her Divorce 101. Now she has become the been-there-done-that girlfriend who survived the divorce from hell and is an expert on what older women need to know about divorce. In this insightful, but breezily written and entertaining book, she shares what she's learned, both from her own experience, other divorcées and recognized experts in the field.

*He's History; You're Not* covers everything from surviving the first year, to finding the right lawyer, to finding a new career, to dealing with your adult kids, to living alone and liking it, to internet dating, to whether or not to forgive, to dealing with betrayal, and finally how to move on.

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## *He's History, You're Not*

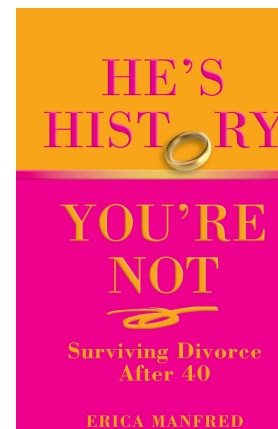
Savvy new advice book tells boomer women how to survive and thrive after divorce

*He's History, You're Not* discusses topics such as how to...

- Avoid “kiss of death” marriage counselors to determine if reconciliation is possible.
- Find an affordable divorce lawyer who does not snort scornfully at the word “mediation.”
- Survive the first, worst, year
- Deal with your adult or teen kids (who can be just as devastated as small children).
- Get back to work or find a new career. (Age discrimination does not have to stop you.)
- Educate yourself about the financial realities of divorce for older women. ( NOT the same as for younger women..)
- Use the Internet to date the Viagra generation.
- Restore your self-esteem despite body parts that have succumbed to gravity.
- Figure out what the hell happened to your marriage.
- Forgive the bastard (and yourself) and finally move on

**Erica Manfred** has written for *Cosmopolitan*, *New York Times Magazine*, *Ms.*, *Parenting*, *Woman's Day*, and *Bottom Line/Personal*, and is coauthor of *The Doctor's uide to Weight Loss Surgery*. Previously a New York State caseworker who counseled families and children, she runs a women's divorce support group in **New Paltz**, New York. Her Web site is [www.heshistory.com](http://www.heshistory.com).

**Tina B. Tessina**, Ph.D., is a licensed psychotherapist in Southern California, with over twenty-five years experience in counseling individuals and couples. The author of eleven books on relationships, she is “Dr. Romance” on Yahoo.com, a frequent guest on radio shows, and she has appeared on *The Oprah Winfrey Show*, *Larry King Live*, and ABC news.



**He's History, You're Not By Erica Manfred**  
978-0-7627-5135-8 • \$16.95 • **Paperback** • 296 pages • April, 2009  
GPP Life, an imprint of Globe Pequot Press  
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## Here's what the experts are saying about *He's History; You're Not:*

Like having a friend on your side to help you let go of the past, get through the turmoil, and turn to a better future.” —*Abigail Trafford, author of Crazy Time and As Time Goes By:*

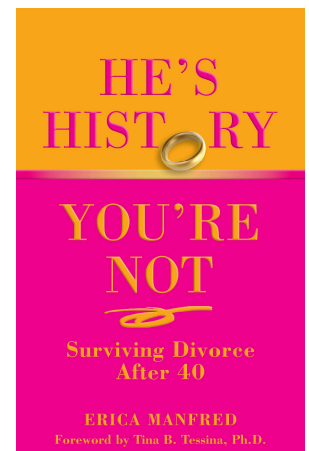
. A must read for anyone contemplating a divorce or going through one.” —*Susan Richards, author of Chosen by a Horse and Chosen Forever*

*He's History You're Not* is for every woman who suffers the anguish of a ruptured relationship. —*Florence Falk, Ph.D., psychotherapist, and author of On My Own: The Art of Being a Woman Alone*

Erica is the warm, witty, gritty, kind, and very knowing friend who's forged ahead, through a forbidding place, and blazed the trail before you.—*Noelle Oxenhandler, author of The Wishing Year:*

I wish I'd had this book when I went through my divorce.” —*Theo Pauline Nestor, author of How to Sleep Alone in a King-Size Bed: A Memoir of Starting Over*

I will be handing out copies of Manfred's book along with a pack of tissues to all of my female divorce clients. And, maybe to the male clients, too, since many of the tips would work for either gender.” —*Susan Ellis Wild, attorney, coauthor of The Unofficial Guide to Divorce*



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## **Q & A With Erica Manfred**

Author of *He's History, You're Not: Surviving Divorce After 40*

### **What's the difference between divorce for women under and over forty?**

Well, I now think forty is young since I'm over sixty, but once you're over forty or forty-five some of the possibilities younger women take for granted dry up. Yes, there available men, but they're a lot fewer and further between. Older women have to deal with age discrimination when it comes to jobs, especially if they've been home taking care of the kids and don't have a career. This is particularly a problem for women over fifty. It's harder to lose your dream of a family when you're over forty, because you may not remarry and you're not going to have more children.

### **If a woman has never had a career and she's over fifty, how does she get on her feet and establish a life for herself.**

Going back to school is probably the best way. There are lots of careers that aren't dependent on age, and don't require four-year degrees, especially in the medical area. Community colleges offer many one and two year courses that lead to careers. Taking civil service tests is another good avenue because it doesn't matter if your experience was 20 years ago, as long as you have some.

### **People often wait to get divorced until the kids are grown. What do you mean by "the kids are never grown?" How does their parents divorce affect adult children?**

Children are often devastated by their parents' divorce no matter how old they are. Just because your children are adults doesn't mean it isn't going to affect them. First of all, divorce calls into question their entire childhood. If they think it was happy, they start questioning their own experiences. Second of all, they have to deal with two sets of parents for every event in their lives, including holidays, weddings, etc. Where do they go on Thanksgiving? The most frequent fallout is relationship problems in their own lives. Then they worry about who is going to take care of mom or dad if they don't have a partner.

### **How should a mother of adult children tell them she and their dad are getting divorced?**

The same way she would tell a small child. Preferably together with the child's father, and with compassion and sensitivity for that child's feelings. Don't assume he or she won't have any feelings. Assume that your child will be upset, and prepare to offer comfort and support. Pay attention to timing. Making a divorce announcement at Christmas dinner is a no-no.

### **Why are older women winding up impoverished after divorce? How is it related to the changes in alimony laws?**

Often older women came of age before women's liberation and they never established careers in the first place. Divorce hits them really hard because they have no source of income to fall back on. Alimony, which often used to be rewarded for life to older women is now considered "rehabilitative," i.e. just until a woman gets on her feet. Well, if you're 55 the likelihood of you being able to support yourself after a few years of alimony is nil. Men, on the other hand, have careers and can support themselves.

### **Is equitable distribution really equitable when it comes to older women? Why not?**

Older women don't have the same earning power as older men, especially if they don't have careers and have been homemakers. So what's equitable has to take into account their inability to make a living, which is not the same as a man's. .

### **Why should older women give up the house? What should they go for instead?**

Older women often want the house in a settlement because they're very attached to it—they're reluctant to leave their lifelong home. However, that house may have a mortgage, and she will also have to pay taxes, repairs, etc. All too often women get the house in a settlement, only to lose it eventually to foreclosure, or unpaid taxes. I recommend women take cash instead. There are no mortgage payments on cash.

### **Why are women the ones who initiate divorce in two thirds of over-fifty divorces? People assume it's older men who leave, usually for younger women.**

An AARP survey found that older women initiate divorce due to infidelity, alcoholism or abuse. Older men might fool around with younger women, but it's their wives who get fed up and leave. Life changes like retirement can trigger divorce, when a man who hasn't been around for 25 years is all of a sudden is there all the time, and bad habits that she'd always managed to live with become really oppressive to his wife. There's also the "lump on the couch" syndrome where older men just retreat into depression and spend all their time watching TV. Older wives want to go places, do things, have fun and lead an active life, they're tired of having no emotional connection with their husbands.

### **What's worse, death or divorce? I hear this has been discussed extensively on your blog.**

I contend that divorce is worse. There are support systems for widows, people feel sorry for you and bring casseroles. No one brings casseroles when you get divorced; in fact people may start avoiding you like divorce is catching. Plus your not so dearly departed is busy getting invited to dinner parties because he is that rarity, a single man over 50, while you are fighting the demographic odds when looking for love. Financially widowhood is a whole lot easier as well; you don't have to split any assets. Plus you can treasure all those happy memories. Divorce tends to erase happy memories.

### **How do you start dating again when your body has started sagging and divorce has wrecked your self-esteem?**

All the women I interviewed lost weight, started going to the gym or exercising like crazy, got manicures, pedicures, new hair colors, makeovers. Buying a new wardrobe helps. Aside from that, act "as if" you're devastatingly sexy even if you don't feel that way. Make believe you're Susan Sarandon or Madonna even if it feels silly. It works.

### **What is dating like after divorce when you're over 50?**

Nothing has changed since high school, except now you want to get laid more than he does, but you still have to play hard to get. Depressing but true. Remember the guys you're dating came of age in the 50s and they're not used to getting asked out on dates. They need to do the pursuing.

### **What's the one most important thing an older woman needs to know?**

She needs to know that she CAN take care of herself and doesn't need a man to depend on. Many older women feel helpless on their own. They've depended on their husbands much too much. Older women can call the plumber or the electrician if something breaks, figure out how to balance a checkbook, and even take the car to the mechanic. It's not rocket science. Helplessness is just an attitude, and you can overcome it.

You **can** even live happily alone if you have to. The bad news is there aren't enough men to go around. The good news is you don't need a man to be happy.