



A Guide For Those Considering Divorce

When you get married, full of optimism and excitement, you feel like you are at the beginning of your happily ever after. For some, this may be the case, but for many, marriage does not always go as planned.



Thousands of different scenarios can lead you to consider divorce. Maybe you fell out of love slowly over the course of many years. Maybe your partner was unfaithful to you. Maybe the strain of parenthood caused you to realize your incompatibility. Maybe you feel you rushed into your marriage and as you've gotten to know your spouse better, you've realized you aren't right for one another. Maybe you've been the victim of physical, emotional, or sexual abuse. But know that you are not alone during this emotional and vulnerable time. Whatever the circumstances, you are now in a difficult and stressful situation, making a decision you never imagined you would have to make. The team at Whitson & Tansey has guided many people who are standing at these crossroads, unsure of how to proceed. If you're not fully certain you even want a divorce, ask yourself these questions:

Is my marriage making me happy? Is it making me unhappy? Do I foresee this changing?

Do I want to spend the rest of my life by my spouse's side?

Does my spouse treat me with the love and respect I deserve?

If you're still not sure, being more informed and learning the process of proceeding with a divorce would entail can help you make the best decision for you.

Whether you're positive it's time or not, find our tips for moving forward with greater clarity and the best outcome way for you.



1. Safety is the TOP PRIORITY

Throughout this guide, we mention developing a plan and making certain arrangements in advance of proceeding with a divorce. However, if you are in an unsafe relationship, it might not be right for you to take the time to make a plan. If protecting yourself from harm requires leaving without a plan, do it. Once you're somewhere safe, you should immediately make contact with a domestic violence program for support and help planning for your continued safety.

2. Prepare financially

If you have time to prepare, there are certain financial arrangements that can be helpful to make. First, gather your important financial records. This includes a few years of tax returns, business bookkeeping records, and bank and investment account records. Gathering this documentation is especially important for accounts kept in the home in the name of your spouse only. Next, run your own credit history to gather information. Then, if you don't have a credit card in your name only, you should immediately apply online and use your current total household income on the application. Keep this card for emergency use only. If possible, set aside some savings in a separate account to provide a safety net for the inevitable financial pinch once your family income is supporting two households versus one household. It can also be helpful to project two realistic household budgets for yourself (and kids, if applicable) and for your likely living arrangement after you physically separate from your spouse. One budget should be created assuming you stay living where you are and your spouse moves out and one should be created assuming you will move out of your current home and set up a new residence elsewhere.



3. Practical planning

The personal planning that goes into preparing for a divorce will be different for every person, but we can offer some general advice. For example, it may be wise to safeguard keepsakes or unique personal property that is irreplaceable (or priceless to you). Things like baby books and children's artwork often end up destroyed or held hostage by angry partners. It is also wise to put important documents like birth certificates, passports, and immigration papers offsite in a safe place.

4. Find your support system

During your divorce, your support system will be extremely valuable to you. They will be by your side to remind you of your strength and value and help you remember that you have beautiful, loving relationships beyond your marriage. Now is a good time to identify emotional supports (close friends, family members, spiritual community, etc.) that can be supportive listeners through the process.

5. Assess your social media accounts

It may be necessary to do a deep cleaning of your Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and other social media accounts, especially if you post about personal matters. You will need to delete anything that would be embarrassing or unflattering if it showed up as evidence in court.

6. Pace yourself

It can be tempting to purge yourself completely of your old life and start building something new right away. You might think, "I'm getting a divorce, so I might as well get rid of everything in my life that's making me unhappy and quit my job, too." However, we recommend that you avoid making multiple life changes all at once. A divorce is enough to juggle! Avoid changing jobs or jumping into new romantic relationships at the same time as going through a separation or divorce.

7. Take care of your emotional health.

Divorce can be a huge emotional challenge no matter your journey with mental health. Even when you have managed other major life crises during your life's journey, going through a divorce can be extremely damaging emotionally. Reaching out for help is a sign of strength, not weakness. Friends and family can often offer some of that support, but it may not be enough and you need to talk to a mental health professional — especially when dealing with other long-term issues like depression and anxiety. You may also benefit from a more neutral, compassionate, mental health professional or regular therapy appointments when you're in the divorce process.

Choosing a legal team can also help you protect your emotional health during a divorce. When you work with the WhitsonLaw team, you are supported both practically and emotionally by understanding, caring, and compassionate advocates with experience in both the legal world and a team of divorce specialists. We empower you by helping you navigate all the issues within the legal process and support you as best as we can.

While this guide offers general information and advice, we understand that every person's circumstances are different and would love to talk to you about your unique situation. Call or email us today and WhitsonLaw's team of understanding, caring, and compassionate advocates are ready to support and guide you at 518.412.4111 or info@whitsonlawfirm.com



How WhitsonLaw Can Assist You

Our team of knowledgeable Certified Divorce Specialists™, mediators and collaborative family law attorneys at WhitsonLaw are here to help make your path to divorce as stress-free as possible. If you desire to use options that keep you out of court, we offer mediation and collaborative divorce. If the Court is where your divorce will be decided, we will fiercely advocate for you and help you obtain the best possible outcome in court. Moreover, we can help you with any problems related to child custody, such as spousal support and child support. We understand the sensitive nature of these cases, and we want to help educate and empower you so that you can make the most pragmatic decisions for yourself.

WhitsonLaw's team of Certified Divorce Specialists™ and experienced family law attorneys are ready to support and guide you. Call us today at 518.412.4111 or email us at info@whitsonlawfirm.com

