

## 5 Things That Will Change the Course of Your Divorce for the Better



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At the center of every divorce are people...people with feelings. Divorce is being treated like big business with very little regard for these feelings. Unless you've personally gone through it, you can't possibly understand the emotional impact of divorce. I believe that, if you're unhappily married, then life can be better after divorce. However, navigating the divorce process to get to that new life won't necessarily be easy.

*Here are 5 ways to ensure the divorce process runs more smoothly:*

### 1. Learn about your

**options:** You need to do your research, gather the facts, and learn as much as you can about divorce before starting the process. Then, it's crucial that you talk to someone who can assess your situation and direct you in a way that suits you and your family. Many people consult with me because they need to learn about the divorce process and get answers to their questions about what their life might look like afterward. Often, I meet with individuals who just want peace after realizing their marriage has been

over for years. After hearing their options, and possibly receiving some coaching, they're more confident about handling the next steps.

### 2. Know how to ask for

**a divorce:** First, be calm when asking your spouse for a divorce. It doesn't help the situation to say hurtful things during this conversation. For example, one client, after 25+ years of marriage, told his wife on her birthday "I don't love you anymore and want a divorce." This is a counterproductive way to start the process. Second, keep the divorce conversation between the two adults, not the children. I often tell clients, "Divorce doesn't mess kids up; it's how both parents behave before, during, and after divorce that can mess kids up." Third, try not to start the divorce process by having an attorney break the news to your spouse. Once a spouse discovers a lawyer is already involved, he or she feels betrayed and defensive. Of course, there are cases when an attorney does need to begin the process, but those are rare. Get the information you need and then make a plan to tell your spouse in a way that considers the needs of all family members.

**3. Be mature:** If you are mature enough to get married and have children or a pet, you should be mature enough to be civil during the divorce process.

Every state has guidelines for child support, spousal support/alimony, and distribution of marital assets. Follow those guidelines to ensure you do what's right. Educate yourself or seek the advice of a Certified Divorce Financial Analyst (CDFA) to learn the difference between "fair" and "equitable" when dividing assets. By taking this step, you will have clarity when your debt and assets are split. A mature approach allows you to divorce with dignity.

### 4. Be informed rather than

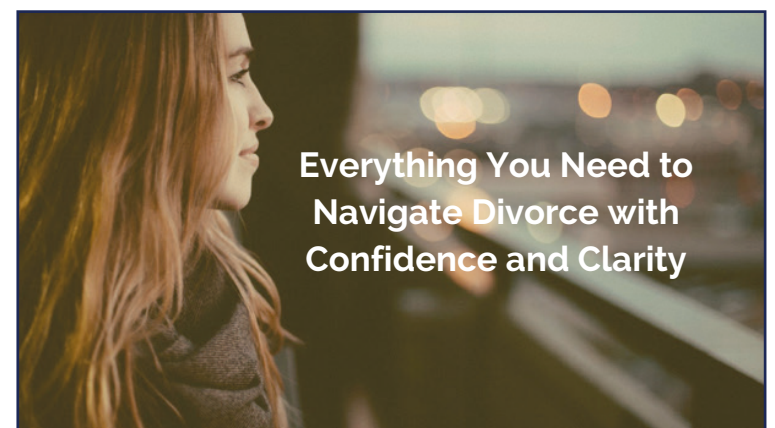
**bitter:** Divorce business is huge because couples fight over the power of money and children. Money, if you accumulated your assets/debts while married, then why wouldn't you split them when you get divorced? Are you bitter or not informed? Imagine this, you are Jack and you open a company with Jane. Your company starts with very little, over the years grows to have many assets but you and Jane no longer think alike or share the same vision, so you decide to part ways. Do one of you buy out the other, or do one of you just decide to give your share away for nothing? If you respond with a big No to giving your asset away (any successful person's response) then why would you expect your spouse to do that with your marital assets? Now, consider this, you are a W-2 employee and your company is changing direction, which didn't include you, so they offer you a severance, would you say, oh, no thank you, I don't deserve it? Probably not, so why expect your spouse to say "no, thank -you" to spousal support/alimony? I say, in divorce, "If you end up getting assets or income you don't think you deserve, then you can always give it back." Bitterness

is usually the fuel when fighting over money. Be informed and do what you know is right, you'll save thousands vs. what you would spend in a legal battle. Now, a topic dear to my heart, are children of divorce. Unless you are an unfit parent, and I mean unfit as determined by a professional, why would you fight over your children? Why wouldn't you want to financially support your children? Are you basing your choices on what is best for yourself, worse for your spouse, or what is best for your children? I'm addressing both parents when I ask these questions. Do a self-check. Is the answer because you have information that validates those decisions, or is it because you are bitter? If you are bitter, let it go, your children are the ones that suffer, and in time they see the truth on their own. If you need information, ask or go to your state specific child support guidelines.

### 5. Be a part of the change:

By following or at least promising to try and follow the above guidelines, you can change the course of your divorce. You'll not only save thousands of dollars, but you'll also avoid repeated visits to the courthouse. You will be able to co-parent and co-grandparent in a kinder manner, and you will be able to move on and focus on making the rest of your life the best of your life.

Divorce does not define us. Divorce is a part of our story, but it's not our whole story. Going through my own divorce opened my eyes to what we as human beings need when faced with divorce. Join me and the divorce community by changing the way you act during your divorce and the way you react not only to your spouse and children but also to the professionals you hire to handle the divorce proceedings for you.



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