

Are You Being Bullied in Divorce? 3 Positive Ways to Stand Up for Yourself



**CATHERINE SHANAHAN,
CDFA**



KAREN CHELLEW

By Catherine Shanahan,
Co-Founder of Divorce U
Solutions, LLC,
Certified Divorce Financial
Analyst, Certified Daily
Money Manager, and
Trained Mediator

When we think about bullying, we often think of bigger kids in a schoolyard or playground being mean to the smaller ones. We don't often consider bullying between adults, yet bullying does happen in divorce. The effects of bullying on families going through a divorce are devastating and heartbreaking. As bullying is currently being addressed on a national level in our schools, it's also time to address this common problem in divorce.

It is a known fact that people bully out of the insecurity they feel about themselves, and nothing brings about feelings of insecurity like dissolving a marriage. One or both parties feel completely abandoned, afraid they'll lose everything, and unsure about what their lives will look like after divorce. It's important to understand how bullying happens through divorce so you can learn how to stand up for yourself during this difficult life transition.

The top 3 ways people get bullied in divorce and how to address them:

1. "I will take your kids away from you or turn

them against you if you do not agree to what I'm proposing."

Unless you can be proven an unfit parent, no one can take your kids away from you. If your children are at an age where they can decide for themselves and they chose not to live with you or they blame you for the divorce, just give them time, love them, and don't talk bad about the other parent with them or in front of them. If your "soon-to-be ex is trying to turn your children against you, trust me from personal experience: in time, your children will see the truth.

2. "If we get a divorce, you will get nothing including monies from my pension."

You are entitled to a portion of all marital assets, which can also include part of your spouse's pension. This is the time when you need to focus on the knowns and not on what your spouse is telling you or dictating to you. This is a great time to meet with a Certified Divorce Financial Analyst (CDFA) and gain clarity on the difference between marital and nonmarital assets, debt vs. liability, and fair vs. equitable. Having this information will empower you because you'll know the facts of the situation instead of responding to your spouse's insecurities or threats.

3. An attorney who bullies the unrepresented party
If an attorney of the opposing party sees that

you have no representation, he or she may try to scare you into settling before entering the courtroom. He or she may say things like, "If we go in front of the judge, you will probably owe my client (your spouse) money" or "You are getting a very fair deal, and we won't agree to it if we are forced to see the judge". It's important to remember that a judge works within the framework of the law and, as such, seeks to find a solution that works for both parties whether or not they have legal representation.

If you cannot afford an attorney, you can find ways to prepare yourself. One of the ways to prepare is to get organized by consulting a CDFA or Daily Money Manager. Oftentimes, I've found that an attorney is necessary when coping with a bully. This is why an attorney liaison (such as Karen Chellew of Divorce U Solutions) may be critical in helping you engage with an attorney who is best suited for you and your needs, as well as preparing you with questions and documents that your attorney will require. Being organized and informed about alimony, child support, and child custody is empowering. Once you are organized, you have a better chance of informing the judge or master of the situation.

If you are being bullied, here's a phrase you can use that will give you time to respond and leave the opposing party speechless: "That's interesting." After saying this phrase without any emotion, simply walk away, get the facts about the situation, be patient, and don't engage in conversation since your voice will not be heard.

Remember, the person who you feel is bullying you is insecure in some way. When you get the answers

from a qualified source and make the choice to walk away instead of engage, the person trying to get you to do something you don't want to do loses all his or her power.

Bullying is unacceptable from anyone to anyone at any time, so be sure to set boundaries and journal everything that occurs. For example, if your spouse only talks to you in an aggressive, controlling manner, then set the boundary of only communicating via email. Journal all events that make you feel intimidated or things that your spouse says to scare you. Don't forget to include the date. This will provide you with a sense of relief and a great source to use to recall, if needed.

On another note, you may have adult children who plead with you to stay married, mostly because it's easier for them and also because they're concerned

about their parents being lonely. It's important that you live for you. Assure your children that you love them, and, just as they will be ok, you will be ok too. In time, they will be happy if you are happy!

If you feel you need more help or you feel like you are being bullied and don't know what to do, reach out to us at www.divorceusolutions.com. We'll help you get organized, get informed, and get the best outcome for yourself. My business partner and I are two divorcees who founded a company committed to changing the face of divorce. One way we do this is by helping clients cope in a bullying situation. This helps them get through their divorce with less stress and move on to making the rest of their life the best of their life. Even though you may not feel this way right now, #UwillbeOK!

Divorce U: Navigate Your Divorce with
Confidence and Clarity Online Course

Thinking Divorce? Not sure where to go or who to turn to for help?

Gain the **knowledge** and **support** you need in the privacy of your own home in our new online course that will save you time, money and a tremendous amount of stress. You don't have to go through divorce alone.

We Can Help!

www.divorceusolutions.com