

# odds and e future

for 18 hours but she's an angel. I will look at her and pinch myself. I always wanted four children and we're still on the adoption programme though we need to get used to being parents first. Everyone was just being nice after 20 as to marriage it's all about the future through love as if we really love the wife.

## I LOST MY CHILDREN, HUSBAND AND HOME

*JO DAVIES, 43, a hypnotherapist and life coach, lives in Maidenhead, Berks. She has a teenage son and daughter*

I was 21 when I married Pete. We were happy at first although he was a total perfectionist but I was in love and didn't notice his controlling tendencies.

After I had Darren, who's now 18, and Rosie, 16, Pete had a fling and I

threw him out. He begged me to take him back which I did but I never trusted him again.

Pete often put me down and by 2001 I was dreaming of a happier life with someone else. Then I met this man through work. He was 10 years older, single and swept me off my feet. I tried to fight it and break it off but ended up moving in with him three months later. I took the children, then aged 10 and eight, and a black bin bag of clothes and photos.

I rang Pete and told him the kids were safe but I wasn't coming back. A few days later he became suicidal so I took the children back to stay with him while he got his head sorted out. Later I found out he'd told everyone I'd abandoned them and he stopped me seeing them.

I went to a solicitor but it took two years to get my daughter back and my son has never returned to live with me.

After I lost the children my new relationship fell apart because I

couldn't handle the guilt. While I was visiting my mother my car went missing – Pete had taken it with my only possessions inside. He had the house, both the cars, both the children and my clothes. He'd taken everything.

I cried so much I was numb. I went to live with mum but couldn't eat and went from a size 14 to an eight. Then came a strange sense of liberation. I felt quite dangerous and the fight came out in me. I even jumped out of a plane at 10,000ft for charity – I felt as if I had nothing to lose.

When my ex gave me an old car as a gift it was my first step towards getting my life back. I rang the council and found a flat, took on more hours at work to pay for it and in 2004 Rosie moved in with me. It was divine but it broke my heart I couldn't have Darren, too.

When my divorce went through in 2004 I came out with just £1,000 after 16 years of marriage. Every night I'd write down the progress I'd made. One day at a time was the only way I could survive. In 2006 I lost my job due to stress but used the time to do a home study course on the subject, funded by reading tarot cards for friends and family.

Now I've retrained as a hypnotherapist and colour therapist. People come to me for marriage issues, weight loss, lack of self-esteem, depression and anxiety.

I had a text the other day saying: "You changed my life." It's so rewarding. I feel good about myself again and I'm determined to make other women stronger, too.

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