



Hope You Got A Good Settlement Out Of It

Originally Published: November 13, 2009

(Warning: Rant Alert)

I recently called a business colleague to ask some advice on a new path I am blazing in my own career.

In recent months, as I am catching up with someone after an extended period (a few months or more), I like to let them know at some point in the conversation that I am recently divorced.

I do this for a number of reasons, mostly:

- 1) to let them know about a big event in my life
- 2) to show people how divorce can be a positive and transformative (in the good way) experience for many people and
- 3) yea, I admit it, for some shock value because most people didn't see my divorce coming.

The person I was talking to in this particular instance was quite surprised.

After her initial reaction, her first statement to me was:

“Well I hope you got a great settlement.”

Um....OK.

A settlement?

I got a heck a lot out of my divorce: Life-changing lessons, insights and strength.

But a settlement?

Guess what?

I got no settlement.

Not a dime.

I'm not here to tell you what I got/didn't get/paid/didn't pay as part of my divorce.

I am here to say that I didn't like the assumption that as a woman, I was entitled or deserving of or needing a settlement.

To me, this sounded like, "So sorry for you, but hope you got some [money](#) out of it."

Or, in other words, "Hope you got properly paid for your years of service."

For the record, I make my own money. I work a lot and always have. I love what I do and I love to work. I am enormously grateful I am able to work on my own terms and answer to no one but myself.

I also love the freedom that making my own money gives me.

I am not going to lie or sugar-coat the truth: One of the reasons I worked so hard all these years, even when I had little [babies](#), was because I did not for one minute want to ever have to base a decision about my well-being or happiness based on someone else who had more money (power) or money-making ability than I.

I didn't marry (or divorce) for money. I know many people, women in particular, do one or both. That's their journey and I wish them well on it. I, however, don't like the assumption that this is how things happen across the board. These are the same wrong assumptions that prompt an immediate concerned face and an "I'm so sorry" from some people who hear that you've divorced.

I get bent out of shape (can you tell?!) when people – especially those who do not know me beyond a limited capacity like this business acquaintance – throw out questions or statements that represent, perhaps, their reality but something far removed from my own.

So I guess what I am saying/asking is:

Don't assume everyone does things, makes decisions and exists for the same reasons you do. And for heaven's sake, if you are going to make assumptions based on your world view, don't push them on me. Especially when they have to do with the power — emotional, [financial](#) and otherwise — of women.

OK...off my soapbox.