

Dr. Radke Women's Oral History Collection

**Cindi Christiansen – A Divorced
Mormon Woman**

By Cindi Christiansen

September 30, 2005

Box 1 Folder 6

Oral Interview conducted by Joy Christiansen

Transcript copied by Bradley Broschinsky

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Brigham Young University- Idaho

- JC: My name is Joylyn Christiansen, and I am interviewing Cindi Christiansen. It is 2:37 on September 30th, 2005, and we're doing this over a speaker phone. ... Okay, what is your full name, including your maiden name?
- CC: It's Cynthia Lee Hollinger Christiansen.
- JC: Okay, when and where were you born?
- CC: March 9, 1953. Long Beach, California.
- JC: What is your religious affiliation?
- CC: I'm Mormon.
- JC: Were you always Mormon?
- CC: No, I converted to the Church 24 years ago.
- JC: Okay. Do you remember your baptism date?
- CC: It was March of 1982.
- JC: And before you joined the church did you have any other church that you went to?
- CC: I was born and raised Roman Catholic, and I went to church before I married my husband, and afterwards when I did get married, we went to many different churches to find a church to raise our children in.
- JC: Okay, and what made you choose the LDS church over any other church?
- CC: Well, we had explored many different churches, and my husband said we would not be able to go to a Catholic Church; and I really wasn't interested in the Mormon Church and so we went to different churches and we had a baby and baby was actually baptized by a Methodist preacher, I believe. And because being raised Catholic I was told that if a baby was not baptized and something happened to him they would go to Hell. So, we went to that church for a few times and we were not impressed with it. And we had a babysitter one night and the babysitter let my baby cry and cry and cry and the beds were messed up in our guest room; and so I told my husband at that time that we will never go out on a date again until the kids were older, when they didn't need a babysitter, because obviously our babysitter had her boyfriend over and she didn't tend to our baby. So, my husband said that the girls in the Mormon Church have good morals, have good values, and so how about if we try to get a babysitter in the Mormon Church, because his ex-wife was Mormon, and his children through his ex-wife were raised Mormon. So, we got- we called the Relief Society President, we found her number and she got us a young woman, and the young woman babysat for us, and I was really impressed. So, that night when we got home, I said why don't we go ahead and try the Mormon Church tomorrow. So, uh,

my husband called the Relief Society President and got the information and next morning we showed up at church. It was my husband and myself and our baby, who was...well, she would have been one in June. So, she wasn't quite one yet, and we stayed only for the first hour and we went to the missionary class and I was so impressed with the answers that I asked. It was quite different from the preacher that baptized my daughter, who didn't have the answers that I told him I wanted to learn more, so naturally the missionaries were there within seconds, and, uh, a few weeks later we were baptized.

JC: Why is it that you didn't want to join the Mormon Church at first? Or that you weren't interested in them?

CC: Well, um, I thought- I had many misconceptions like many people have misconceptions, and I didn't think that they knew how to have a good time, and I didn't think they danced, or sang or wear make up or had fun. And I used to, uh, you know I wasn't raised Mormon, I was raised Catholic. We, uh, our weddings and everything were big to-do's and there's a lot of drinking and dancing and carrying on and I knew that Mormon's didn't do that and I thought that was very boring. So, I really wasn't interested in that and I only knew the Catholic Church and basically that's where I wanted to raise my kids with. However since my husband wouldn't allow me to do that, I needed- I needed my children to be raised in some church that had some foundation that had the same basic belief as I did, which was a belief in Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ; and when I found out that the Mormon Church did believe that, which I did not know the did, um, and that was fine with me. So at that time, whether I believed it or not, I knew it had the foundation that I wanted for my children. And so that's basically what I needed, I joined for my children. Initially it was important, very important.

JC: Okay, um, as a woman in the church, in the LDS church, like, how did you, um- how did you understand your role to be as a Mormon woman?

CC: It was my responsibility to be a good wife, to raise up a family, to keep a clean house, to have meals on the table every night, to be responsible for everything that took place in the house basically. And all the classes I ever attended with the Mormon Church, that's basically what it was. They taught you how to be homemaker, and, uh, that's what they taught me. And I wanted to be a stay at home mom and I was, and so that- that was okay with me.

JC: Okay, and did those teachings- were they any different than what society had taught you when you were growing up?

CC: Um, no, not really, because I was grown up with a stay at home mom, and my responsibility was to get married and have a family and raise up a family and, Heaven forbid, not go to work. You're not- the mother's place is in the home and that's where she belongs and that's how I was raised and so, um, the teachings of the church at that time were aligned with how I was taught. So, there was no problem at all, and as a matter of fact we were told, when we joined the church, that people who are Jewish and

people who are Catholic make the best converts because we're a very disciplined people. I was taught to stay home.

JC: Oh, okay, um, so learning these kind of beliefs that you've been taught all your life, and then joining the Mormon Church, they were reemphasized. What did you think- did you have any thoughts on divorced Mormon women?

CC: I didn't think there were any.

JC: Absolutely none at all?

CC: I didn't think there were any.

JC: Okay, um, had you ever heard of any?

CC: The first- the first introduction to a divorced woman I had was a year into the church, and we had moved up from Southern California up to Northern California and there was a woman who never went to church on Sunday, but she made sure her children went to church and I would bring home her children periodically and I asked her why she didn't go to church, and she said she was divorced and she worked five days a week and she was totally exhausted and this was her only time away from everybody, and so she did not attend church. So that was my first introduction of somebody in the church in a divorce; and I was shocked, I didn't think there was such a person.

JC: Honestly speaking, did you feel comfortable around her- her being the first divorced Mormon woman that you met?

CC: Um, at that time unfortunately I was a little bit judgmental and I thought she should have been at church. Um, I blended right into the Mormon role. So I- you know to be honest with you I can't even remember what I thought about her other than I thought she needed to be at church, because I had not worked, having a family, so I had no idea how what, you know, tired a person could get; I just had no idea what she was feeling.

JC: Okay, um, thinking back to that time, would you ever have seen yourself as a divorced person?

CC: No, because once you have children you stay married. No, absolutely not. You don't go into a marriage thinking about getting a divorce. No.

JC: Would you say that's changed now-a-days?

CC: Yes- well no, people entering a marriage. No, I don't think they think that. Um, at least not Mormons going into a marriage. I don't think they think, well, you know, I can always get a divorce. I've talked to other people outside of the faith, that, going into a marriage, you're going into it with your eyes open and they're very cautious and so the decisions they make before they enter that covenant are, in, um, keeping in mind that this

marriage may not work out and there might be divorce down the road. And this shocked me, but this is a new mindset of young people now-a-days that are getting married, at least outside the church.

JC: Um, when you got married, did you feel that you went into the relationship with your eyes open?

CC: Yes, I did. I knew who I was marrying, and I fully intended to stay in the marriage, no matter what.

JC: Okay.

CC: Yeah, I think I did. I was older; I wasn't an 18 year old.

JC: Okay, and how old were you?

CC: I was 26.

JC: When you got married?

CC: When I got married.

JC: Okay, um, now...

CC: Or 27, I can't remember.

JC: Okay, as this interview is mainly about your experience through your divorce, we're just going to kind of shift to that topic now. Um, you mentioned earlier that you never saw yourself as a divorced person, that you, um, you always stayed married. You had kids, you stayed married. Then, if this is an okay question, what were some of the signs that you might have seen that suggested that maybe the marriage wasn't going to work out?

CC: Is this going to bother the interviewer if I answer this?

JC: Nope.

CC: Okay, um, fine. Um, I felt, uh, that others were placed before me, which was confirmed by my Bishop, that I did not have a voice in anything. My place was behind my husband, it was not beside him. Um, I was never asked questions. My...in anything I did was disputed, it was always wrong. What started really difficult times was, it was a special occasion that, um, he went back, my husband went back on his word and, um, he...he put other people before our marriage, and that was wrong; and I went to the Bishop about it, and he confirmed that it was wrong. And so, my husband didn't see it that way, and so that's when the conflict really started and we had been married, um, six or seven years, something like that, and we began going to marriage counseling at that time. And then as the years went on, um, what finally was the breaking straw was when

he began not coming home and spending more time at the office with his administrative assistant; and at times I couldn't find him and nobody could find her, and so everything led to infidelity, which he had been unfaithful after 18 months of marriage. So, it was something that was not new to me. Um, actually the 18 months into marriage, you know, I kind of questioned it, but, you know, we resolved that...I thought. So when the time came where he wasn't coming home at night, and he was with his assistant, and every time we had a conversation at home it was about his assistant; we couldn't even have dinner without his assistant calling. And the alarm company even called one time about this business and I said he wasn't- you know, the owner wasn't home, call his assistant, and he was with his assistant so they couldn't get the assistant either, so all- everything led to...everything led to a possible separation. And then through the help of the Bishop and after several sessions of spiritual counseling the Bishop finally explained to me what he saw, and he wanted me to make an appointment with Family Services with the church, and he gave me a referral; and it was basically a last ditch effort and he told me that. And so when we...we went and it didn't work out, and, um, Brother Brown down at social services told me that I did have a choice and it was either have a life or be very, very miserable because I didn't have a marriage and I can remember when it died. It was July 1993, and I was trying to have a conversation with my husband and he brought his administrative assistant into the conversation and that did it. And it was like a death had occurred and I remember going to bed that night and I cried because something had died, and what had died was my marriage. So, there were a lot of things leading up to it. And also, there was no communication in the marriage because it was all one sided, because I was never right. I was never right. So, it's just not the way to have a marriage.

JC: So, when you went to, like, marriage counseling, what do you think that did for you?

CC: For me?

JC: For you and/or for the marriage.

CC: It did absolutely nothing for the marriage. For me, it allowed me to speak and be heard and that was good. That was very good. And so we went through marriage counseling a lot and it ended up where my husband didn't continue with the counseling, but I did and it was very, very beneficial for me and, uh, and every time we always started out with the counseling, I always ended up staying because he felt he didn't need it, and that was his excuse. It was our last ditch effort that he didn't need it and I always did, and that was when Brother Brown said, well, uh, Cindi doesn't need this counseling, but you do, so I think you need to come back for it.

JC: Okay, he said that to your husband, that he needed it?

CC: Yeah. Yep.

JC: Um, did you and your husband try to keep the marriage together at all, like, for the kids?

CC: Um, there was a time when I left my husband for a couple of nights after my last child was born, and, uh, when I came home I actually called him and asked him if he could come to the hotel and we could talk; and he said, no he couldn't. And so, uh, um, after that I can remember a conversation we had and he said that- and this was during the time I was in counseling, and he said he didn't want to lose me. However nothing was done. Everything was done, it was everything- I needed to change, he needed to change nothing. And I even went to a 3 day intensive workshop, 'cause I was told- I went with a person who took care of my baby, when my last child was born and, uh, I went for her, and I found out that it served me wonderfully and it was the beginning of the end of the marriage at that time because it told me that I was enough and I do have a voice and I am important and I do have things that matter. And so at that time when I came home from that my husband couldn't handle that, and, uh, he wasn't willing- he wasn't willing to budge because he's the type of individual that feels that he's right and everybody else is wrong. And so, but this guy at this work shop said that one person can hold a marriage together because the other person will change. And I tried, and it didn't work. And then I remember toward when I knew it was breaking up, and I had four children. He told me he wanted me to be like I was when we got married, like his administrative assistant was.

JC: And how would that be?

CC: To be a yes-person. To kiss his feet and tell how wonderful he is and to not have a voice. And I tried that for about two-three weeks, and I felt very phony. I couldn't- I couldn't do it, I just couldn't do it. So, even though I knew it was really bad to get a divorce with the children, I just couldn't be phony, because even when I was being phony he still never came home. So, you know, it was- it was pretty much over by then.

JC: Um, besides from your Bishop and the LDS counselor that you saw Brother Brown, did you confide in anyone else in the ward?

CC: Yeah, my Bishop at the time asked if I had any good friends in the ward, and I said, yes, I have a couple; and so he goes, well, when you're having difficult times it would be a good idea to talk to that person. So, I did, after an incident happened, and this person was a really good friend of this Bishop. And so my next appointment with this Bishop, I was criticized and ridiculed for going to this person and talking about my problems, because as he put it, everyone else had problems. So, my Bishop at the time-

JC: Excuse me, what time was that?

CC: Pardon me?

JC: What time was that? Because I know you had, like, two Bishops.

CC: Well, the Bishop who recommended we get a divorce was Bishop one month into the divorce per se. We hadn't even filed yet when he moved to Salt Lake. So this was the Bishop after that, the divorce was a long time, and we had the same Bishop.

- JC: Okay, so the Bishop was criticizing you or whatever for confiding in other people, was that the second Bishop?
- CC: Uh-huh, that was the second Bishop and that was a week after he told me to do that. So, I had no support in the Bishopric whatsoever.
- JC: Okay, what about- among the sisters in the church?
- CC: When I started going through the divorce I felt like I had to go to the Relief Society President, because she was my friend, and she told me she couldn't believe it. But then she said, I don't mean I don't believe you, she said I just can't believe that of Fred. Nobody believed me. And as my Bishop told me, one person has to be more responsible for the divorce, as he stood, like, two inches away from me. So, um, I didn't get any support, however there were some men in the ward I did get support from. And, um, they were very spiritual individuals and they saw more than what the Bishop saw. The Bishop was brand new, he thought- he had no clue what was going on in the ward and we were just the first divorce, and after us many, many more women got a divorce for the same reason. I'm sure he's quite a different man now. But, I- we were the first. We were the first, and he just couldn't believe that something like that could happen to a Molly Mormon family. But it did, so I- I didn't get any support from him. None.
- JC: Okay, now going back to that sister who said she couldn't believe that of your- that your husband did what he did. Did she believe your story?
- CC: She believed it, she believed it, but she knew both of us and she was good friends with both of us, and my husband knew how to put on an air that made him look perfect- like the perfect Mormon husband, dad- whatever. And it was hard for people to believe. I got that response from many people. They would call me and they would ask me what am I doing. He's so perfect. They know differently now, but they didn't at the time. It was hard. There was very little support.
- JC: How did this feel, hearing all this from everybody? That they supported him?
- CC: How did it affect me?
- JC: Uh-huh.
- CC: It just confirmed what my husband told me all those years we were married, that my opinion didn't matter and what I said doesn't matter. So it was really hard. Um, I had- I had four people maybe. It was a very long divorce and I can remember I had only two people call me to see how I was doing. And, um, my best friend during that time had gone through a divorce. And, so, she knew- she knew. She knew us both really well, but she knew who I was married to. I mean, there was no doubt- initially she was shocked, but- because I can remember telling her after a Gospel Doctrine class and she was shocked. But the, she started putting the pieces together and she understood. But a lot of

people just see the perfect family and they don't want to see anything different because it might make them look at their situation; and that's uncomfortable for people.

JC: Um, just for the record, when did you- when did you officially divorce?

CC: Legally?

JC: Legally, yeah.

CC: Oh, gosh...um, it was, like 2 ½ to 3 years we legally got divorce, I forget what that's called, but then it was like 2 ½ to 3 years after that that everything was settled. It was a very long, long, long process.

JC: And when did the divorce start, then?

CC: I filed November of 1993.

JC: Okay, um, going back to people in the ward, um, about the people who chose to, um, like, follow your husband, um, how did you react to that? To them?

CC: Well, I didn't react any differently than I did a lot of the time, but I did start not going to church. I started dropping my children off, because it was too hard; and it's uh...'cause there are some people and you know the people who- who don't approve of you and it's just uncomfortable; and I didn't have the support of my Bishopric. So, when you don't have the support of your leaders, why go? I didn't go. I did not go. I became inactive.

JC: How do you feel that everybody saw you?

CC: How do I think they saw me?

JC: Uh-huh.

CC: Um...um probably I felt that they looked at me in a negative light, that they were pretty much disgusted that I didn't hold it together, because it's the woman's heart is the one that makes the home. And so, um, and I had people tell me, well everyone has problems, but you have to endure to the end no matter what. So, and...

JC: So, did you say anything to that when they told you to endure?

CC: Not initially, because I wasn't very outspoken. I was very insecure. I had very low self-esteem and I felt that anything I said didn't matter. It didn't matter. I didn't matter.

JC: Did your Bishopric give you any counsel at all?

CC: Nope. None. None.

- JC: And did the Relief Society do anything specifically to help you?
- CC: Nope. Nothing.
- JC: Okay, um, how about your visiting teachers?
- CC: Okay, let me think...um...If they did I certainly can't remember. I don't remember any- I had no support. I had no support.
- JC: And your home teachers, did they still come over?
- CC: We had a good home teacher. Uh, and he was good until he moved, and then our next home teacher...our next home teacher I personally feel felt I was wrong. And, uh, to this day actually he's my home teacher. We've had- we've butted heads, because...I don- ...he just, uh, he feels the woman's place is exactly how my husband felt a woman's place was. Uh, he's difficult, he's difficult, but no, when I was going through a divorce, I had very, very little support. And things would probably be a little bit different if I would have had support, but I didn't.
- JC: Alright now, thinking how you felt inwardly, um, as a newly divorce LDS woman, how did you view yourself in terms of being a female Mormon?
- CC: Um, initially, I probably felt I was pretty worthless. I couldn't even keep my family together. That's probably how I felt initially...um...but once you build relationships with friends, and they weren't, uh, they weren't friends in the church, because friends in the church kind of went to the wayside, they were really no longer your friend. But then you start doing reading and, uh, and your faith takes over.
- JC: How would you say your faith grew through this experience?
- CC: Tremendously. Because when you feel you have no support with your community that you have kind of lived in for many, many years, and when the leaders of that community really don't want to have anything to do with you, you really don't have anybody. And so, it's a feeling of being very alone, and you turn to Heavenly Father. I've always prayed to Heavenly Father even before anything like this happened, which I'm really thankful- 'cause I already had a relationship I felt already secure, but- but, how we've been taught you do all you can and then you turn it over. And, uh, I turned it over and I walked with faith everyday, because I had no idea what was going to happen, 'cause I was very naive. I didn't know how to handle money. I didn't know how to take care of a household. I did not- I hadn't worked in 16, 17 years. I had no college; I had- I had 48 units of college. I had nothing. It was very difficult. And so the only thing I had was my faith in a loving Father, I mean that's the only thing I had. And I don't know how people can make it through what we go through if they don't have that knowledge because that is what- that's what pulled me through. That and my family.

- JC: So, um, how did your, um, okay- through your faith, um, what kind of- what were the results of your faith?
- CC: Through my faith, I learned- I truly learned that I'm a child of God- that I'm a child of Heavenly Father and I matter just as much as the person beside me. I matter just as much as the richest person on earth, and I matter just as much as the homeless. There is no- there is no difference in the love Heavenly Father has for us. And that was continually- continually shown to me through the miracles in my life during that time, because I had nothing, and so I basically turned everything over- everything over to Heavenly Father, and I asked Him to guide me. And He did, and to this day He's guiding me. And, um, pretty powerful- pretty powerful for the- I- I think a person needs to be enough of a child, and humble enough to see what Heavenly Father does for us, how He does answer our prayers. We have to be humble enough to see that. Even the smallest thing can seem monumental when you're going through a difficult time, and my faith soared. Personally, I felt I had better faith than probably the majority of people who went to church every Sunday. Um, I delved into the scriptures at home, and, um, I'm just really thankful I had my faith because it got me through it- it got me through it, and Heavenly Father provided for me- for me, because I didn't- basically because I didn't know what to ask for. I didn't- I didn't know anything, and He provided everything, everything to smallest little minute detail, how you would think. When I went to Mediation, I thought, I have no money for gasoline, how am I going to do this? I have no money. And my child support was given to me in gift certificates from Costco, and so I didn't know what I was going to do. And I got home that day from court, and in my mail box was a credit card from Shell Oil which I- I had used- I had gotten this credit card when I was 18 years old, and when I married I never used it, because my husband didn't want me to use Shell Gas. And so, I discontinued it; I never used it. And that day when I came home from court- and what was on my mind was, how am I going to get gas to take my kids to and from school? How am I going to do all this? It was in my mail box. That was just *one* miracle. I mean it...I mean it- it was pretty phenomenal the things that transpired in the life of myself and the life of my family to guide us and to allow us to make ends meet, and to be able to live a decent life, because I didn't know how to do- I didn't know how to provide that for my children. And my ex-husband certainly didn't want me to be able to survive. So, and he basically told me- he wanted to put me out on the streets, that was his goal. And...Heavenly Father and I we both- we're working together and to this day when I go into work, I still talk to Him and it's like we have one more day, let's see what we can do today, and- and He's just become my best friend. And what's good is that when you go through something like this, you don't get much sleep, and so it leaves a lot of time for thinking, and it's really nice to have somebody to talk to during this time. So, I have a very, very, *very* strong faith- very strong faith. And I challenge anybody to challenge me. So...I'm thankful.
- JC: Okay, alright, um, when you were- when the divorce was just beginning, um, what did you see as your options at the time?
- CC: Options?

JC: Options for anything, for survival...

CC: Options for anything? Okay, um, number one was to get a house for my family. Your basics come first, um, I knew that much. I had no place to live. My time was getting short in the family home, because my ex-husband wanted to move back in, supposedly, and so I was being kicked out, and I was given, uh, part of the settlement. The judge made it so I would have it, but I had to find- I had to find, uh...I had to find a house. And- well, actually no, excuse me, that's wrong. Before then, the courts told me if I didn't get a job that they would base my spousal support on if I had a job. And now I looked in the paper every single day and I applied to jobs, and I took a home transcription course 'cause I was told I could get a job doing home transcription, because I wanted to be home with my family; and so I took that. And you pay it with a very small amount every month, and so I took that and I found out that I couldn't get a job because I had no experience. So, that was a dead end, because my first priority was to get an income, but I wanted that income to where I could be at home. And so, when I went to court, and I told- I brought all the clippings of everything I had tried to, you know, get a job, and I didn't want to work in retail because I wouldn't be home for my kids. And so, um, I said a little prayer. I- I had an opportunity to- this one doctor was willing to interview me. And, um, so I said a little prayer, I can remember, before I got in the van and I said, if this is supposed to be for me, please let me have the job. So, um, I was hired. He was Mormon, and he hired me on two accounts. One was that I was LDS; and one that I had worked for the FBI for 9 years, so he knew I'd be honest. And so I was hired, for six dollars and thirty-five-cents an hour, and I did everything from emptying his trashcans to doing medical transcription, and billing, and-but I- I got a job, and Heavenly Father gave me that job because I could go back to court and say, this is how much I make, and this is the only job I could get; but I had a job. So, um, and that job- my children told me every night when I came home crying, and they said, consider it an education; and they probably didn't realize what they were saying at the time, but it was true, 'cause I couldn't be where I am now if it weren't for that job of six-dollars-and-thirty-five-cents an hour, being slave labor, but I needed that to be where I am now. Heavenly Father knew what He was doing. You know, you- it's a journey. And if you can find- if you can look at everything as parts of the puzzle, then you understand why you had to go through some of the things you went through. But that was the first obstacle. And so after I got a job, then I told Heavenly Father, because the courts were saying, okay you have to be out of the house in 90 days, and I didn't know a thing about real estate. And so, I started looking for a house, but I didn't know what I was looking for. I just wanted something that my kids would be able to live in. That's- that's the only thing, because I sat all my kids down and asked them, you know, we can move to Utah, or we can stay here. If we stay here I'm gonna have to work; if we go to Utah, I don't have to work. If we stay here, you'll have your friends, and yadda, yadda, yadda. And so, everybody decided that they were going to- we were going to stay. But I was going to a Junior College at the time, and I was not sure that was the right thing to do. And so, um, my philosophy teacher, I talked with him after class one day, because- well, during mediation I was- I was going to quit school and he called me and told me to come back. He told me, he said, if I could give you any advice, I would recommend that you stay here. You do not move your family, and you let your children go through the

trauma that they're going to go through while they're young, and let them see, um, what their father is like while they're here, instead of when they're an adult and it will be more difficult for them. So he goes, I would recommend that you stay in the area, so that's why we did. Uh, so, when we went- when I went back to court I was told that I had to have a house, and so I did find a realtor, and every single house I looked at that we- that I put an offer down, they all fell through. And I couldn't understand it, except, and I don't know if this is accurate to this day- my husband is in Real Estate, he knew the properties that I was looking at. And so my realtor said, let's not tell him about this property I found. And I was exhausted, she called me at work, and she said, I have a house that's ideal, and I basically told her I didn't want to look at it, I was tired, I was very, very tired. And she goes, just come over and we can just walk through it really fast. So, I can remember I went over there, there was another couple coming out of the house, and then I went in and I stood at the door, and I just asked her, I said, are there enough rooms for my kids- enough bedrooms? You know, is the house big enough? Can I afford it? Because I- she was a real nice lady, and, uh, she- all the answers were yes, yes, yes. And I said, let's make an offer. I didn't even really see the house. And so we went down to Denny's, and the other couple went to Cocoa's down the street, and we both put the same exact offer on the house. And they called the owner back in Virginia, and since I was a single mom and I had a family, he sold the house to me. And it was the only time I ever went above list, and it was the only time I didn't tell my kids' father that I was looking at a certain house, and that's where we ended up. And, uh, so I- I had my job, menial as it was; I had my house. And so then one day on the way to work, I said, okay, I- I- I have this, I have my house, I have my job, do I need to go back to school? Because I had wanted to go back to school, and my ex-husband did not allow me to further my education. So, I came home from work that day, and this is Heavenly Father working again; there was a message on my recorder from University of Phoenix- Counseling Department, asking if I was still interested in going to their school. So, the next day I did my interview, and I went back to school. So, it's just- He's in there. And so then I knew my earning power was going to increase, so I had what I needed: my kids were secure, we had a home, I had a kind-of-a-job, and my future was starting to take shape and the pieces of the puzzle were fitting together. It's- and, uh, that's...for some reason I had enough wit about myself to move forward. You know, it's uh, um- I moved forward and- and throughout all this I've made some really special relationships with people and- and they've helped me and- and it's all worked out so far. So...I don't know if that answers your question, but...

JC: That is great. Um, at the time you were looking for your house, um, how old were your children? Just so we can get an idea...

CC: The baby was five- five, seven, ten, twelve or thirteen- twelve- twelve. They were small.

JC: At the time you looked for the house?

CC: It was like a year after- it was like in '94, '95- I think '95 I closed escrow- I can't even remember now. They were young. They were young.

- JC: And, um, when did you start going back to school? What year?
- CC: I should know this, um...I went back to school...one-two-three-four...I can't even remember. I remember my first night of school, my van got stolen. So the adversary was there, saying, you don't want to do this.
- JC: Oh man.
- CC: Yeah. The first night I went back to school, the next morning I had no van. It was stolen. Yep. Yeah. So the adversary was playing a good role there, too.
- JC: Um, when you were growing up, did- were you encouraged at all to get an education?
- CC: Absolutely not. Uh, when I was growing up, you were to graduate high school, find a husband, get married and have babies, and that's it.
- JC: Oh, I see. In the LDS church, did you hear anything about women getting an education? What was your impression of that?
- CC: Nope, not initially. It didn't bother me, because I was doing what I wanted to do. I- I can remember when my first baby was born, and I went back to- I was able to take an exercise class and I was doing my exercise, going, this is exactly how I wanted my life to be. I- I was truly happy. I was truly happy.
- JC: So, you- you would say that education is- has always been very important to you?
- CC: Yeah. Yeah. Ever since, um- ever since I can remember, I've always gone to school, and even when I was married, I took, like, night classes. And- and then I would take some day classes as the kids got older, and- and I had my education plan. And I was going to transfer to San Marcos State, and I was a semester away from transferring. And then I was told I couldn't do that.
- JC: When you were still married?
- CC: Yeah.
- JC: Okay, um...
- CC: But I had a lot of units. I was able to transfer into the University of Phoenix with a lot of units. So, I- that just shows that- I did, I always went to school, because at age 24 I had decided I wanted to become a psychologist. And I figured I would be able to attain that by the time, you know, my kids were, you know, out of school, and- and I could do it without affecting them, because I took classes here and there. And I would have done it, but I wasn't allowed to. So...

JC: And how close are you to that goal right now?

CC: Pardon me?

JC: How close are you to that goal right now?

CC: I am so close I can taste it. Um, I'm in third year of my PhD. I'm looking at dissertation options. Um, I should be, uh, I- I should have my PhD within another three, maybe four years and the only reason it's going to take that long is because I'm putting off having my internships until my baby has graduated high school. I should- I should be in an internship now, but that would take my time away and I can't do that. So, I'm a year behind myself, but I will have my PhD. I won't be a psychologist yet, but I will have my PhD.

JC: Okay, and what is your PhD in?

CC: Clinical Psychology.

JC: Okay, and how old is your youngest?

CC: She's seventeen.

JC: Okay, so, this is her last year of school?

CC: Yeah, she's a senior in high school.

JC: Okay. Um, thinking about your children, how do you think they responded- how do you think they felt in, um, you and your husband's divorce?

CC: I can't talk for them, however I think it had to have been very, very difficult- very scary. I would think it would be very, very scary. I've counseled enough kids to know that the very difficult time in a child's life, and they don't feel they have roots. They don't know what the next day is going to bring. They don't know where they're going to be living. They don't know anything. They don't know if they're going to have a mom. They don't know if they have- if they're going to have a dad. If it's so easy just to get rid of one parent, that means they only have one other parent left under the house, and under the roof, and how easy is it going to be for that parent to go away too? So, it would- from all my research and education and experience, it tells me that that is a- a good- there's a good chance kids feel that way. That's a very scary time for them, and a very sad time, because it's a loss. It's a great loss. They've- it's a loss of a dream. It's a loss of a family. It's- nobody expects to be born into a family to have that family torn apart. And in the church, for some of my kids it was very difficult, because now they were part of a broken home. And it's- they're not- some kids are very cruel. A lot of kids are very cruel, and I actually had to call a couple of parents in the ward because of how their kids were treating my kids. But it's human nature, and it's also- it's the Mormon way, because it's how kids are raised in the Mormon households. You do not get divorced!

You don't! You don't! You know, you get married in the temple and you live forever, and all you family goes through eternity together. And so, that's what those kids are being taught; and so if they see somebody that's rubbing against the norm, they- uh- uh- that's absolutely- that's a no-no. And so they- there's a stigma that's placed, I believe, on, uh, uh, a lot of kids when it comes to that. It's almost like...you shouldn't play with them, you shouldn't be around them. It's almost like it'll rub off or something. It's very sad, very sad. And, uh, I can remember my oldest son. He was in middle school and I went to an open house with him, and I asked him how he was doing with the divorce. We were just a couple years into it maybe, I don't know, maybe even a year and eighteen months. And I asked him how he was doing, and he was so shocked when he told me, he said, well so-and-so at school, his mom and dad are divorced; and I asked him at that time, I said, did you think you were the only one that had parents divorced. And he told me, yes. So, I guess children feel like they're the only ones going through it. And so, what I did was, because I had done a lot of reading, and- I'm in- I like psychology, and so one of the books I read, it said that you go to the counselors in all the schools and you find out if they have support groups for the children that are going through this. And, uh, so, I did that. And, some of them took advantage of it. I know- I know my two youngest ones did a lot, and they actually created a program at a new middle- at a new- it was Dingman, it was, uh, an elementary school, they created a program. And I can remember over in, uh, Jerabek Elementary, they, uh, they had a program. And I went in to tell my child's teacher that, um, that I was getting a divorce, and before I told him, he told me, he goes, it's just so shameful how many people get a divorce, and- and there's- you see all those kids out there, and he was giving me statistics, and he goes, they have these programs at school, and should see all the kids in the program for families that are split up. And I was there to tell him this was one more to his statistic to put on. So, uh, the public schools are becoming much more aware and they're a lot more tolerant, but I- I think the church has a long ways to go. Long ways to go. I think it's really tough on kids.

JC: Did you notice any- any certain things that your children did to cope with the divorce?

CC: UM, I think someone became very isolative, and the- they escape by- one escaped in daydreaming in her class. I remember being called in for special appointments with the teacher because they were going to hold her back, because she was daydreaming and so they brought in the district psychologist, and as soon as she found out that we were talking divorce that was the end of our meeting because she said that's how a lot of kid's respond. They go off in la-la land and they begin to, um, they daydream. And, uh, grades went down. A lot of my kids' grades went down during that time and a lot of crying and clinginess. There was a lot of clinginess, and that's understandable. I can remember when I told them I was going back to school. There was one child that didn't want me to go, and there were tears, and, uh, that was a toughie, because I knew I had to. So, um, yeah, there was a lot of changes with the kids, and unfortunately, I felt I could handle- you know, I could make it better for them by buying 'em things and stuff, and so that just, uh, escalated my debt, and all they need was mom to be around. But I don't think- I- I had to work, and so I worked four days a week, but other than that, I was home, except when I started school and I made sure that that school wasn't during the

day, it was only one night a week. So, it wasn't- it- it wasn't- we were blessed, because I think a lot of people who go through a divorce, I- I think the mom's gone more. I really do, I think the mom's gone more. I could be wrong, but I- I think we were pretty fortunate. I think Heavenly Father watched out for us really well. So, but I think that was very hard for them. And now even when I bring something up, my youngest will thank me. She'll say, like, uh- I'll tell her I'm holding off to do this or that 'til you graduated, then she'll go, thank you. And then I'll say, I know this has been really hard on you, with the divorce and everything, and she says, thank you for knowing that. So, kids need their feeling acknowledged too, and a lot of times parents don't acknowledge their children's feeling, you know, they're people- they're people too. So, but a lot of parents are so wrapped up in themselves and- and their problems, that they forget that there are little children around that are in just as much, if not more pain, and even more so than pain, they're scared to death. So, that's my take on that.

JC: Well, how would you say, um- how would you say your kids have changed because of this? How do you see them today?

CC: Well, there are four kids and they're all totally different- earphone fell off, sorry- and they're all totally different. I- you can never predict how it would have been. You would never know however I think for my girls- I don't really think they would have had they opportunities that they've had. I don't think my oldest would've been allowed to go away to school unless she had a scholarship. I don't think she would ever have been able to travel like she has been traveling because somebody would put the breaks on it. Um, my youngest daughter, I don't think she would have been able to travel to Japan, because of the money. I don't think she would have been able to participate in the extra curricular activities at school, because my husband would not have allowed to spend the money. He's balking about it now, so I know it would have been- it would have- it- she wouldn't have been able to do that. And, now I just don't ask his permission and I allow them to do it because this is their life, and I just don't see a problem. My boys...if we were still together, we would have been strong in the church, even though terribly unhappy, but strong in the church. I think my boys would have went on a mission, I really do. Uh, my daughter went on a mission. I don't think she would have been encouraged by her father to go on a mission. Um, but I think my boys would have went on a mission because it would have been expected of them. And at this rate, I know my oldest will not go on a mission, he's totally inactive.

JC: How old are they now?

CC: Um, David is twenty...22. Brian...Brian's 19. Brian still hasn't 100% given it up, but it doesn't look like he's going on a mission. So, but, things changed around our house, just like that one lady up in Northern California. She wanted that one day, she wanted that one day to herself, and I understand now. I- I totally understand what she's talking about, and, uh, I totally understand. So...but my kids, maybe they wouldn't have fallen away from the church because they would have been expected to go to church. I don't know. I don't know, but, uh, I think my boys are doing, as far as education and stuff like that- I think they'd be doing it anyway. But, uh, I don't know, it's really hard to say. It

seems like the boys are encouraged to do more than the girls are in our family. So...but I think- I think they're all more independent because of it. I definitely know my youngest is independent of it. She- she has a mind of her own. My girls are very, very spiritual, and they know the value of staying close to the church. My oldest- my youngest son, he, uh, knows the church is important- he, uh, knows religion is important. He's a good boy, and he knows that, and he knows what's expected of him, and he has good morals and all that. And both boys, you know, I don't think they drink or smoke or do drugs or anything in that respect, they're very good. But, um...I- it's really hard to say.

JC: Okay, um, going back to your job, now are you still at that doctor's office making six-twenty-five an hour?

CC: No, no. When I- go ahead.

JC: How long did you stay there?

CC: Well I promised the owner- the doctor that- he said, I'll hire you if you don't leave in three months. So, he goes, I don't want to train you and then you go somewhere else. Uh, I haven't had a job in ump-teen years, I wasn't going to go job-hopping. And so I told him I'd give him a year, and he said that's great. Well, at eleven months I- it was very humiliating. Uh, everything got blamed on me, it was bad- it was really bad. They'd go out to lunch, they wouldn't invite me. They talk behind my back, and then they'd see I was hearing, and they'd close the door on me. How terrible it was for a person to get divorced and it was- it was horrible. It- it was...it was really a low, low part in my life, very dark. So, uh, after about- every Sunday I looked in the paper for jobs. Because that's just what I did on Sundays, because I couldn't see myself staying at this six-twenty-five an hour job, because there's no way I could support anybody on that. And he wouldn't even hire me full time. He didn't hire me full time because he didn't want to pay any benefits. So, he was really bad. But anyways, at about 11 months, one week I came across- well, before that- ten months, something, I came across this ad- it was for self-employment in a mental health facility, and they were looking for somebody. And they had to have two years of experience. Well, I didn't fit that, and so I talked to a few people about that. And, uh, one was- I was a Girl Scout leader, and this one mother- she was, uh, she was a professional- she was a speech therapist and I told her about this ad, and she goes, well as soon as they find out you're older, you're responsible, surely they'll hire you. And I was very hesitant, and then one day the doctor wasn't in and I was sitting with the secretary, and I told her about this ad. And I had my resume with me, and she goes, go ahead and fax it over. And I said, nah, I don't think so. And she goes, what's it going to hurt? You know, all they can do is not call you. And so, she was right, that's all, all they could do was just not call me. So, I went ahead and I faxed it over and, uh, within five minutes I got a phone call back, and I was asked to come in that night for an interview. And so, I went in, not even thinking I was going to take the job- it's just- this is a good experience to go interviewing because I knew I wasn't going to stay there for much longer. So, I went in and I had to interview- it was an old, old office and I can remember it smelled. But I went in and I was going, okay- all I could think of was, you can't judge a book by its cover. There's another whole story

about that, when I miscarried a baby. I like- I liked the office the doctor was in. I didn't like the doctor, but I liked the office. So that's what I thought in the waiting room, okay, you can't judge a book by its cover; even though this is really a bad looking place, this might be a really good job. So, I was interviewed by the lady that needed to be replaced. And then I was interviewed by this little, quirky guy who asked me all these weird questions that I've never been asked before. And he was sharp and stern- oh, it was terrible. And I sat there going, just because you can get the job, doesn't even mean you want the job. You're just here for the experience of interviewing. And so after I saw the little, quirky guy, I went across the hall and saw this- this gentleman. He was a tall, slim, bearded gentleman- I mean, really a nice, nice man- nice Italian. And so I sat down in his cushy chair, and he just asked me a few questions, about what my goals were, and, you know, if I would want to work for them, you know, what...what I wanted out of life. It was absolutely really nothing about the job. And so, I got done with him, and I went back out and talked to the gal, and- and, uh, and she goes, we'll call you. And I said, okay that's fine, and I went home. And the next- I didn't really, I can remember I didn't sleep much that night, I- I was walking and- and I'd say, well, I can't do that. I can't do that. I'm leaving the- I'm leaving the security of my job. And, um, you know, it's self-employment, and the bottom line was, I wasn't leaving anything, because I had no security there. I wasn't making any money, and I did not have any benefits, so it's be no different at all, except I'd be making double- over double the income. So, the next morning I went into the office 'cause I wasn't sure if I wanted to do it, because I don't like change. And this gentleman called me up at 9 am and he goes, well, are you going to work for us? And I told him, I said, well, I can't. And he asked why, and I said because I have children, and my children go to school at 9 'o clock, and I have to get them to school. And you want someone to be there at 8 am and I can't be there at 8 am. And he said, oh, no, you can come in any time you want. So, I said, I- I can? I can take my kids and then come to school (work)? And he goes, oh, yes, yes. At the time I didn't know what the definition of self-employed meant. And so, I took the job. And the doctor that I was quitting was not very happy with me. Um, I don't care. I- you know- he- he trained every little...out of me, and he got a lot- he got a lot out of those eleven and a half months. He got- he got slave labor. And, uh, he- but he gave me an education and that's the only reason I was able to consider- be considered for this other position. So, I took the job, and, uh, I worked like a dog. I worked really, really, really, really, really hard to earn my place and their respect. And, uh, it's ten years later and I'm still with them and I'm making triple what I was making at the doctor's office, and soon to go up again. And now, I'm now working only two days a week at the office, and I'm working the rest off the time at home, and, uh, I have them- I have their respect. I think they'd do anything for me. And I've made myself- uh, uh, I- I- they'd have a difficult time if I quit. And so, I'm kind of indispensable. And that's what I try and teach my kids, you know, you work your tail off initially to make yourself indispensable and then, you know, your chances of maintaining that job will be better that if you just did enough. You need to do more than enough, at least initially, 'cause then you earn your place in their business. And again Heavenly Father followed through, because I wanted to be at home and this job allowed me to come and go as I wanted. And, uh, it's- it's been a blessing to my family. I mean, it's been truly a blessing. It's allowed me to go to school. It's allowed me to come and go into the office whenever I want. And, uh, you know, on

the weekends when I'd have to do work, my kids would come with me and, uh- to this day my kids come with me. They'll do homework and we'll cart in a little TV or something, but I'm with them. And, uh, my daughter goes through the drugs- you know, I work for a psychiatrist- a couple of psychiatrists and we have samples of drugs, and my daughter throws away the expired ones, and...you know, we're just one big happy family. But it works, it- it's worked. And it was something that was put on my path and I didn't ignore it. I- I think that's the worst mistake we can do is to ignore something that we've asked for and is given to us, and even though it looks really scary and really difficult, we need to do it and see if that's the answer to what we were asking for, and chances are, it is. And yeah, it's hard, anything's hard, but anything worth receiving is hard, it takes a little bit of work. But, uh, it's been a good experience. I've learned a lot about myself, and I've learned what I can do, and, uh, it's a pretty good feeling, because when you go through, like, 17 years of being told you're nothing, you can't do anything, it's pretty nice to be in position where you're needed and you actually- you're actually needed and you're important and what you do matters. It leads into every other aspect of your life, and so, I also learned, within a couple months being there, I was feeling really guilty that I had to work. And this one psychologist that I contract with, I was talking with her about it, and she works with children, she works with court cases, and she's- she's a great gal, and told her how I was feeling, and she set me straight. And she said, you know, a lot of people have to work. She goes, there are a lot of single moms in this world, and the mom that isn't successful with her family and that the kids hate it that she works, is the mom that comes home and brings the work home in a really bad light. And she gripes and complains and she hates her job, but the woman who works in a job that she likes and she comes, and even though she's tired, you know, she's happy because she's doing something that she likes doing. And your kids will be just fine. And I just went, yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah- well, you know what, she was right. She was right. So, you need to follow your heart, and you need to follow- you need to follow your heart and do what you really have a passion for and what you want to do. Because as the little saying goes, you do what you love and you'll never have to work a day in your life. So, and unfortunately in this day and age, a lot of people have to work, and even people that are married, you know, they got to have a dual income sometimes. She was right, she was right, but that's how...you know...

JC: So, um, seeing as you worked with uh, uh, psychologists in that field, how has it affected your school life? Has that helped at all?

CC: Oh yeah. Um, my resources are limitless, and when I was getting my Masters for Marriage Family therapist, and I had to do a practicum, the same gal who gave me advice about mothers working, I told her that I had two offers. One was a really plush office in Escondido and it really looked tempting, and then there was this other one, this really icky place downtown San Diego where you work with all these homeless derelicts, and, uh, it was really creep and the place smelled, and it was dirty and I don't want to do that. And she told me I had to, and I said, I don't think so. And she said, you get on that phone and tell them that you'll take that job because I had interviews already with both of them. I batted the ball a couple times, back and forth, and I said I don't want to. She goes, you have to. And I did, and then she told me she's a supervisor for practicum

students in PhD, and she said, people who work in crisis houses, it looks wonderful on your resumes, and it helps you with your state board, and you learn so much- so much from, uh, the time that a client is admitted to the time a client is discharged. You'll know the DSM, which is our book of diagnosis, you'll know that like the back of your hand because those crisis houses are like walking DSM's because they're so sick, and the people are so sick. So, I would never have done that if I wouldn't have had her as a- I contract with her to do her billing, but I wouldn't have had that. And several times when I've had papers, I've asked them if they had any information, and they'll pull open their files and they'll...and in several times, I know I had a huge paper in my Masters program to do and my friend and I were doing it on eating disorders. And my number one doctor that I contract with, he, uh, he's nationally known, he's very- he's quite famous in his, uh, line of work and he speaks nation- international wide, and he's an eating disorder specialist. And he opened his files and he said, take anything you want, just make sure you bring it back. And so my friend and I, we spent a day in his office going through all of his stuff. And, um, so it's been- it's just phenomenal where I am now in what I needed, and how detrimental it was for me to be where I am. And Heavenly Father knew where to place me. And I've kind of dragged my heels, you know, every step of the way, and, no, I don't want to, and then something says, do it, do it, do it. So, I did it, and anything I've done, I have not regretted as far as schooling and that stuff goes, because I've depended upon the Lord. And- I mean that's the key, that's the key, because He'll lead you- He'll lead you where you're supposed to go even though it's uncomfortable. So, yeah, my job now is, uh- when I become licensed as a marriage family therapist, I'll keep it and I'll- I've actually gotten another doctor that I do his billing now at home, and I had asked for that two weeks ago. I had asked Heavenly Father, I needed to increase my income to feel secure, and this was placed on my doorstep. And I go, I don't think so, that's an awful lot of work, but I knew- I knew that I had asked for it, and you don't- you know, you don't say, oh, well thanks for giving it to me, but I don't want it now. So, you take it, and I took it, and it's going to work out, because when I have my private practice, which is another blessing, because I'll be working five minutes away from home. Um, everything works out if you just hold onto your faith and if you just listen and listen and listen to the still small voice and don't question it, even if it's uncomfortable. Because I think we kind of know when the adversary is sticking his neck in there, 'cause if it feels good and you're just scared- you do it, especially if you've asked for it, you do it. So, um, everything, ever since I split up with my ex-husband, everything has fallen into place. Heavenly Father has- Heavenly Father has been there and He has guided myself and He has guided my family and we are very blessed- very, very blessed. From the time we got our house, which fits us perfectly, until where I am now, and in my education- I mean I- I mean I have everything I want. You know, I'm in the school I wanted to be in- my girlfriend didn't get in, but I got in. And it's just- He's there, I mean, He has the plan and we really don't know what the plan is, and when we get a glimpse of it, it's kind of scary, but you know what? If our needs and our wants are righteous, and if they're brought to Heavenly Father in a- in a very humble manner, and if we have evidence to back it up, why we need it, of course, He'll follow through. He'll do what is best for us. We don't know what is best for us. But in my situation with myself and my family, it's been incredible how everything has fallen into place- and it could all fall apart tomorrow, I don't know. But, um, right now, everything's falling into

place and Heavenly Father has a plan and we're- we're working the plan and- and we're not done yet. We're not done yet, but we will be. We will be. And I have more time behind me than I do in front of me, because I started with 48 units. And I got the Bachelors, got the Masters, and I'm ready for my second state board, and I'll be licensed and then I'm into the PhD program, which is an elite PhD program, which I wanted to be in. So, you, like, can't ask for anything more. And my kids have all turned out good. I don't think any of them are drinking or smoking or any of the bad things, I think they're all- they're all doing pretty good. So I'm really blessed. And I'm a stronger woman.

JC: Yeah, that's- I've got a few more questions, um, one of them about how you feel you turned out, but just before that, um, I'd like to ask you, at any time during the divorce, did you feel any pressure to remarry?

CC: Oh, yeah.

JC: And where did that pressure come from?

CC: Church.

JC: How did you feel about the pressure?

CC: I caved into the pressure, and I did get married. Um, the church doesn't encourage you to remain single. The church doesn't encourage you to make a life for yourself, uh, especially when there're kids are involved. The church encourages you to get married to have a priesthood holder in the house, and the- it's unfortunate, and I didn't...so, and so, I caved into- I caved into the pressure, and, um, that's okay. It's a decision I made. But yes, I felt a pressure, because when you go to functions and you're not married it feels kind of funny, 'cause you have all these families around you, and it feels kind of funny. And unless you've done it for years and years and years, like, I do know some single people, and it doesn't bother them. But, um, yeah, there's a huge pressure- huge, to, uh, become married- huge pressure- and I guess in one sense it's so you don't, you know, do things that you'll regret, I- I guess, I don't know. I don't know. I have no idea, but yeah, there was pressure. There definitely wasn't any pressure on anybody outside the church, you know, and if I would have been a strong enough woman, knowing that I could make it on my own, I would not have gotten married again, that I truly did not feel I could make it on my own. So, and that's the number one reason marriages- remarriages happen when there are kids involved. It's financial. The man makes out better when he's divorced, but the woman, she decreases her lifestyle. The man either remains the same or he improves his lifestyle, but the woman seldom remains at the same economic level, and normally she goes down. So, uh, that's the number one reason that people get remarried.

JC: Um, now that it's been about 15- no not 15, about 12 years since your divorce started, how do you feel about it now? Do you feel comfortable in the ward still? How does it affect your life today?

- CC: If I was in a ward that didn't know my ex-husband and know us as a couple, it would be a lot easier. There are still times when it's really uncomfortable, because the people who have said things before- they know who they are and I know who they are, and, um, it's kind of awkward sometimes. It is kind of awkward sometimes, however it's my choice to remain here, and so...my choice. And I don't have to remain here if I'm too uncomfortable, and, uh but I choose to remain here for my kids.
- JC: So, you're still in the same ward as you were when you divorced?
- CC: Yes.
- JC: Okay. Okay, um, having gone through everything you did and having accomplished everything that you have, what are your goals for the future? How do you see in your future?
- CC: As Oprah Winfrey says, the future is so bright it burns my eyes. Um, the future is going to be good. There's a lot more struggles ahead, but the struggles aren't the same as they were before. Um, I'm secure in who I am. I 'm secure in my abilities. Um, I know I will never be homeless, like my ex-husband told me I would. I know I can do anything now. I know that- I know...support around me. I'm resilient. I'm going to succeed in everything I wanted to do, which is good which is really good. I know I never walk alone. I know, uh- I just- I know I'm important and I'm resilient and I- I'm tenacious and I can do anything, and I know my kids can do anything. I know anybody can do anything. And sometimes we're motivated for different reason, and I think when I started all this going back to school and stuff- it was a lot of my anger and my spitefulness, and my revenge, you know, like, I'll show you- I'll show you that you're not going to do that to me. And, um, we as women, we're amazing- we're an amazing gender. We are strong and we can do anything. I mean, we really can. It's uh, I truly feel that it's the men who need the extra help, not us- not us, but, uh but we can do anything. And it would be really wonderful to have a companion by my side who had the same aspirations, but that didn't always- isn't always the case, but that doesn't mean you can't still have your goals and your successes and your dreams, because even though it isn't ideal in somebody's else's eyes, it can still be pretty ideal in your own. You know, if you're just true to yourself and you keep the faith- I- I'm thankful for the challenges that I've gone through- I didn't like them, and to this day I don't like working as hard as I do, but in order to get where I want to go, this is just one the road. And, uh, Heavenly Father will be there to lift the load and make it lighter, and as long as we know that, we can make it through anything. We are a- we, uh- when Heavenly Father created women, He knew what He was doing, because He knew the challenges we were going to have. But He knew that we're strong. We're strong. We are amazing women. We really are, and how dare if a man ever, ever says anything-anything different, because they're wrong. They're wrong. We can do anything. And how beautiful it is to have a companion by you, to be successful and fulfill your dreams together, but it doesn't always happen. So, I miss that, I miss having the Priesthood. I wish I did have the Priesthood in the home. But, you know, at least we have a great Bishop we can turn to.

JC: Is it the same bishop as when your divorce started?

CC: Oh, no. We've had a couple of Bishops. We've had a couple since then.

JC: Um, one last question, for- what would your advice through experience be, um, for other LDS women who are going through divorce and are having a hard time?

CC: It's real trite, but, you know, you stay close to your Heavenly Father, and you ask for things, and you stay close- you just stay close and stop doubting yourself. We're great doubters. That- that is what I think I would...that's the big thing that helped, is just keeping the faith, keeping the faith, and keep moving forward. Keep moving forward and visualize- I can have all this psychological stuff come out too, but that's not what it was back then. So, a lot of self-talk, you know, correcting your negative- your automatic negative thoughts, you know, you need to correct those. They're very distorted. I hope that there will be someday groups for women in the church that are having challenging times like this, you know, with divorces and separations and stuff like that. There's nothing like that around here. And, uh, women need to talk and they need to know that they matter, because there is so much abuse- there is so much abuse in the ward of the women that people aren't even aware of. And they're the- many of the perfect families are the abusing families. So, um, and people- mothers don't think that they can get out of it, because they're thinking that they'll destroy the family, however many times if you stay in a marriage you destroy the family, when it is unhealthy. And, uh, it's sad to say- and I don't know what Heavenly Father's going to say when we get up there to see Him, but I can't imagine that a loving Father would want any woman left in a marriage with abusive- physical, verbal, emotional...I can't imagine a loving Father wanting any of His children to remain in a dysfunctional relationship like that. And- but unfortunately a lot of people don't think they have options, but we all have options. You just have to believe that you can, you know, we just have to believe- you can set a goal and you can achieve a goal. So...because we can because we're women. We're women. We're strong. So...and hopefully someday there will be more programs for the woman, and I think there will be. I think there will be. If enough women get out there and propose different- different, uh, different options for women to, uh, participate in different activities, because too many of it is not geared toward the- the single woman in the church. So, but, the main thing is faith, keep the faith. Very trite, but very true. It worked for me, it worked for me.

JC: Well, thank you so much for letting me interview you. That's all the questions we have for now anyway, I guess.