

# Mary J. Blige Says She ‘Learned to Be Happy’ on Her Own After Divorce: ‘I’m Grateful’

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When [Mary J. Blige](#) belts out her hit “No More Drama,” she really means it.

The R&B superstar — who just brought down the house at the [2019 BET Awards](#) on Sunday after scooping up the Lifetime Achievement Award — is taking her winning streak to New Orleans for this year’s [25th Annual ESSENCE Festival](#), which she’ll headline for the 15th time, kicking off her [Royalty Tour](#) with pal [Nas](#).

After a tumultuous couple of years that included her [contentious divorce](#) from former manager [Kendu Isaacs](#), the star, 48, opens up to PEOPLE in this week’s issue about moving on with her happy, healthy and busy single life now.



Leon Bennett/Getty

“If I could tell my younger self something, I would tell her don’t be afraid of your imperfections, because one day people are going to love you for them,” says Blige. With hoards of fans who routinely sing along to her heartbreak hits like “Not Gon’ Cry”, she’s right.



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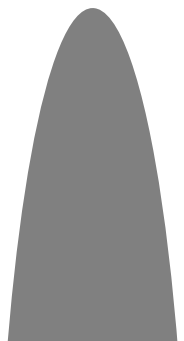
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It’s those songs that ended up helping her through her recent split from Isaacs after 13 years of marriage. Asked whether she finds it tough [singing about lost love](#) these days, she says that actually, “It’s therapeutic. To travel back and to relive something again and not have it drive you crazy is a true gift from God.”

Emma McIntyre/Getty

The star adds, “To be able to touch people with what you’ve gone through and pull them though...The sadness makes me happy almost. I can’t even describe it.”

Francois Durand/Getty



In 2017, [Blige opened up](#) about what all she'd been through, alleging that Isaacs had been unfaithful during their marriage. She didn't find peace until last year.

"I think I turned that corner when [I got my divorce](#). I think that I realized that no matter what comes to me, no matter how big or bad it is, I have to keep moving, I have to keep living. I said, 'No, I'm not going to stay in this marriage. I'm out of here.' That's what thriving is about."

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ESSENCE Festival 2019 / Mary J. Blige and Nas

Courtesy ESSENCE

Now, "I'm very content, and I'm happy with myself," says Blige. "I learned to be happy with just Mary, just enjoying my own company, me by myself most of the time. I'm grateful."

*For more on Mary J. Blige's life after divorce, pick up this week's issue of PEOPLE, on newsstands Friday.*

Sophy Holland

But that doesn't mean that suitors aren't lining up to date her. "There's a lot," she says with a laugh, when asked about men vying for her attention. "But I'm very selective. I've been in a bad relationship. So if it's not worth it, it's not worth it."

The important thing she's realized these past couple of years is that *she* is worth it. As she told the audience at the BET Awards, "Although I am a leader, a queen, a living legend, I'm a servant as well and I'm here to serve."

Luis Sanchis

And the "[Thriving](#)" singer is just focused on being her best. "I try to keep my mind positive, I stay working out, I try to eat right and treat people right," she says. "I have fun too, don't get it twisted, I go out with my friends, I laugh, I joke, I have wine. I do all of that."

Honestly, she adds, "It's not easy, it's hard doing the right thing all the time, but if this is going to keep me out of trouble, I choose this. I don't let anything get the best of me."

*Tickets on sale now for the 25th Annual [ESSENCE Festival](#) in New Orleans July 5 – 7.*

- By [Janine Rubenstein](#)

