



A Guide for Those Considering Divorce

So you and/or your spouse dropped the D-word in another argument? What does that mean? It can be scary, unsettling, and a reason to seek support. First of all, you are not alone!

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 like 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 Mediated Online Solutions has guided many people who are standing at this 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? Or 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 or legal separation would entail can help you make the best decision for yourself.

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 or anything that could make you uncomfortable during mediation.

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 mediation can also help you protect your emotional health during a divorce. When you work with the Mediated Online Solutions team, you are supported both practically and emotionally by understanding, caring, and compassionate advocates with experience in both the legal world and the world of family therapy. We empower you by helping you navigate all the issues that the legal process doesn’t prepare you for.

If you are interested in learning more about what we do at Mediated Online Solutions, we would love to connect with you. 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.



9. Knowing the difference between mediation and hiring an attorney.

When you hire an attorney, and we are a team of attorneys *and* therapists, so we are not against hiring one, however, when you do, you get the result of court. When you propose mediation, you and your spouse can create your own plans, find common ground with the support of our team, and avoid the person in a black robe making your huge life decisions for you. Consider that a person you do not know could dictate a large number of years of your life including financial decisions, child custody, and geographic restrictions. However, when you and your spouse choose mediation, we can work with both of you to see each side and work out our own plans. That is right — no black robes or court involved! We do the heavy lifting and work toward an amicable and sound resolution. Oh, and you don't even have to leave the comfort of your couch, we are 100% virtual!

10. Take The Time You Need To Assess Your Next Steps

How Mediated Online Solutions Can Assist You

Our team of knowledgeable Certified Divorce Specialists™, mediators, therapists and collaborative family law attorneys at Mediated Online Solutions 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 and creative solutions to resolve your marital disputes or divorce needs, we offer mediation and therapy services completely online. 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.

Mediated Online Solutions team of Certified Divorce Specialists™ and experienced family law attorneys and therapists are ready to support and guide you towards peaceful solutions.

Call us today at 518.413.1200 or email us at info@mediatedonlinesolutions.com to learn more about how we can guide and support you as you navigate the often unclear path that lies ahead.

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