

Cupid Exclusive: 'Divorce Court' Judge Lynn Toler Talks Divorce, Domestic Violence and Hollywood Couples



By [Lori Bizzoco](#)

The celebrity lens can make relationships look frivolous. Two year courtships disintegrate as easily as a pair of worn-out running shoes, and headlines of “Betrayed,” “Cheating,” and the big “D” – Divorce – along with paparazzi shots of miserable stars fill the newsstands daily. Divorce is an issue Cupid’s Pulse takes seriously, and who better to talk about it than Judge Lynn Toler from the popular TV series *Divorce Court*? As a celebrity divorce expert, she has more than enough experience to offer solid, real-world advice for our readers.

For the past five years, Judge Toler has been the host of television's longest running court program. A Harvard graduate, she has written two books, including *My Mother's Rules* – which not only shares the wisdom of her mother, but takes an honest look at her childhood as the daughter of a man who struggled with both mental illness and alcoholism. She has seen divorce firsthand countless times and has been part of the messy situations that can arise when two people who took vows of love are now each other's worst enemies. We asked Judge Toler for her perspective on divorce, relationships and Hollywood couples. Take a look at what she had to say:

What's the number one reason people get divorced?

It's hard to say, but people who marry young have the most number of divorces. They don't know how to manage the marriage. You think if you get married the relationship will just handle itself. You need to decide how to argue, you need to make plans about the money, or that mother-in-law that you don't like. You need to manage your relationship, and I think most people don't end up doing that.

How can people who marry young sustain their relationship when divorce statistics are so high?

Marriage counseling before marriage. Don't wait until the boat is swamped. Get somebody who is older, who has been there and done that. You don't have to have any problems, but problems will arise. You have to be mature and in a position to respond appropriately. The first thing I would do is get marriage counseling.

Are there signs that suggest a relationship is heading for a breakup or divorce?

Yes, there are signs:

- 1. Withdrawal:** When somebody is non-responsive, not engaging.

When the fighting has stopped, and this person is like, "whatever." That's usually what they call one of The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse.

2. Globalizing: When "You don't take the garbage out," becomes, "You never do anything I want you to do." You're adding pieces to the "I'm getting ready to go" pie.

You can tell when people make that shift. It's either everything or nothing bothers them. Of course, infidelity is always a big one too.

Are there red flags that women should be aware of before heading into marriage with the wrong man?

Yes, I think this is important for women who are attracted to controlling men. I call this the "Widdled Away Women" and I see them on *Divorce Court* a lot. These are the folks who really want to get married and tend to overlook stuff. Some of the things you cannot overlook:

1. Needs you too much too soon: If he met you on Tuesday and can't live without you on Friday. That's a possessive personality; it's not romance.

2. Gets angry easily: If he gets mad easily with other people, or about other things, it's only a matter of time before he's comfortable enough to get angry with you.

3. Always check out the family: How do the women in the family get treated? What is the script that he is reading off of? Is his pops mean to his mom?

These are some of the signs that this guy may not be the guy that you want. When speaking in general when you are talking non-gender, always remember that this is as good as it gets. Don't get married and think that your problems will be over. If it's not good now, imagine it half as good – and can you live that way? Remember: In the beginning, everyone is

looking good and compromising. So if it's not good now, don't even bother.

Who would you say had the messiest Hollywood divorce?

I think the LA Dodgers McCourt divorce in my opinion right now is the messiest. Others would include Alec Baldwin because of the children, and of course, Britney Spears and Kevin Federline.

Do you think that celebrity couples in some way contribute or play a factor in real-life relationships?

Yes, absolutely. The quintessential example of that is the royal wedding: "Some day your prince will come." It's the dream of all women to find their soul mate. Kate (Middleton) and Prince William are on every cover, and this news feeds the fairy tale that so many women want.

What are some lessons we can learn from reading about celebrity relationships?

Again, it's a fairy tale. Celebrities have a lot of problems with the fairy tale belief of love. They are used to getting what they need and want. They have the elaborate wedding, the vacation, and then they are off for six months making a movie and they don't see one another. Their partner is lonely and temptation sets in. Or, they wake up next to a spouse and the fantasy is over when they realize someone has to take out the garbage. They realize it's not the person they thought they married.

Which celebrity couple has surprised you most?

I would have to say Angelina Jolie and Brad Pitt really surprised me, even more so that they have stayed together. It was concerning when they started having all of these kids, but they are doing so well. Raising these kids is probably keeping them together.

So many single women feel at a loss because they haven't found someone. Is there a message that you can share with them?

Our primitive minds or emotions want us to hook up with a guy, because in the prehistoric times, your chances for survival increased dramatically when you were with a guy. Don't let that hereditary desire define how you feel about wherever your life is; it's not as necessary as you may think it is, even if you might feel that way. Single is OK. If you just live fully, and not in anticipation and not looking for someone, you actually become more desirable, and half the time that's when you end up finding someone.

Judge Toler also raised the issue of domestic violence and how that issue weighs deep in her heart. It's something that she sees far too often, and even among the famous, she says love can blind you, as she noted with successful women like Marlee Matlin or Tina Turner. For more information on domestic violence, check out her appearance in Rock the Purple Campaign 2011's Public Service Announcement.

Cupid thanks Judge Toler for her time! For more information, you can visit her Facebook pages, Judge Lynn Toler of "Divorce Court" and Divorce Court, or follow her Twitter handles, @judgelynntoler and @divorcecourt.