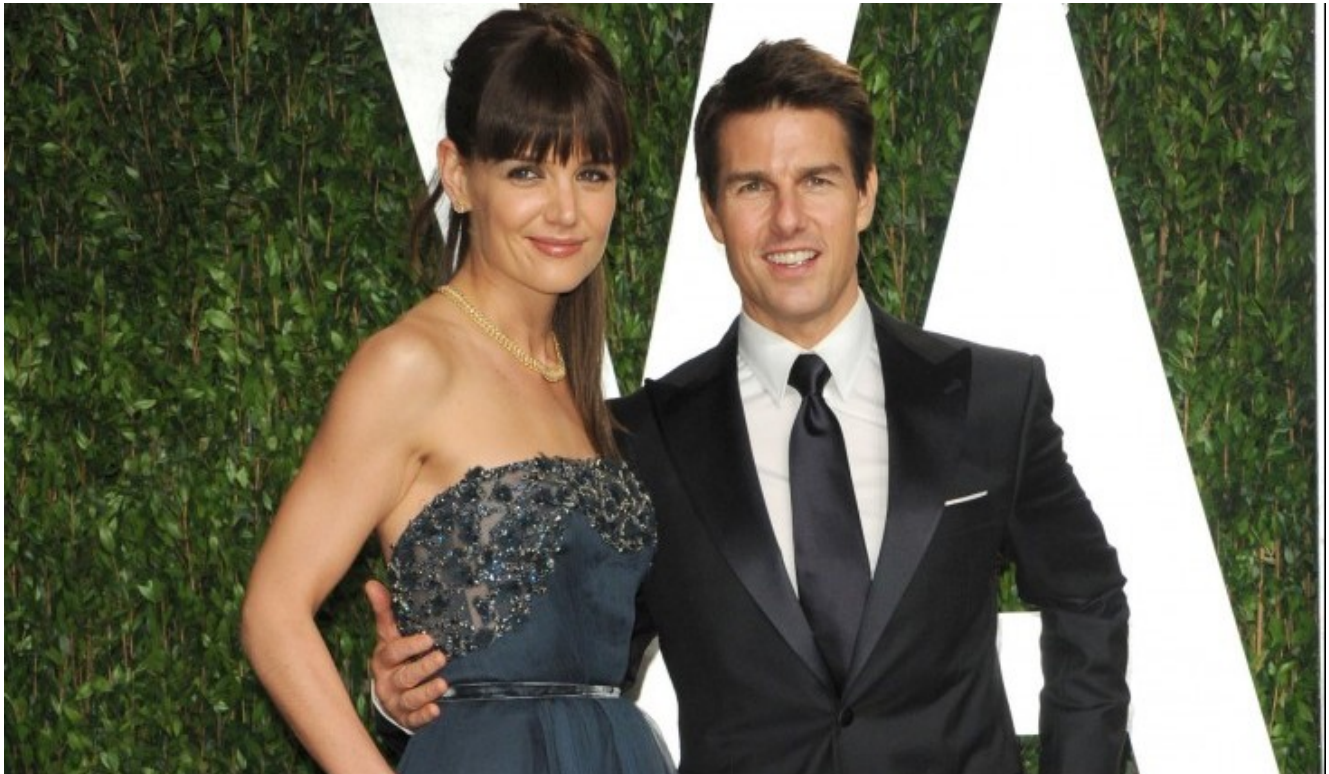


7 Lessons We Can Learn from Celebrity Divorces



By Relationship & Sex Talk, Jane Greer, Ph.D., for GalTime.com

Katie and Tom? Kim and Kris? Seal and Heidi? Do you relate to any of these A-listers break-ups?

With all the celebrity divorces topping the news regularly, there is much to be learned from their trials, and in some cases, triumphs. Here are seven tips to help you steer clear of a Maria Shriver-Arnold Schwarzenegger un-hitching, or handle a divorce gracefully— if that's the best route to take.

Know what you are getting into before you walk down the aisle. Could this have been the issue for Katy Perry and Russell

Brand's short marriage? We can't know for sure, however, we can take note. I often think of how we take the time to plan a vacation. We decide where we want to go, where to stay, eat, and tour. You wouldn't jump into the car without any thought and head to a destination. Why would you do that with a marriage? Learn what your partner wants out of life, and what they expect from you and the home you build, before you commit to being together forever. That is the only way to ensure a happy future and continued travel together.

Pay attention to the signs, so a divorce doesn't blindside you. "I had no idea it was going to take this turn," Jennie Garth of "Beverly Hills 90210" fame told "Access Hollywood Live" about divorcing Peter Facinelli of "Twilight" fame after eleven years of marriage. The thing to keep in mind with this one is, if you've been fighting and then the fighting stops, it doesn't always mean things have improved. Maybe your spouse has simply given up. Just because your partner stops complaining doesn't mean the complaints have necessarily gone away. Don't assume all is well; make sure it is.

First deal with the "me" so you don't get caught up in the "we." Could Katie Holmes' path been different had she focused more on herself before she wed Tom Cruise? The perception that Cruise overwhelmingly ruled the roost and left no room for the compromise that a healthy marriage demands is something we all can learn from. Before you commit to a life of possible unhappiness, make sure you are a strong individual. Then together you can focus on becoming a couple.

Make your anger work for you. Rumor has it that one element in Heidi Klum and Seal's break-up was intense anger. In an intimate relationship everyone seeks a loving and safe shelter, and behavioral issues or outbursts can quickly erode those comforts. Over time, one partner may lose the sense of sanctuary and begin to feel fearful and anxious knowing that at any time their spouse might blow up. That pattern of behavior destroys the foundation of your mutual trust and

commitment. Instead of letting things between you become explosive and hurtful, use those strong feelings to do good.

Don't compare your old partner to your new one. Was Brad Pitt busy comparing ex-wife Jennifer Aniston to his new partner Angelina Jolie? Well, rumors seemed that way for years, but the honkin' engagement ring on Angie's finger puts that to rest. For the rest of us: If you play the comparison game, you will just keep yourself stuck on what was wrong with your past marriage. This will keep the pain and loss of divorce alive, instead of allowing you to let go and move on. Create closure for yourself, and to do that you have to be willing to let go. That means being able to cope with what you left behind, focusing on the positive of what you took away from it. When you talk negatively you keep your bad feelings alive. When you talk positively you put them to rest. The ultimate goal is to get on with your new life in a better place for what you gained from your old one.

Tend to other aspects of your life – financial, professional, health, parenting, education, friendships and family relationships. When “Desperate Housewives” star Eva Longoria ended her marriage to Tony Parker, NBA star point-guard for the San Antonio Spurs, one of the things that suffered was her financial situation. It is not unusual for the loss you have already been through with your separation or divorce to replicate itself in other parts of your life. Often, people end up experiencing loss in a panoramic sense – it finds its way into everything, taking over even more than their love and home life. Don't turn a blind eye to other corners of your life that need your attention, places where you can still make a difference. Pay attention so you can focus on and sustain the other things you still have in your life, thereby curbing the widespread devastation.

Don't bad-mouth your ex in public. Alec Baldwin is quoted in gossip mags bashing former wife Kim Basinger. Find an outlet for your anger, sadness or leftover emotions by keeping a

journal, seeing a professional counselor, or joining a divorce support group. It might feel good in the moment to go off about your former partner. But even if you're not in the press or spotlight, be mindful that saying negative things out loud about an ex rarely serves anyone well in the long run.

If you keep these tips in mind you can hopefully use them to insulate your marriage and stay on track. But if you've gotten to the point of no return, then maybe these lessons will help you remain in control so that you don't exacerbate an already difficult situation and make it worse. Use them to regain your footing and start your new life on solid ground.