

## EFFECTS OF DIVORCE

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### CHAPTER 1

#### EFFECTS OF DIVORCE ON WOMEN

When a happily ever after turns into a nasty end, it leaves a sour taste in the mouth for a long time to come. The frequency of divorces is on an all time high. With more and more people getting a legal separation, the effects of divorce on women are more emphasized as compared to men. The sole reason for this being women tend to be more emotional than rational in thought. A divorce has many facets besides its emotional angle.

Understanding these dimensions can help you in comprehending the side effects of a divorce much better. This kind of separation affects both the partners in separate ways, depending on their mental ability to cope up with the situation.

## PSYCHOLOGICAL EFFECTS OF DIVORCE

### A. EMOTIONAL UPHEAVAL

Divorce is painful no matter what the reasons for separation are. It causes emotional upheaval which wrecks many. The rigmarole of starting over and adapting to a single's life is the toughest part of getting divorced. One of the most common effects of divorce is depression. Feeling low is natural, and it often leads to a state of depression. With no one to talk to and the sudden loneliness, one can feel abandoned. Additionally, the loss of financial and emotional support can cause anxiety and insecurity. Being in wallows of self-pity and self doubt is also a common side effect of divorce on women. Spend more time with your family and your friends, to get out of this phase of eclipsed self worth. Value the people who are still there with you, to see the positive side of life.

### B. GUILT TRIPS

Women going through a divorce often blame themselves for the relationship mishap. Seeing your immediate family and children put up with the emotional upheaval, can make you feel guilty for a long time. To deal with this conundrum, spend more time with them. Be open about your issues and accept their support as you cope up with the breakup. Dissolution of marriage is no reason for a woman to feel guilty for the rest of her life. Remember that it takes two to tango, so the fault is not entirely yours. Forgive yourself and vow to evolve as an edified person from this traumatic experience.

### C. SINGLE PARENTING

A single parent is both, the mother and the father to the child. Playing the double role is definitely taxing and the toughest challenge of parenthood. Effects of divorce on children are long-

lasting. It makes them question their acts and their relationships with you. In many cases, it also warps the meaning of trust for kids who are in the developmental stage of life. Although you are now a single parent, you have to help your child to cope up with the fact that his / her parents are no longer going to be together. Communication is the key to re-establish your relationship with your child.

#### D. SOCIAL CIRCLES

Women going through a divorce often end up feeling alone, and crave to spend time with friends. However, a broken marriage comes with a broken friend circle too. After spending years with your ex-husband, your social circles are bound to be the same. A divorce creates a rift amongst friends as well, causing lack of friends and disturbed social circles. When you lose out on people who were once a part of life, for no fault of yours, it can cause prolonged periods of sadness and depression.

A homemaker finds it extremely difficult to deal with the side effects of a divorce, as she loses out on everything she ever worked for. However, one needs to realize that divorce is not the end of the world. It is a rough phase of life, which needs to be dealt with optimism and positivity.

## CHAPTER 2

### WHY PEOPLE GET DIVORCED

I can't think of settling down with one decent reason as to why most of the marriages don't last after a certain time phase. This is because marriages today do not mean the same as they meant a couple of years ago. In primitive times, when someone stood before the Almighty and said 'I Do', they literally meant those words which would last forever. But today, those same words sound hollow. When you plan to get married, obviously you don't intend to get divorced. But people's values and outlook over the years have changed drastically. Today, a relationship has everything like cheating, boredom, adultery, money related issues, children, but love and respect. If such aspects take place in your marriage, then

neither of you really want to work at it anymore. Probably the next thing you would see yourself doing, would be sitting in a courtroom or a lawyer's office signing unpleasant divorce papers. However, you should take such a step only when you are emotionally ready to go through with such a decision. Generally most divorces happen due to a family's orthodox thinking or family pressure. Some partners really never get to know each other, resulting in a divorce after a few years of incompatibility. And in many cases, people marry for all the wrong reasons. That's exactly when the tragic journey of divorce starts.

### CHAPTER 3

#### COMMON CAUSES AND REASONS WHY PEOPLE GET DIVORCED

##### A. BREAKDOWN IN COMMUNICATION AND DISCLOSURE

Maximum marriages begin with a romantic, fairytale interaction between the partners, also known as a 'honeymoon phase'. Today, this effect does not last long. Eventually, there comes a point in the marriage where acknowledging each others minor flaws and habits gets very difficult. The fact has to be accepted that living a normal day-to-day life is not easy when it comes to terms of money or personal life. If you cannot meet each other's basic needs, you're bound to get frustrated and annoyed over a period of time. If either one of your partner is piling up grudges on their chests, by not sorting things out with you, then definitely such reasons will cause a relationship breakdown.

##### B. MONEY PROBLEMS

If you have heard the lyrics of the song 'Money, Money, Money...' by the famous band ABBA which goes "I work all night, I work all day, to pay the bills I have to pay, ain't it sad.. And still there never seems to be a single penny left for me, that's too bad". Well, the condition of either one of the partner turns out to be the same after marriage. You do not contribute financially, and afterward

unnecessarily depend on your spouse. You formulate this habit because he or she can pay all the expenditures. You ultimately realize that you have spent all your earnings in paying off the bills and managing other costs. Later you hold your partner responsible to not being supportive enough. When money is abundant or scarce, a lot of money related issues can blow up into big fights and could lead to a divorce.

### C. PHYSICAL ABUSE OR EMOTIONAL

Abuse is another main inference as to why people get divorced. This is not observed in specific countries and places, but it happens round the globe. This part in a marriage is the most vicious factor a spouse has to face. Inflicting physical, emotional, verbal or a combination of any abuses, can eventually lead the other partner to file for a divorce. If abuse is involved in a relationship, one needs to get a complete separation as soon as possible. Such a stage in a marriage strictly displays that love between the two has long gone and you must not stick around for long. This is the phase where you have to abate all the pain, suffering and emotional problems that you have put your state of mind to. Abuses never mystically disappear on its own, so enduring such a significant burden does not sound rational for any human being.

### D. BELIEVE IT OR NOT: 'CHILDREN'

Many people think children are a 'perfect gift from God' and are so wonderful, that deciding to have them becomes an important choice for many couples. Some couples after the honeymoon phase, attempt to rekindle their passion for each other by deciding to have children. And some couples get married, just to have children as a part of their lives. At the outset, the partners feel wonderful having children, but ironically in due time, it has an opposite effect on them. Couples realize that raising children involves so much time and money. One of the spouse works harder and for longer hours to contribute the extra expenses of a child, whereas the other partner endows a thorough upbringing in a child. In this fashion, to raise children, couples invest several

hours in their daily life and after years, discover that they sparsely have any time to maintain their marriage. And this is why people divorce after 20 years, because children were the only reason they were still together.

#### E. PERSONALITY CHANGE

Two people get involved and reach a stage in their marriage, where they learn to share themselves with each other. But it is not necessary the marriage has to meet the expected needs and standards. Majority of the individuals have a 'free spirit' attitude even before they get married. If such people get a chance, they would love to explore life in their own way. Some marry at a very young age before they can discover their true self and purpose of being alive. To pursue such an attitude, one of the spouse becomes confident in exploring who they are as a person and embarks on a new journey towards their dreams and desires. Eventually, one of the partners will demand of the other, asking for more time and space for themselves. Of course, such behavior naturally creates a void in your minds and a lot of relationship issues get triggered from that point. An individual's such significant change in personalities and values have resulted in dissolution of marriages. Sometimes this personality change truly is inevitable.

I believe life gives you one true chance to make a sensible and a correct decision. If you fail to justify that, you almost lose the meaning of living this life. I never could stomach the reasons why marriages fail and end in a divorce. Are there too many problems? Or is it each others attitudes that cannot be handled. Well, if you overlook these midget things and acknowledge each other's gratitude, you will positively find happiness and love awaiting for you to meet your wide, big eyes.

### CHAPTER 4

#### DIVORCE ADVICE FOR WOMEN

A woman, being more emotional, tends to feel extremely insecure and stressed when going through the dissolution phase of a

marriage. The upcoming transitions provide some useful divorce advice for women.

The decision to get divorced is a heart wrenching one, and one may find it difficult to cope with. The complexity of the process worsens the situation even further. However, once the decision has been made, it is important to bear a few points in mind to prevent it from being a messy affair. It is essential to chalk out a systematic plan, and execute it in a smooth manner.

## IMPORTANT TIPS

### A. ARRANGE YOUR PAPERS

This part is often neglected by most women. In most cases, they are clueless about the status of their investments, insurance policies, credit cards, and bank accounts. Your tax returns should be properly planned in advance. If you and your ex-spouse hold a joint account, then remove his name from the account holder's list. If both your names are inscribed on credit cards, then immediately get his name removed from the card. The name of the beneficiary/nominee in your life/accident insurance policies needs to be changed as well.

### B. CHECK YOUR FINANCES

The termination of a marital union can drain you out both mentally and financially. Therefore, you should have sufficient funds at your disposal. You should withdraw at least fifty percent of the money that is kept in your joint accounts before filing a divorce. Legally, you may not be stopped from operating your joint accounts during the course of separation proceedings. However, it is quite possible that your former spouse can take out all the money from such accounts, and you may not get to have any money until the final verdict is declared. Ensure that the bank receipts of such transactions are kept very safely. It can serve as an evidence that you have made a fair withdrawal.

### C. HIRE A GOOD LAWYER

The moment you're sure that the separation is inevitable, you should hire a good divorce lawyer. Rely only on the lawyer for any legal advice which will help you get the best settlements. The attorney is the most competent person to explain all the legal matters in detail, with accuracy, and in a simple manner.

### D. VISIT A THERAPIST

The stress of a divorce process is likely to take a toll on your emotional health as well. Often, you may find yourself lonely and helpless and may require the need to share your emotions and feelings with someone. A therapist is bound to help you in this regard, and he/she will also provide all the necessary advice on how to take care of yourself and prioritize your life.

### E. MOVE ON

This is easier said than done. Still, you will have to make the efforts and try to look forward in life. You have to look at it as a new beginning. Do not confine yourself to the four walls of the house, and keep brooding over the past. Be enthusiastic about going out, meeting new people, making new friends, and starting life afresh. Make sure you do not get involved in any activities that can project an undesirable image of yours in the court. In such a scenario, the decision of the court may go against you.

It is alright, if someone doesn't want to be with you anymore. There are a billion other people on this planet to mingle with. Just try to keep a positive frame of mind, and have a firm belief that life does exist beyond a divorce

### F. MOVING ON AFTER DIVORCE

Moving on after divorce is not an easy situation. But it's a step you need to take in order to get your life back on track.

Once two hearts, mind, body, and soul have met, the separation is a difficult pill to swallow. How does someone go from building a life with their spouse to wanting to break the relationship, and move on? All this gets left behind are questions with no answers to fill

the void. The most difficult step is to let go of someone who once meant the world to you. And that feeling right there is one of the main reasons why moving on after a divorce can become complex. No matter what the reasons may be for your decision, it's safe to say that imagining a life ahead might seem scary. When we become comfortable in our routine lives, changing it drastically is never straightforward as the past won't leave our sight. But you can look at things in a better light. The past was, is, and always will be with you. What you need to do now is find a way to cope with this change and get back to a better, more productive life.

## G. STEPS YOU SHOULD TAKE

When a marriage decimates, both parties get hurt. Most of the time, it's not just the couple who breaks up and gets a divorce. There are kids involved as well, and when you think about how this will affect them, it can give you sleepless nights. Dividing of the house, money, and other essentials can take a toll on you, and finding the right path to bring yourself to a normal routine becomes necessary. After you've made the decision, it may take some time for you to not feel sad, stressed, or hurt. But the fact remains that you can become a stronger, more confident human being.

Don't skip the grieving phase. Many times, some people tend to make themselves and the world think that they are over it all. When you have spent years with the most important person in your life (at some point), it is natural to feel depressed, sad, angry, hurt, and scared. Take your own time to accept the situation and don't rush your true emotions.

Know that there is life beyond your marriage. It might seem impossible at the moment, but as you give yourself time to think things over, you will see that you don't need someone to give approval on your identity. You are a strong individual and there's nothing that can shake it.

If you have kids, then you have a responsibility towards them as well. If you breakdown every time, they will see this and might think that it was their fault for the divorce. Instead, you can talk to them about what happened, the real reasons, and why this step was important. Also, it is necessary for them to believe and trust you that no matter what happens in the future, their parents will always be there for them.

Stop denying that it happened. Sometimes, marriages don't work. But, that doesn't mean you need to stop living your life and pretend everything is okay. Accept the reality, no matter how tough you may think it is because without this conscious effort, everything else you wish to do and accomplish in your life will fail. Although you can't put a time frame on how long will it take for you to accept and grieve for your relationship, life doesn't really wait for anyone. You have many more commitments and responsibilities in life, including yourself. You own it to yourself to bring a positive change in your life and build a better future for you and your family (if you have children).

Only you can make yourself believe that there is a future for your beyond all of this. And, you are the only one who can change this idea into a reality. Take as much time you think is necessary to heal your heart, but don't feel that you can't do anything ahead; because you can.

Even though you have reached the brink of a divorce, this doesn't solidify the fact that everything is lost or bring the thoughts of regret. You need to reverse the negative feelings and thoughts into positive. See what you can gain in life with your new-found freedom. Perhaps now you can get more time to go after your passion (cooking, traveling, painting, music, etc.); grab life by the horns.

Don't be alone, or cut yourself out of the world. Perhaps in the beginning, isolation might be required to gather your thoughts, adjust yourself with the current situation, and get used the idea that you just went through a divorce. However, you need a support system from your family and friends who can help you through

this. You might wish to stay away from everyone, but honestly speaking, healthy company is always better than an idle mind.

Get back to work or find something new that excites you. When you become busy in life or have something else to think and concentrate on, negative feelings don't get a chance to return. Go out with friends; take short weekend getaways with your kids, family, and/or friends. Involve yourself into something productive and see how you begin to smile in no time.

Finally, take care of yourself. Divorce makes some people do things they wouldn't in any other situations. I am talking about starving yourself, not getting enough sleep, poor hygiene, and most importantly, drinking excessively. By doing any or all of these things, your marriage is not going to be mended and you're not going to hurt anyone, but yourself. Instead, you can take up some hobbies, do yoga and meditation, go swimming or hiking with friends, listen to music, and read your favorite books.

There are various reasons behind why a marriage fails, but that doesn't mean you take the entire blame onto yourself. The events that lead to this decision wasn't anyone's fault and you don't need to look at it that way.

Life is unpredictable and that is why we have to evolve ourselves to fit in its mysterious molds. The above mentioned tips weren't given concentrating on a particular gender or age group. The tips and suggestions on moving on after divorce apply to both men and women. Live the life that you've always wanted and don't regret any decisions you make. This life is the only life we have; so let's make the best of it

## CHAPTER 5

### DIVORCE ADVICE FOR MEN.

Divorce is not the happy ending to a not-so-steady marriage; it is unfortunately just a way to stop two people from making each other miserable, of course, with no guarantee of the outcomes being as envisioned.

## A. PRE-DIVORCE ADVICE

It is not a routine decision. It is a life changing decision that has repercussions not only on the two people involved, but practically on anyone who cares for one or both of them. Make sure you've analyzed your decision alone, then together as well. Divorce should not be emotionally driven and definitely not ego driven. It is not a casual threat in heated marital arguments and should definitely not be something to be fulfilled just because you've said it once and can't back out now. Acknowledge the fact that it is not child play. There are marriage counselors who will help you in an attempt at reconciliation.

Once the decision has been fully and finally reached, there's one more thing to say. There is often no advantage in being the first person in the filing for an official divorce. The process is long and psychologically and financially draining, so should only be done when one is sure that he can handle the tough times to come. If not, just wait for a little while, who knows what's around the corner. Many a time, reconciliations are just as speedy as the break ups and I for one, am an eternal optimist. I believe that there is nothing that cannot be worked out between two mature adults, if the love between them is strong and genuine.

## B. EMOTIONAL ADVICE

If you've decided on a divorce, you have reached the succumb stage. You have reached the sad conclusion that your relationship is no longer worth fighting for. There are a lot of emotional dilemmas in such a situation. If it is the result of just one spouse wanting it, it can have disastrous effects on the psyche of the other. If it is due to adultery, cheating, infidelity or falling out of love, it can turn the aggrieved party into a cynical, non-believer of the institution itself. All of this can be avoided by taking the help of therapists, psychologists and friends (the best cure is good friends). Healing emotionally is often the toughest job, probably tougher than the event itself. Only healing can help a man to get past this blow and help rebuild the process.

## C. PRACTICAL ADVICE

Drop the glum face and concentrate here. This is where you need to take back the reins of your life and be alert or it can easily be that, you're taken to the cleaners. Brush up on your knowledge a bit, because as a man, you need to be aware. Mel Gibson separated from his wife of 28 years. He shelled out 500 million dollars in this separation. Steven Spielberg doled out about a USD 100 million for his 1989 divorce. You may not be the who's who; but you must be aware of what's 'alimony' money. So this is where you need to call in mediators and attorneys as things could easily escalate and get ugly. If there are kids involved, then there will be custody battles and child support tussles. Dude, you could be in for some trouble here.

First things first, get yourself a good lawyer who specializes in divorce settlements. Many courts favor the ladies in this case but a good lawyer can easily turn things around. Please, I urge you, do not go airing your dirty linen in the courtroom, that is only reserved for the time when the other party is getting ugly. Maintain your status as a good man, you stand better chance of earning the jury's favor then.

Second, brush up your research on the prevailing custody laws in your jurisdiction. Jot down the points that the court will consider to be in the child's best interests. Make sure you do not fail in one, even one of them. Even one error in this department can be monopolized by the opposition. I really urge you to be faultlessly impeccable in this department, because your children will be worth every bit of that effort. Don't let your guard down, you can cry awhile, once the whole thing's over; not before that, please!

Study the economic disparity between the spouses. Whatever the reason for your divorce, it is best to part as friends, at least try for it. In order to do this, please keep an open mind towards the financial settlements. Maybe, it will be worth it in the long run, even if you pay an alimony upfront, because one can't predict the future. If your wife wins the custody battle, your fate is as good as sealed, if your relationship has soured further during the

proceedings. Maybe you will get a better deal from your still friendly spouse, than anything that the court can offer you. If you have crossed the boundaries of enmity, remember the famous dialog from Troy, "We are enemies tonight, but even enemies can show respect.

#### D. POST-DIVORCE ADVICE

If you have kids, you should know that you will be tied together even as a divorced couple. There will be no escaping confrontations when both of you will surely not be missing on the school functions, graduation ceremonies, weddings and social gatherings. There will be no escaping mutual friends as well. Hence, it is best to part cordially, as the wounds heal faster and leave behind fewer scars. Get all the help you need, asking for help is not a weakness. It is only through healing that you can face each other again and enjoy such events for the sake of others, especially your children. Psychological therapy will also help you to learn to trust again. It will give you back your confidence to date again. Go out there and learn to live again, you deserve to fly and rediscover happiness. The things to remember post a divorce is that it is not the end, merely a new beginning.

I conclude with this - They say that behind every successful man is a woman. They also say that behind every unsuccessful one there are two. I say, there could be two, but there's definitely an alimony. Don't worry my friend, if it is the decision you have consciously taken, you will definitely come out of it a better man.