

# Relationship Advice: Top 6 Contributors to Infidelity



By Toni Coleman

We read celebrity gossip about infidelity all the time. Sometimes, as in the cases of Debra Messing or Claire Danes, it's a part of their dating behavior. But what compels a partner to cheat? And why are the perimeters of commitment such a mystery to them? In this article, relationship expert Toni Coleman, LCSW, gives [relationship advice](#) and explores the hidden meanings behind infidelity and what we can do to secure our relationships and love.

# Relationship Advice On Infidelity

When infidelity occurs, it often leads to a lot of blaming that focuses on the violation of trust and a realization that one's partner isn't the person who they believed them to be. There's a clear distinction made between victim and perpetrator. While this is certainly true to a point, it ignores the dynamics that left the relationship vulnerable in the first place. And it leads to a simplistic and erroneous conclusion that nothing could have prevented the infidelity except for the wronged spouse to have picked someone else to marry. Remaining stuck in this thinking is a sure way to end up in divorce court. My relationship advice to healing is that both people need to take an honest look at the state of their marriage prior to the cheating, what each contributed to their problems, and how they could work together on building an infidelity proof union. Identifying which of the following issues played a role in their marital breakdown is the first and most important step. Below are the top 6 contributors to infidelity.

**1. A breakdown in communication.** A "problem with communication" is the number one reason couples give for seeking relationship help. It has a broad interpretation but essentially boils down to having difficulty connecting through daily conversation, misunderstandings and hurt feelings due to an inability to express feelings and needs clearly, conflict when discussing sensitive topics or issues they disagree on, and/or withholding through silence. Any of these can contribute to increasing distance, which leaves a void that one partner might attempt to fill by going outside the relationship. This is of course a poor choice, and one that can bring the couple to a place there is no coming back from.

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**2. A decrease in emotional and physical intimacy.** There is a lot of emphasis placed on a couple's problematic sexual relationship as the cause of marital unhappiness. However, this is only one facet of what they share and though it is important, addressing it alone will not offer a complete solution for repairing their broken bond. Emotional intimacy provides fuel and is foreplay in a relationship—and unless two people share a strong friendship and good intellectual chemistry, their physical relationship can become another chore that is best avoided or handled quickly and without wasting any of the little emotional energy that their relationship has left them with. One partner might make the poor decision to reach out to someone who they can laugh with, who listens to them and seems to really get them, and who challenges them and inspires them in a way their spouse no longer seems to have any interest in doing.

**3. Unaddressed stressors related to family and job.** Couples encounter many challenges on the long road through commitment, marriage and family life. Sickness, loss of a job, an ill or handicapped child, unexpected financial problems, and the day-to-day struggle to find balance in a too-crowded life all lead to stress. For many people, this is something they try to ignore or just push through, thinking that in time, things will get better on their own. Then, one day, they realize they are completely overwhelmed and experiencing physical and emotional symptoms that contribute to an “every man for himself” mindset. When this happens, the marriage is often put on the back burner and the individuals hunker down, focused on getting through another day, unable or unwilling to add to their own burden, even for the well-being of their partner.

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**4. A negative or hostile home environment.** When a couple stops communicating, puts their focus on their own needs, and withdraws due to overload—the environment often becomes

charged with negative energy and feelings of resentment and anger. The tension is often palatable as one or both seek a way to escape through watching TV, going online, spending time alone in different rooms and parts of the house—and seeking companionship and dialogue with others outside of the relationship/family. Essentially the negative energy pushes them further and further apart until home is not a comfortable or happy place to be, so they look elsewhere for that lost comfort.

**5. Stressors related to physical or mental illness.** This is the “in sickness and health” part that is contained in the marriage vows. For many couples, naiveté contributes to that feeling of invulnerability that many start out their marriage with. Sickness happens to other people, but won’t happen to them. Then when something bad strikes, it feels completely unexpected and can have a sudden destabilizing impact on a relationship. Even if the couple can quickly put resources and supports in place to deal with the crisis, it can be a game changer, depending on the type, severity, and chronicity of the illness. Physical and emotional exhaustion, draining or depleted resources, lack of down time and fun, and the potential for a large shift in how the couple interacts and relates—can push one or both people over the edge. If one individual ends up in a caregiver role for their partner, it shifts the dynamics in a way that can leave them unable to get their own needs met—and they may feel resentment and a desire to escape this new life they had not planned on. Even if the illness is not chronic and can be eventually resolved, the stress can alter how two people relate and lead to emotional and physical distance that leaves a void of unmet needs.

**6. Financial problems.** Money problems are often said to be the root cause of marital conflict and discord. Difficulty managing joint finances, agreeing on a budget, keeping secrets about purchases and debt, and conflicting values regarding saving and spending are some of the common issues that arise.

If these are not addressed quickly, they can lead to a loss of trust, and respect, and an unwillingness to be open and candid regarding important financial decisions that could have a long-term impact on their family's security and well-being. When this happens, some people are vulnerable to thinking about what it would be like to be with someone else, to have a partner that offers financial security and someone who wants what they want for their future.

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No wonder the marriage vows include the phrase "for better or worse, for richer or poorer, in sickness and in health..." Marriages are tested by all of these, and if a couple doesn't work together, they will slip apart—and the space that is left is what a third person moves in to fill.

*Toni Coleman is a licensed psychotherapist, certified relationship coach and internationally recognized dating and relationship expert and founder of consum-mate relationship coaching. She is frequently quoted in many local and national publications and top ranked dating and relationship websites and has been a guest on a number of radio and TV programs seeking to provide their listeners with her cutting edge expertise. She is a regular contributor to Hope After Divorce and HealthyLiving.care.*

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# Relationship Advice On

# Financial Infidelity



By Toni Coleman

While celebrity news cites irreconcilable differences as the final blow for [celebrity divorces](#) such as Brandi Glanville of “Real Housewives of Beverly Hills,” actress Kaley Cuoco, and celebrity chef Giada DeLaurentiis, it doesn’t take long for the matter of money to surface as part of the proceedings. Whether finances are openly discussed as an asset to a healthy relationship and love, or used as fodder when your vows start falling in the red, money is an integral part of any marriage.

## Relationship Advice On Handling

# Money Issues

If you're concerned about how you and your partner communicate about money, pay attention to the following relationship advice. Watch for these four warning signs of financial infidelity.

**1. You never sit down and talk specific numbers.** After two people are married, their lives become intertwined. Their home and individual possessions essentially become the property of both. And ideally large purchases, investments, and decisions regarding long-term financial goals are decided jointly. But what if a couple never discusses a budget or decides how they will handle savings and investments? That answer is usually that you're both too busy, one of you is better with money and handles all the bills without the input of the other, or you each handle your money in your own way. If any of these are true you could be on a slippery slope. Continuing down this path could lead to important financial decisions being made without the knowledge or consent of the other, which constitutes financial infidelity.

My relationship advice is to address this by sitting down and listing all your income and expenses. Then, decide on a budget that covers joint expenses while also allowing each of you a discretionary pot of money that only you control. Every few months conduct a joint review to assess how your system is working and make adjustments as needed. Handling it this way allows you both some autonomy but not at the expense of your marital financial health and happiness.

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**2. Discussing finances becomes heated and defensive.** What happens if you agree to sit down and talk about your finances and one of you reacts with defensiveness or anger because you feel you're being accused or challenged in some way? When you

attempt to talk it through, do the words “yours” and “mine” get used too often? Does it ever feel like money is a taboo subject that you shouldn’t really be discussing at all because it often leads to hurt feelings or conflict? If any of these sound familiar, you’re at risk of ending up with no financial plan, which often leads to impulsive, short-sighted, and costly choices. When this happens, partners can begin to focus on protecting their share of the assets, which increases secrecy and contributes to a further breakdown of cooperation and an increasing loss of intimacy. The way to address this issue is to decide together that continuing to avoid the problem is not an option. Then you may need to seek out resources to help if you continue to be unsuccessful in your attempts to resolve it on your own. Try talking with an experienced counselor or a financial planner.

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**3. Large purchases are hidden.** When there is a breakdown in cooperation and a loss of intimacy, secrecy flourishes. These conditions create an environment in which partners can begin to act autonomously and in their own interest, hiding large purchases as they tell themselves they have no other option. Over time, one partner can run up huge amounts of credit card and other debt, liens are placed against the home due to unpaid taxes, and properties go into foreclosure—all happening without the knowledge or consent of the other partner. Yes, these are all examples of worse case scenarios, but they happen with alarming frequency. The solution is open, honest communication—again seeking out competent, experienced professionals when needed.

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**4. You discover a secret bank account or PO box.** When one partner is being secretive, the other one usually senses something is up and begins to pay closer attention. This is



often when the discovery of a secret bank account or PO box is discovered. Sometimes the partner happens upon the information as they're attempting to get a better handle on the couple's bills and complete paperwork. Either way, it not only spells serious trouble, but it also says that the problem has been going on for some time and has most likely reached a serious stage. It is at this stage that large secret purchases, huge debt or liens and potential foreclosures come to light.

When you hear about money being the number one reason for divorce, this is why. Because so much damage has been allowed to occur, the solution will be more complicated and costly in terms of money, time, and marital goodwill. Immediate crisis intervention is needed, which consists of professionals who can help the couple triage their debt, cut their expenses, come up with a payment plan—and continue in their home and adjusted lifestyle if possible. When a couple finds themselves here, they must act quickly and work towards a new normal. Otherwise the financial consequences can be dire and the marriage un-salvageable.

You have worked hard to build your financial security. Don't allow it to collapse by falling victim to poor financial decisions by someone you love and trust. By watching for signs of financial infidelity, you can be sure your wallet is protected as well as your heart.

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# Love Advice: Roll With The Punches, Don't Get Rolled Over



By Debbie Ceresa

You know the feeling. It's that unsettling doubt that surfaces when the best of days turns into the worst of moments. It's like the time Taylor Swift was awarded the 2009 MTV Best Female Video Award only to watch helplessly as the self-

proclaimed 'expert' on artistry, Kanye West, took the microphone to express his differing opinion. Thankfully, most of us aren't confronted with these instances on national television, yet our reactions to these experiences are just as emotionally charged. As a relationship expert, I know these moments happen in relationships and love all the time. During these occasions, you're faced with a choice. How you handle that decision can make all of the difference in the outcome.

## Love Advice On Rolling With The Punches

Several years ago, I was asked to present several awards during an annual high school honors ceremony. This year, one of the awards would be presented to my team of ambassadors and I couldn't wait. I caught the smiles from the audience and was ready to begin my accolades of the young people on the team. However, before I could say another word, a loud ringing phone rudely interrupted this high point. I could have tried continuing over the interruption. Or, I could have gotten angry and flustered. But, I didn't. The ringing eventually stopped and the audience sat silently. Looking over the crowd, I smiled and jokingly said, "I guess another student wants to apply." The laughter was overwhelming and so was the applause.

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I learned a lot from that incident. Often in our lives, many unexpected events happen. What we do with the unexpected is what matters. My love advice: Instead of living in fear of being knocked off course, here are four strategies to navigate the surprise bumps and keep you on the straight and narrow for success in your love life.

- 1. Change your course and navigate the unexpected life**

**bumps.** You know the unexpected is going to happen when you least expect the disruption. Why not channel your adventuresome side? Use the detour as an opportunity to find a new discovery. Many of us hide our longing for adventure by turning cautious and reserved. Remember your curiosity when you were a child? Some of your inquisitive adventures were great learning experiences; others earned you a time-out. Either way, it didn't take long to learn from one of your escapades. As adults in your love life, not all of your challenges bring about immediate positive outcomes. Nevertheless, accept this love advice, your "time-out" experience, and learn from it.

**2. Learn to laugh.** By keeping an open mind, you'll find yourself laughing and enjoying some of the unexpected. It's easy to focus on the familiar and never look beyond the narrow comfort zone you created. Often times, the comfort zone is only in our mind, prohibiting us from seeing so much more. Life is constantly changing; why not enjoy the unforeseen? My expert dating advice: Laugh, join the party, and live in the moment.

**3. Don't listen to the criticism.** Many people rely on the emotional destruction of others to boost their own place in life. Just like Taylor Swift in 2009, and the 2015 Grammy awarding artist Beck for Album of the Year (whom Kanye West also tried to upstage), sometimes this happens when you least expect it. In those seemingly powerless instances, the outcome is entirely up to you. Your strength lies in your ability to rise above the negativity and be an example of grace, maturity and professionalism. Both Swift and Beck displayed immense diplomacy and both gained enormous respect as a result.

**4. Accept and share compliment.** How do you feel when someone hands you a compliment? I don't know about you, but I feel good when that positive gesture comes my way. Focusing on what's good in our lives and taking note of our good fortune in every aspect helps us operate on a higher level. It

encourages us to rise above the pettiness and negativity and remain focused on what is everlasting and important. Accept and be grateful for that positive vibe that comes to you. Think about the many ways you can spread your own thankfulness. I guarantee the positive energy will make your day.

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We can't eliminate the unanticipated twists that happen in our lives, but we can decide today how we plan to navigate them. By remaining flexible in the need to change, using humor to buoy our decisions, turning away from negative people, and focusing on our contributions to the world and being grateful for the goodness that comes our way in return, we can handle the unexpected. In this way, the one thing we CAN expect is much success and happiness in our near future.

*Debbie is a Certified Grief Recovery Specialist® and the author to the #1 bestselling memoir A Beautiful View, available on Amazon.com. A Beautiful View documents her journey through her husband's battle with cancer, which ultimately ended with his death. She has experienced grief firsthand and is well equipped to aid others in the recovery process, whether with death or divorce. For more information about Debbie and how to recover from your loss, please visit [debbieceresa.com](http://debbieceresa.com).*

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# Expert Love Advice: Handling Debt & Credit Scores Post-Divorce



By Rosalind Sedacca, CCT

As the media shares details of [celebrity break-ups](#) we learn that even the rich and famous aren't immune to financial hardships. With stars like Brian Austin Green and Avril Lavigne taking steps toward a life on their own, we are reminded of the importance of keeping our financial history intact.

# This Expert Love Advice Will Save Your Credit Score

Divorced or not, we all understand the importance of having a high credit score. Unfortunately when divorce decrees are drawn up, a simple attorney error or oversight can result in long-term negative affects on your personal credit. Since these papers identify who is awarded what debt, it's essential that debts that came from joint accounts are only in the person's name that is awarded that debt per the decree. In most cases the decree is a simple agreement between divorcing couples. It *does not separate liabilities* – and that's where the problem lies. If, while you were married, your significant other had created some debt on your joint accounts, both of you are affected. Each of your social security numbers are attached to the obligations – and all three credit bureaus have this information.

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When you decide to end your relationship and love, a divorce decree is not the best way to handle debt. The reasons become obvious when you explore a number of likely possibilities. What if, a couple of years after the divorce, your ex decides to be late on a debt obligation that is still reporting in your name? Imagine what will happen to your credit score! It can suddenly drop 150 points – and you may not even know it! Unfortunately, this is not uncommon. And the problem is now yours even though the debt was awarded to your ex. What if it's a house at stake and your former spouse decides to let it go to foreclosure? Are you aware that you cannot buy a home for the next three years because of the foreclosure record on your credit report?

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Here's some expert love advice offered by divorce financial planners. They insist that divorcing couples should never rely on the other spouse to pay bills that were awarded to them per decree. In essence, this is a disaster waiting to happen. These issues must be tackled up front so you're not vulnerable once the divorce is final. If you are among those who have already made this mistake, it's important that you go back to court to get those debts off your name. If a house is involved especially, get it refinanced out of your name or sold, depending on the situation. If your ex is behind on the mortgage, you might want to go back to court and take over the mortgage payment in return for having the house awarded back to you.

Divorce is tough enough without having to deal with financial crises in the months and years to follow. Be aware. Make sure you don't have debts in your name that get awarded to your ex. Don't put him or her in the position in which they can ruin your credit. If you are not sure about your credit rating, get your current credit report with credit scores to make sure there is no damage done. There are many resources on the Internet for accessing this information. My relationship advice: Don't put it off!

*For more information on and expert relationship advice from Hope After Divorce, click [here](#).*

*For other free articles on child-centered divorce, a free ezine, valuable resources for parents, coaching, and other services, visit <http://www.childcentereddivorce.com>. Rosalind Sedacca, CCT is founder of the Child-Centered Divorce Network and author of the new ebook, How Do I Tell the Kids ... about the Divorce? A Create-a-Storybook Guide to Preparing Your Children – with Love!*



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# Relationship Expert Talks When To File For Divorce



By J'Nel Wright for [Divorce Support Center](#)

If your relationship and love has been confronted with unexpected and undesirable changes, you might consider ending your marriage. While we witness the threat of [celebrity divorce](#) surface almost every day, along with other nasty allegations, the fact remains that the decision to pursue a divorce is a personal choice.

# Relationship Expert: What To Consider Before Ending Your Marriage

Before you make a serious decision about your future, consider our love advice and ask yourself these questions:

**1. What do you value most about the marriage?** Is it the security the marriage provides? Do you value the companionship that's shared? For many, mutual respect is a highly favored characteristic, but whatever it may be, consider the strength of that factor now. For example, relationship expert, Rosalind Sedacca, CCT, says "When one or both spouses stop respecting one another, the foundation of the marriage is torn apart and little can be done to mend it. This is the biggest cause of divorce and is usually behind all the other issues involved." If the value you cherish is lost, you need to decide if it can ever be reclaimed. If not, you have the answer on what the next step should be.

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**2. What do you value in your partner?** Think about what attracted you to your honey in the first place. Was it integrity? Was it the prospect of a lifetime of financial support? Does your partner make you laugh or offer protection that makes you feel safe? If something has happened that compromises their character or desirable traits, you need to consider what's left. Moreover, is it enough to sustain your marriage in the future. The key is to identify the difference between reacting to an emotional experience and becoming more self-aware about what ultimately matters to you and what you want in your life.

Divorce support relationship expert Cathy Meyer says "If you're ready for divorce, you've let go of any emotional attachments you have to your spouse. These are good and

negative feelings that often come into play during marital conflict. Deciding on divorce at a time when you're overwhelmed with emotions won't solve problems. It will generate problems and compound any hurt and frustration you may be feeling."

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**3. How much is an outside party influencing your feelings or decision?** At the first sign of infidelity, the pressure to leave the marriage is palpable. Often the hint of staying leaves feminists howling "once a cheater, always a cheater." But what if the infraction is viewed as redeemable? In a variety of instances that go beyond infidelity, how do you piece together the logic of the woman who chooses to stand by her man? Truthfully, a third party has no place in your decision. If they have information that's important for you to know then it should be shared, but if you find yourself overly concerned about the reaction your decision may receive, your focus is misdirected. Only you can decide if this marriage has the foundation to withstand hardship. You're the one to decide if you have the strength and desire to rebuild it. Whatever your decision, be prepared to defend it to those who question it, but make it clear the decision was yours to make.

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We are surrounded by failed marriages that kicked the bucket for a host of reasons. Unfortunately, the commonality of it doesn't make the decision to end our marriage any easier. By establishing our value system and monitoring the present state of a relationship that we once held in high esteem, we can better prepare ourselves to estimate the current value of our love and whether or not it can make it over the threshold to better days.

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# Relationship Expert Talks About Being Friends With Your Ex



By Debbie Ceresa

“Today, I marry my friend.” It’s a common declaration of love shared between two people as part of their wedding ceremony. We promise “to love and cherish until death do us part.” But what happens when the relationship and love you once shared dies? Is it possible to stay friends with your ex?

# Relationship Expert Shares Her Thoughts on a Friendship With An Ex

“If you don’t have children or financial reasons tying you together and you want to stay friends, you need to think about how the friendship would work,” advises Dr. John Aiken, a clinical psychologist and [relationship expert](#), in the article [“Can You Be Friends With Your Ex?”](#) Even if you share children with your former partner, Aiken refers to the importance of establishing boundaries, measuring expectations, and evaluating the true motivations for wanting to keep your ex in your life. We see this challenge in the recent celebrity break-ups of Jennifer Garner and Ben Affleck as well as Gwen Stefani and Gavin Rossdale as they move forward with separate lives yet combined parenting.

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Sometimes, the reason the relationship ended supports the need to cut ties and walk away. However, as a relationship expert, I know that, many times, if you struggled on a romantic level, a friendship can still flourish. If you choose to develop a friendship with your ex, here are some things to remember:

**1. Mourn the loss of the relationship you once knew:** You’ve ended your relationship. For whatever reason, you’re no longer romantically together. Now is the time to stop the fighting and blaming and get on the path to recovery. “Give each other time to mourn the death of the relationship,” advises Ami Angelowicz in the article [“The longer you two were together, the longer it will take before you’re ready for friendship. It could be two months or two years – feel it out. You’ll know when the time is right because both of you will feel ready for it. Let hearts heal and flames fizzle out before hopping on the friendship train.”](#) You’ll have challenges along the way, but you’ll find that healing and forgiveness will bring you new insights. Once you step away from the negative thoughts,

you'll find yourself a new person who is able to renew your old friendship with your ex.

**2. Set clear boundaries:** Recognize that you're now at a different stage in your relationship with your ex. All couples have their own song and dance, but now is the time to change yours. This new dance could bring back what you miss about your lost friendship. "The same rules don't apply anymore, so toss out old expectations," advises Dr. Gabrielle Morrissey, a sex and dating expert for [bodyandsoul.com](http://bodyandsoul.com). "Setting clear and defined boundaries means that, when you become attached again, you'll have an emotionally healthy relationship with your ex." Why not treat your ex like your other friends, acknowledging their strengths and weaknesses? Focus on your ex's friendship strengths, but keep the relationship at an appropriate level. Just because you're rekindling your friendship doesn't mean you're looking to rekindle your romantic relationship.

**3. Move forward:** Be angry. Be jealous. You can even spend time feeling hurt. Then move on. It's essential for you to date other people and make new friends in different social circles. "You might not realize it, but keeping your ex around as a friend after a break-up can keep you from moving on," observes writer Karley Sciortino in the article "Breathless: Should You Be Friends With Your Ex?" "Moving on is hard, and the impulse to keep your ex in your life can be really strong – we all get it. But you first need to give yourself a window to move on physically and emotionally."

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Reaching out to a former love certainly has its rewards. You need to allow yourself time to mourn the loss of the relationship and embrace new parameters as well as set clear boundaries as to what those parameters include. Then, after moving forward by welcoming opportunities for love to

become a part of your life, you can enjoy the support of a former partner who knows you better than anyone else while you gain strength and focus on finding a new path to personal happiness.

*Debbie is a Certified Grief Recovery Specialist® and the author to the #1 bestselling memoir A Beautiful View, available on Amazon.com. A Beautiful View documents her journey through her husband's battle with cancer, which ultimately ended with his death. She has experienced grief firsthand and is well equipped to aid others in the recovery process, whether with death or divorce. For more information about Debbie and how to recover from your loss, please visit [debbieceresa.com](http://debbieceresa.com).*

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## **Expert Dating Advice: Moving On After a Divorce**





By Debbie Ceresa

“I don’t regret getting the divorce,” a close friend confided recently. “It’s more resentment. My ex seems to be moving on with his life so easily. I fear I may never find someone I can trust again.” Sound familiar? Many divorcees can relate to these circumstances, and celebrity couples are no exception. We saw it play out in Hollywood with [celebrity exes](#) Mariah Carey and Nick Cannon, who handled a private and painful break-up in the public eye. Inevitably, two people who have ended their relationship and love with each other must move forward. Most of us hope to get a second chance at love, but sometimes, that isn’t the case, and you find yourself standing still while your ex moves on.

## Post-Divorce Expert Dating Advice

My expert dating advice is to take ownership of your feelings, complete yourself, and forgive. You need to be able to handle this change while preparing yourself for your own happiness.

**1. Take ownership of your feelings:** Often times, in failed



relationships, one or both partners misunderstand emotional responsibility. What does this mean? Take a minute and think about the many arguments or disagreements you had during your marriage. Do you find yourself saying that your partner made you mad? Instead of owning your feelings, you're blaming someone else. As a relationship expert, I can tell you the result: If you aren't able to look at your own emotions, you're creating a victim mentality, which will certainly land you in an emotional jail of your own making.

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**2. Ask yourself, "Am I getting over a relationship or getting complete?":** The first thing we think of when someone recommends "getting over" a relationship is to forget, but is it really possible to not remember falling in love with someone or having children together? Consider my expert dating advice, and find closure in your relationship by writing down your unrealized dreams and expectations. Think about some of the things that never materialized during your marriage. Keep your notebook in a safe and private place. Remember that it's for you to think about and not share. You may discover writing gives you an opportunity to look honestly at the situation. Making a list of your broken hopes in your personal notebook is a step towards forgiveness.

**3. Forgive and be free:** I recognize that insensitive, uncaring, and even evil actions by your ex hurt you terribly. However, if you persist in holding onto your resentful and unforgiving mentality, you will only continue to hurt yourself. An important aspect of recovery is remembering that forgiveness is designed to empower you. You're not condoning negative aspects of your marriage. Set yourself free by recognizing what was incomplete during your relationship.

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There are few things more painful than realizing the person you once loved so deeply has found love with another. The feelings of inadequacy and doubt can take a beating on your heart and your hope for a happy future. But, by taking control of your emotions and owning those feelings, focusing on building inner strength, and allowing forgiveness to release those feelings that weigh you down, you are preparing yourself for a future filled with hope, happiness, and, perhaps, a second chance at everlasting love.

*Debbie is a Certified Grief Recovery Specialist® and the author to the #1 bestselling memoir A Beautiful View, available on Amazon.com. A Beautiful View documents her journey through her husband's battle with cancer, which ultimately ended with his death. She has experienced grief firsthand and is well equipped to aid others in the recovery process, whether with death or divorce. For more information about Debbie and how to recover from your loss, please visit [debbieceresa.com](http://debbieceresa.com).*

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**Relationship Expert: The Economic Reality Of Divorce Is No Excuse For Irresponsible Parenting**



By Rosalind Sedacca, CCT

While the economy is turning up, middle- and lower-class Americans are still struggling with financial challenges. Many couples that are ready to call it quits in their [relationship and love](#) are postponing the divorce decision because they can't afford it or the two-home reality in their future. As a relationship expert, here is my love advice for how to cope with the economic reality of divorce.

## Relationship Expert Shares Love Advice About Divorce

Does postponing divorce mean couples are finding new ways to get along and reconsider their marriages? I've seen some cases where the relationship and love survives because they put off breaking up. But for many, it just means adapting to continued

states of unhappiness and coping with disappointment and frustration. This approach, of course, does not bear well for the children of these unions. They experience the negative consequences of a distressed marriage whether their parents split up or choose to stay together because of economic factors.

Too many couples are so financially dependent on one another that they can't make a clean break. But, at the same time, they've lost their emotional interdependence, which helps a partnership thrive during outside challenges. Without the affection and emotional connection, they're basically roommates sharing a home and living expenses.

**Related Link:** [Expert Love Advice: How To Tackle That Nagging Seven-Year Itch](#)

The problem is that they're also parents of children who may be more confused than ever about life at home. Mom and Dad are still married and together – but are they? It's a big concern for therapists, school guidance counselors, clergy, and others who understand children's emotional and psychological needs during times of high stress. There are no clear resolutions for today's economic challenges or for parents caught up in making the divorce decision. However, staying together in a marriage that continues in "form" can only be a damaging situation for the kids. That's because those marriages often fail to focus on the emotional safety and security factors that children need in order to thrive, feel self-confident, and express themselves.

## **Dating Expert Gives Tips For Moving Ahead – In Or Out Of A Marriage**

Parents, whatever you do, stop and ask yourself some fundamental questions before moving ahead, whether you choose to stay in your marriage or get divorced:

- Despite economic stress, are we taking the time to give our children the loving attention they deserve?
- Are we as parents providing a loving environment for our children, either in the same residence or two separate abodes?
- Are we providing the nurturing values and personal time we want to instill in our children despite our own challenges as adults?
- Are we creating rituals with one or both parents so our children feel that we still are a “family” regardless of the form it takes?
- Should we be seeking outside professional help to make sure our children are feeling safe, secure, loved, and peaceful in their home environment(s)?
- Are we being honest with our children about our circumstances without sharing adult details with them that would be confusing and burdensome at their age?
- Are we restraining from arguing, badmouthing each other, and creating tension? Are we avoiding bitterness, sarcasm, or other negativity when the children are present?
- Are we reminding our children how much we love them and will continue to love them regardless of changes in where and how we live?

**Related Link:** [Relationship Expert Talks About Helping Kids Through Divorce](#)

As a dating expert, I know that how you answer these questions will determine the quality of life your children experience, whether they are residing in one residence or two. Always remember: You are parents first and a couple struggling with marital or divorce issues second. Isn't that the way it should be?

*For more information about and expert relationship advice from Hope After Divorce, click [here](#).*

*Rosalind Sedacca's Child-Centered Divorce Network provides free articles, an e-zine, coaching services and other valuable resources for parents at [www.childcenterreddivorce.com](http://www.childcenterreddivorce.com). Her signature ebook, How Do I Tell the Kids about the Divorce? A Create-a-Storybook Guide to Preparing Your Children – with Love! is also available at [www.howdoitellthekids.com](http://www.howdoitellthekids.com).*

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# Expert Love Advice: How To Tackle That Nagging Seven-Year Itch



By Amy Osmond Cook for [Divorce Support Center](#)

Can you remember the first time you were in love? Do you remember how the mere image of your partner took control of your thoughts? Your actions? Your view of the world? Life was vibrant and hopeful. Most of us can relate, but fast forward seven years, and the crowd thins a little. The intensity has dimmed or even disappeared long ago. Were we wrong about that person...or are we just incapable of maintaining a lasting [relationship and love](#)?

## Relationship Expert Shares Love Advice On Seven-Year Itch

As a relationship expert, I know that there's some empirical truth behind the matrimonial seven-year itch. According to the US Census Bureau, statistics continually support this behavior pattern and offer a theory showing that, after seven years of marriage, most couples have raised their children and have realized they don't want to be around each other anymore.

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In an article for *PsychologyToday*, author Dario Maestriperi, Ph.D., referred to the findings of anthropologist Helen Fisher. She theorized that humans may have a predisposition to being serial monogamists. This means that "people are socially bonded to one partner at a time but don't stick to the same partner their whole life." Instead, they switch from partner to partner. This often follows a four- to seven-year pattern.

So how do you explain those couples who defy the odds of statistics and anthropological patterns? What is it about the pair that remains together for 30-plus years that we could emulate in our own love life? Here is some expert love advice about what those enduring relationships have that yours may not:

**1. The relationship is flexible:** Most long-term goals need to

adapt to endure, and the same holds true for long-term relationships. An article for eharmony.com warns of adhering to patterns that don't work or weaken a partnership. For example, if one or both of you start taking the other one for granted, if either or both of you adopt a condescending tone in communicating with your spouse, or if you start seeking comfort and support from someone other than your spouse, the healthy relationship can break down. "To help avoid long-term unhealthy side effects that can lead to the seven-year itch, it's important to change those relationship-weakening patterns and habits," the article reads. "In doing so, you may discover what you love about each other and ultimately deepen the bond you share."

In an article for *PsychologyToday*, author Robert Taibbi, LCSW, stresses the importance of updating your vision. "What do you both envision in the next year, five years, or ten years? It's not so important what you say as you both have the ability to say it," he explains. "This is what will help you both narrow the gap between your daily life and your inner needs."

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**2. Communication, communication, communication:** Communication is a habit that should emerge during the early dating stages and continue throughout a marriage. Make it a habit to express your needs. Moreover, be sure to ask your partner what his or her needs consist of as well. This doesn't mean you'll always agree, but it will teach you how to handle conflicting views. In the eharmony.com article, we are reminded to expect bumps in the road. "The goal is not to avoid them at all costs but to understand how to navigate them in healthy, effective, loving ways," it says.

**3. Partners choose happiness over the need to be right:** It often comes down to choosing one or the other. Are you drawn to having the last word? Do you relish those opportunities



when you have proven your partner wrong? Is defending your point of view worth taking it to the mat at every opportunity? If so, you may win the battle, but you are destined to be alone at the end of the war. "By letting go of the desire to always be right at any cost, you give yourself and your partner permission to enjoy life again," says eharmony.com. "A happy relationship AND less stress? Sounds like a win-win."

Problems will certainly make a regular appearance in your relationship, whether motivated by self-serving strategies or not. In this case, long-term couples understand the importance of solving problems when they arise. They know that unresolved problems or unchecked behavior creates an unhappy environment. "It just becomes another land mine that you have to carefully walk around," writes Taibbi. "If you're always looking down at where you are stepping, you never can really look at each other."

**Related Link:** [Romantic Relationship Advice: From Roadkill to Recommitment](#)

So how can one scratch that dreaded seven-year itch? Our relationship advice is to make sure your partnership is important to you. Expert love advice shows that, by maintaining flexibility, communicating, showing respect for your partner's opinions, and handling conflict openly and with fairness, you can uphold the value of your relationship and enjoy an itchy-free future with the one you love.

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# Relationship Expert Talks About Helping Kids Through Divorce



By Debbie Bartashius-Ceresa

Whose divorce is it? Perhaps this sounds like a strange question when talking about the Hilary Duff and Mike Comrie custody dispute or the battle of where Jodie Sweetin and Morty Coyle's little Beatrix will attend pre-school. But as a [relationship expert](#), I know that a divorce can cause many losses, especially for the children.

# Relationship Expert on Losses of Divorce

There is truth that divorce is a family matter, but in the end, it's the couple who is ending their relationship and love together. The kids are merely in the midst of a war zone, and the damage to them can be immense. Divorce, like death, creates losses for everyone involved. Children can experience any or all of the following:

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**1. Loss of expectations:** We teach our children to love, trust, and be loyal to us. Children think that their family will always be together. Think about the many stories you've read to your kids; most of them have a family that stays together. Children are also exposed to the vows and commitments parents make to each other through movies and religion. Try to imagine how confused a child feels when they're told that their parents can no longer keep this pledge.

**2. Loss of trust:** Children have a difficult time dealing with the conflicting feelings of love and divorce. These emotions tend to cause the child to believe that their parents are distrustful.

**3. Loss of familiarity and routines:** A divorce sometimes causes a move from one home to another or a change of schools. Everything that was familiar and routine in the child's life is disrupted.

**4. Loss of safety:** What makes you feel safe? Most of us feel stable when we are in our day-to-day routine and our comfort zone. Oftentimes, children caught in the battle lose their sense of safety.

# Expert Love Advice For How To Help Your Child Through Your Divorce

As a relationship expert, I look at celebrity divorces, such as the Duff-Comrie and Sweetin-Coyle cases, and see that they create an awareness of how to understand the effect of break-ups on our children. My expert love advice, whether you're dealing with a divorce of your own or someone close to you, is to focus on the kids. The following can help your child:

**Related Link:** [Romantic Relationship Advice: From Roadkill to Recommitment](#)

**1. Don't "fix" feelings:** Be there to listen to your child without trying to tell them how to feel. Every child is different and reacts to a divorce uniquely. The problem with emotions that are sad, negative, or painful is that we try to fix them. We don't try to change or fix good feelings. Remember that feelings are feelings.

**2. Find a safe zone:** Give your child a place to express any happy, sad, or painful emotions. You need to be able to listen, hear, and acknowledge their feelings. This safe zone also means not taking sides with the other parent.

**3. Complete your own emotions:** The world isn't perfect. Divorce happens. Every divorce is unique; your feelings are unique. Taking actions to complete your own emotions with your divorce will give you the ability to hear and listen to your children.

*Debbie is a Certified Grief Recovery Specialist® and the author to the #1 bestselling memoir A Beautiful View, available on Amazon.com. A Beautiful View documents her journey through her husband's battle with cancer, which ultimately ended with his death. She has experienced grief firsthand and is well equipped to aid others in the recovery*

*process, whether with death or divorce. For more information about Debbie and how to recover from your loss, please visit [debbieceresa.com](http://debbieceresa.com).*

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## Expert Dating Advice: Should You Give Your Ex a Second Chance?



By Amy Osmond Cook for [Divorce Support Center](#)

In the latest celebrity news, actress Pamela Anderson recently announced that her celebrity divorce to two-time husband, Rick Salomon, was final. In retrospect, she realized she never should have traveled down that path a second time. In contrast, my aunt Marie Osmond reunited with and remarried her first husband, Stephen Craig, 26 years after they divorced. This [celebrity couple](#) is fantastic together, and I'm thrilled to see them back together. As Uncle Donny stated in *People.com*, "These two people are right for each other."

Deciding whether or not your ex is the ultimate soul mate for you can be a complicated decision, and it's one that requires some soul-searching. Six percent of people remarry their former spouse, and sometimes, it results in happiness, while other times, the old problems flare up again. As a relationship expert, I think the wisdom behind that decision largely depends on what caused the marriage to break up in the first place and what changes are happening now. My expert dating advice would be to consider these three reasons for remarrying your spouse and these three reasons to move on:

## **Expert Dating Advice For Giving Your Ex a Second Chance**

**1. You're able to forgive each other:** What was once considered a deal breaker to your marriage may take on a different look as time passes. In her *Huffington Post* article, "Remarrying Your Ex-Spouse," author Lois Tarter believes the ability to forgive comes with time, stating, "If the two ex-spouses worked on themselves while apart and they are in a better place, they may be able to forgive their spouse for all that went wrong."

**Related Link:** [Expert Dating Advice For Finding Love After Divorce](#)

**2. Bad timing caused the break-up:** Could it be the right guy came along at the wrong moment? If so, follow my expert dating advice and look at the personal growth of both of you during the time apart. “Sometimes, two people feel that they need to grow a bit on their own in order to be fully committed to a marriage,” wrote Tarter.

**3. The problem wasn't the marriage:** In some cases, it was the baggage that was brought into a marriage that cast a destructive shade on the relationship and love. Rachel Clark, who blogs for Psychology.com as “Marry, Divorce, Reconcile,” refers to her own experience when she writes, “It was never the marriage. It was a habit of thinking that questioned and doubted, that spawned negativity instead of positivity. And I can say that came from my childhood because my own parents had divorced.”

## **Relationship Expert Gives Reasons to Move On**

**1. Toxic behavior is ruining the relationship:** As we witnessed with Anderson, a failure to acknowledge the effects of unhealthy behaviors can doom a relationship and love. It's like opening the refrigerator door, hoping to find something to eat, not finding anything, and closing the door, only to open it again a few seconds later in the hopes that something new appeared. That type of thinking is irrational, and so is thinking the same negative behavior patterns will not have an adverse effect on you as they once did.

**Related Link:** [Romantic Relationship Advice: From Roadkill to Recommitment](#)

**2. You are remarrying for the wrong reasons:** Contrary to most Disney movies, remarrying your ex-spouse for the sake of the children, the grandparents, to save the family farm, or any reason that lies outside of genuine love for this person is

sure to end in disaster for the second time.

**3. Your ex-spouse has moved on:** If your former spouse has invested his time and affections into another, your time speculating what could have been is over. "Life would be so much easier for everyone involved if our feelings of desire, love, and attachment were reciprocated," was an opinion shared on [truthaboutdeception.com](http://truthaboutdeception.com). "But more often than not, these basic emotions do not align themselves that way."

By taking an honest look at the reasons behind your split, you may be facing an opportunity to make right what went wrong long ago. Or you may be proud of your ability to escape a destructive relationship that left your heart as empty as your checking account. Either way, toying with the prospect enables you to confirm your choices and feel good about what is to come.

*For more information about and articles by our Hope After Divorce relationship experts, click [here](#).*

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## Romantic Relationship Advice: From Roadkill to Recommitment







By Elaine Taylor

I am a woman for whom the relationship “r-word” had been “roadkill” more often than “recommitment” (not nearly as often as my almost namesake Elizabeth Taylor but more in the range of Demi Moore or [Jennifer Lopez](#)). So it’s surprising that I leapt to the assumption that “May is National Recommitment Month” was for romantic relationships. A Google search, however, led in a different direction.

## **Romantic Relationship Advice on the Importance of Recommitment**

Apparently, Recommitment Month originated as a time to look back on New Year’s resolutions and reenergize (recommit to) goals set and vows made with a champagne glass in one hand and a noisemaker stuck between pursed lips. Recommitment Month is also an overused leitmotif commandeered by addiction facilities to hawk their pricey rehab gigs.

My only New Year’s resolution is never to make one because I already know my commitment will be lip-service deep. I’m going

to stick with what I, multi-divorced but now blissfully hitched, finally figured out about both commitment...and its scary twin, "recommitment."

My romantic relationship practices in years past have followed the basic animal kingdom model. I have:

- Been attracted to the peacock version of the species: tall, dark, handsome. Who could resist a nice tail?
- Gone for the all-too-common, unambitious, suburban songbird. He sits atop the feeder, happily chirping at the bright blue sky, waiting for Santa Claus to show up with the seed bag.
- Tried out a white-rumped sandpiper. It could be said that I was attracted to his breeding territory(San Francisco). It could also be said I didn't realize his breed was not monogamous.

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Recommitment? Ha. More than once I sprinted down the aisle – in reverse – to Peggy Lee crooning, "Is that all there is?" Not that any of my paramours had grim character flaws. They were perfectly acceptable husband material. Just not for me. At some point, I poked an accusatory finger at the mirror and confided, "With your track record, maybe it's time to consider that *you* might be the problem." So I went to an astrologer/psychic to ask if Peggy Lee nailed it: That's all there was?

"Oh, no," the psychic said. "You are destined for great love – the kind about which stories are written – but not until you're ready."

Seriously? I had a workout regimen and a classic sense of style, and I waxed routinely. What more did a woman have to do to be "ready" for a relationship and love? Ashton Kutcher came along with his tidbit of relationship advice – vulnerability

is the essence of romance – a couple decades too late for me; I had to figure it out for myself. Even more scary, it became obvious that I had to be willing to be vulnerable with *myself* before I could be vulnerable with anyone else.

Over the next years, I spent time on the therapy couch, and I:

- Held my nose and, reluctantly, dived headfirst into my emotional dumpster.
- Dug to the back of the withheld-feelings closet – the one I had never dared peek inside because, yes, I had in fact stuffed it with an army of destructive memories and their full-dress uniforms: shame, sorrow, and self-denigration.
- Didn't stop diving and digging until that dumpster and that closet were emptied out, spit-shined, and springtime fresh.

That was my first big step in making myself “ready.” The second step – and perhaps my most important insight – was to realize the one person to whom I had never even *considered* committing to – much less *recommitting* to – was...me! Of course not – that would be selfish! I was committed to mothering and wife-ing and bread winner-ing. *Me*-ing would have taken time from the ones I loved.

**Related Link:** [Dating Advice: Create The Person You Want To Be](#)

My therapist asked if I included myself on the Ones-I-Love list. The question didn't even make sense. Wasn't it someone else's job to love me? The someone I hadn't yet met?

## **Focusing On Your Relationship and Love with Yourself**

The therapist's answer came in the form of a question: If you don't love yourself – believe yourself worthy of love, deserving to be cared about and cared for – then why would

that elusive “someone else” love and care about you?

Whoa! That was like a pistol-whip to the head. It left me stunned and reeling. Was she saying it wouldn't be selfish to expect from others what I was so willing to give? Respect? Nurturing? Security? To feel I had the right to the same “love-entitlement” that I accorded the Ones-I-Loved?

The psychic had been right when she said I wasn't ready. I had always hidden my vulnerability, never believed in my own self-worth. I worked hard to change. Soon after, the love – that someone for whom I had yearned for so long – slid right into my life. For more than a decade, he has colored my world with a rainbow of happiness and contentment. Never again have I found myself asking, “Is that all there is?” Recommitment – to him and to myself – is, at last, something I do most willingly, joyfully, and often.

*Elaine Taylor is the author of Karma Deception and a Pair of Red Ferraris: A Memoir. She is a former IT headhunter, Contingent Workforce Management specialist, and Board member of Raphael House in San Francisco. She can be found at [www.KarmaDeception.com](http://www.KarmaDeception.com)*

*For more information about expert relationship advice from Hope After Divorce, click [here](#).*

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## **Expert Dating Advice For Finding Love After Divorce**



By Amy Osmond Cook for [Divorce Support Center](#)

Fellow fictional vampires Nikki Reed and Ian Somerhalder just tied the knot in their celebrity wedding after a whirlwind romance. The famous couple began their relationship in the fall of 2014 when Reed announced she and her then-husband Paul McDonald were separating. By January 2015, the [celebrity divorce](#) was finalized and Somerhalder had popped the question. Now, the two are hitched and honeymooning in Brazil after dating for less than a year.

## Expert Dating Advice for Finding Love

To some, tying the knot only four months after leaving a marriage may seem impulsive, but there are no rules set in stone when it comes to finding love after a divorce. "This

wildly varies from person to person,” Judith Sills, Ph.D, psychologist and author of *Getting Naked Again: Dating, Romance, Sex, and Love When You’ve Been Divorced, Widowed, Dumped, or Distracted* told Web MD. “Everyone ends a relationship by grieving the emotional investment. For some people, that happens before they move out. Others are still emotionally married after the divorce is final.”

Based on the romantic photos that Daily Mail shared of the honeymoon, it looks like married life suits this famous couple. Reed seems confident about her relationship with Somerhalder, which is one of the most important signs of a healthy union, especially when her celebrity divorce from Paul McDonald was so public.

What are some ways you can tell if you are ready to dedicate yourself to a committed relationship after a divorce? Here’s some expert [dating advice](#) to determine if you’re ready to begin again:

**Related Link:** [Dating Advice: Create The Person You Want To Be](#)

**1. Feel it out:** Stay true to your feelings. Allow yourself “a little time to think, a little time to grieve, a little opportunity to find someone else,” Sills says. Sure, Reed was ready to seriously date almost immediately after leaving her previous marriage, but that doesn’t mean you have to be, too. Do what feels good. If dating makes you uncomfortable, embrace that fact, and use that time to treat yourself. Eventually, your emotions will let you know when you’re really ready.

**2. No, really, feel it out:** Dating after divorce has shown potential to prevent depression in a surprising way. Dr. Karen Finn stresses the importance of human touch when it comes to maintaining good mental health. However, if the idea of becoming physically close with a new person isn’t appealing, Dr. Finn recommends to, “get a massage, become known by your friends as a hugger, get a mani and/or pedi, and hug

yourself.”

**3. Do it for the right reasons:** It can be tempting to jump back into dating after a divorce so that you can claim yourself as “the winner,” the one who finds happiness with another person first. Unfortunately, that’s not the kind of motivation that will necessarily lead to a lasting new relationship. You wouldn’t want to get involved with someone who is invested in hurting their ex’s feelings, so don’t put anyone else in that position.

**Related Link:** [How to Be Mindful When It Comes to Relationships and Love](#)

There is no schedule in terms of finding love post-divorce. Most importantly, this is a time to rekindle the love you have for yourself! *Then* you can start hunting vampires like Reed, if you know what I mean.

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## Expert Relationship Advice: I’m Divorced, But He’s Married





By Toni Coleman, LCSW, CMC for [Hope After Divorce](#)

*I recently received the letter below and offered my expert relationship advice in my response.*

## **Expert Relationship Advice from Hope After Divorce**

Dear Toni,

Somehow, I have fallen in love with a married man. I know what you must be thinking: that if I knew he was married, and I walked into it anyway, I did this to myself and need to just accept the consequences. If so, you would be right, but I honestly didn't have the intent to go down this path. It more or less evolved from us being co-workers and friends. Ironically, he was the one who I leaned on a lot through my ex's infidelity and subsequent divorce. It was a time of great vulnerability for me, and he was just so great; in fact, he was everything my ex had never been. After hours of talking, long lunches, drinks after work and an increased frequency in texting, we shared a kiss. From there, it was too easy.



**Related Link:** [How to Be Mindful When It Comes to Relationships and Love](#)

He is a good man, the father of three children and spouse to a nice woman. I know they have had their issues and problems, but he has never been unfaithful to her in the past because he is not that kind of guy. He has told me that he did not intend this either and feels guilty and torn about continuing, even though I know he values our relationship and love. He loves his family, is concerned about his children, and knows he would take a terrible financial hit if he were to divorce.

I'm hoping you can help us figure out what we should do next. Speaking for myself, I would love it if he could be free and we could have a life together. I know this is very selfish, but it's the truth. However, I am not exactly sure how he feels. He has told me he cares about me and has demonstrated this in many ways, but I know he is devoted to his family. I have considered just breaking it off, asking him to go to counseling with me, and telling him I can't remain in limbo while giving him a period of time to tell his wife and begin a separation or else. The last one is a bit of an ultimatum, but at least I could be sure of where he really stands. Any insights, suggestions or wisdom gained from your experience working with situations like this would be greatly appreciated.

– In Love's Limbo

**Related Link:** [Your Soul Needs Nourishment](#)

## **What's Next For This Relationship and Love**

Dear In Love's Limbo,

Wow, your ex did this to you, yet you have let yourself be a part of doing this to another wife. You mention the irony, but

I don't sense much remorse on your part, and that is a bit troubling. You also say "he" is married to a nice woman and that he has never done this before because he is a nice guy. What does that make you?

My intent is not to dump a lot of guilt or criticism on you; I am instead asking hard questions in order to get you to step beyond your present perspective and take a larger and more brutally honest view of the situation in which you now find yourself. This did not just happen – it is the result of a series of steps taken over time, each of which could have been different if either of you had made a different choice. Seeing this as a choice is very important, as you are not a helpless victim here, and that means you can make choices that will help you to work towards what is best for all involved.

I get the sense from several things you have written that your lover has been expressing ambivalence and has suggested that he does not want to continue. It also seems apparent that you do not share these feelings and would have no hesitation to move this relationship and love forward once his marriage is out of the way. The reason these impressions are important is that, if I am correct, your letter might be motivated by a desire to find a way to convince him to remain involved with you and end his marriage because his reluctance to do so is becoming very apparent to you. If this is the case, any suggestions I might offer would not be addressing the real issues and dynamics and would not help either of you in the long run.

**Related Link:** [Love Advice: Is Your Life Working?](#)

Therefore, I recommend that you begin with an honest discussion about what both of you want. This will require that you create the right environment and give him the space to share his feelings honestly and without fear of backlash. After all, would you want to be with a man who feels ambivalent or pressured to be with you? If his heart is with

his family, what of any real value would be left for you? There is also all the collateral damage that would result if he were to break up his marriage and family life. Would it be worth it to him if he only has a half-hearted desire to be with you? Do you really want a future with someone who isn't fully committed to you and the relationship?

The truth may be very painful to accept, and you would be left to grieve if a decision is made to end your affair. I suspect you are feeling a bit desperate to avoid this pain, and that is understandable. But weigh that against a possible lifetime of resentment on the part of your partner and continued grief over never having the relationship and love you had hoped for. Somehow, a quick and clean cut seems like the better option. However, you will need to really listen to what he has to say before you will know what you need to do.

*For more information about expert relationship advice from Hope After Divorce, click [here](#).*

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## **How to Be Mindful When It Comes to Relationships and Love**





By Lisa LaBelle for [Hope After Divorce](#)

Relationships and love begin at a young age for many of us, long before we are adults. Luckily, there are words of dating advice, guidance, and wisdom we can share to help each other through these sometimes murky waters. After all, we are all navigating our way through relationships – whether they be family, romantic, or platonic – in one way or another.

## **The Importance of Mindfulness in Relationships and Love**

One specific word I find essential, helpful, and a miracle worker when it comes to relationships and love is “mindfulness.” Why? Here’s a broad definition that will hopefully answer this question:

*Mindfulness means to consciously paying attention to what you are experiencing (feeling and thinking) as it’s happening. You must be in the present moment within your mind. It means to be fully anchored in the moment, leaving what has happened in the past or what’s lying ahead in the future. To be mindful means*

*to be aware of your thoughts and emotions and then to choose how to behave and respond through your words, actions, body language, etc. It means to recognize others around you as they are without judgment.*

**Related Link:** [Changing Your Life in Those Quiet Moments](#)

A positive consequence of being mindful is feeling peaceful rather than overwhelmed by your thoughts, memories, emotions, worries, concerns, fears, or distractions. In addition, mindfulness gives you the authentic feeling that you are the captain of your own ship; you are responsible for your own life and the choices you make. You gain your own power, which is essential to living an authentic life. This includes making positive decisions when dating, whether you're playing the field or in a romantic, committed relationship.

## **Celebrity Exes Nick Cannon and Mariah Carey**

Unfortunately, Nick Cannon and Mariah Carey weren't able to practice mindfulness in order to rebuild their marriage. After a lot of ups and downs, the comedian filed for divorce. Now, the celebrity exes will begin a new and significant journey of co-parenting. Hopefully, they will realize the importance of working together, supporting one another, and doing their individual parts to raise their children peacefully. It will be essential for them to be mindful of their own thoughts, actions, behaviors, responses, decisions, and choices for their own well-being and that of their beautiful children.

Mindfulness is naturally becoming a common practice among health and wellness professionals, counselors, relationship experts, and life coaches. You can clearly see why in the description above. If you wish to have a healthy relationship and love, choosing to be mindful of your own thoughts, actions, and feelings each day will be a significant benefit

for you and your partner. Remember, you are 50 percent of a relationship. Your other half must also do their part to mirror your practice of being mindful. When we are mindful of what is going on around us and how we are choosing to respond, feel, think, and behave ourselves, we are likely to feel more connected. We engage in healthier and happier patterns of behavior. These positive patterns will serve us well if we will do our part to practice mindfulness, so make it a daily choice.

**Related Link:** [5 Ways to Turn “Me” to “We”](#)

Our brains are powerful. It is up to us to guide them in a positive direction. We each have the innate power to literally change the way we think. Hopefully, celebrity exes Cannon and Carey will choose to be mindful as they become co-parents for years to come. Begin to be more mindful, and see how your own relationships and love life will evolve and change for the better. It starts with YOU!

*For more information about our Hope After Divorce relationship experts, click [here](#).*



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# Kindness No Matter What



By Janeen Diamond for [Hope After Divorce](#)

*"It seems that, whenever I allow myself to react without thinking, someone is watching from nearby who knows me. Can you relate?"*

I was in a fast food restaurant with my family the other night, and everything seemed to be going wrong for me. The tomato basil soup I ordered wasn't quite ready, so I was told it would be just a few minutes before it was brought out to me. Well, 20 minutes later – after my family had nearly finished their chicken noodle soup – mine finally arrived...cold!

Now, I was already annoyed about the wait, and, oh yeah, a pita bread incident, and I really didn't want to have to send my soup back, but I did! Cold soup just doesn't hit the spot when it's 28 degrees outside. And, silly me, I actually expected it to be hot after waiting 20 minutes, right?

**Related Link:** [EXCLUSIVE: Designer Christy Biebrich from 'Brother vs. Brother' Says, "Laughter Is The Secret to a Healthy Everything!"](#)

When the waitress finally brought my heated-up soup back to my table, she sat it down in front of me, looked me in the eye, and said without hesitation, "Let me know if that's good enough for you." Yikes! My daughter had pointed out to me earlier that I was making the waitress scared... but now, it was me who was scared. I would have eaten the soup had it been frozen at this point. Luckily, it was just right.

## **Relationship Advice for the New Year**

As I pondered what had happened that night, I realized both the waitress and I could have been a little more kind to each other. I don't like myself much when I allow my emotions to get the best of me and I wind up taking it out on other people. But here I was letting it happen. And she struck back. It made me think about how we can be unkind in all of our relationships, even with the people we love. Wouldn't you agree that our relationships with everyone – even those we don't know or even like – deserve our respect? After all, respect is one of the only things that keeps our world from crumbling into complete and utter chaos.

I decided right then and there that I'm going to work harder during this new year to be more kind to everyone I meet. So, as some general relationship advice, here are my rules to myself. You can borrow them if you'd like:



- I will smile at every person I encounter;
- I will offer an acknowledgement to let them know they are important;
- If someone is less than kind to me, I will try to brighten their day with a kind word;
- And if a person annoys me in some way, I will ask them cheerfully how their day is going.

I kept these rules quite simple for a reason: so I could remember them and have only a few small things that I require of myself. That way, it's more likely I will actually stick to them.

**Related Link:** [Single Traits to Lose So You Can Move Forward in a Relationship](#)

I consider myself a generally happy, kind person. But I am here to tell you that stress and pressure can get the best of any of us. We are all capable of acting annoyed, put out, angry, and unkind. It seems that whenever I allow myself to react without thinking, someone is watching from nearby who knows me. Can you relate? Maybe next time, I'll tell you about the time I said something thoughtless about my husband's ex-wife only to discover she was sitting at the table behind me. Yep, it actually happened!

## **What We Can Learn from Celebrity Divorce**

Celebrity and well-known chef Giada De Laurentiis recently announced that she and her husband are divorcing. They have been married for 11 years and have a young daughter. They have stated that their divorce comes with much sadness. However, they are committed to focusing on the future with a desire for their family to heal and be happy. They say this is giving them the much-needed strength to move ahead. This celebrity divorce is a great example of how couples can choose to move

through a split. It is a choice to be respectful, kind, and mindful of others, even during a tough breakup.

My best relationship advice is to remember to be kind. We live in a stressful world. Let's cut each other some slack and work on helping each other feel like we matter. When I'm feeling stressed or overwhelmed, all it takes for me is a smile and a kind word from someone, and it changes my entire day. Keep in mind that, when someone is rude or impatient with you, it's not about you. That person is most likely in need of some love or simply some appreciation. See if you can be the one to help them get it.

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*Janeen Diamond, author of Save Your Marriage in 30, was a newscaster for KUTV News until 2001. Since that time, she has been actively producing commercials and special programming through her company, Your TV Spot. She has hosted several television and internet productions and has been a spokesperson for several products and companies. She is a leader over the youth in her church and takes a special interest in helping kids stay on track with their lives. Janeen is currently co-creating "Teen Impact TV," a website for high school students to give them a creative and emotional outlet. She is a contributing expert for [HopeAfterDivorce.org](#), [DivorceSupportCenter.com](#), [FamilyShare.com](#), and [CupidsPulse.com](#). Follow her on Twitter [@janeendiamond](#) and [www.facebook.com/janeen.diamond](#).*

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# Solo Parenting: New Year, New You!



By Cynthia MacGregor for [Hope After Divorce](#)

If you didn't make any New Year's resolutions, don't feel bad. Many people don't. In fact, I happen to be one of them. But just because you didn't make any resolutions, that doesn't mean you can't make any changes.

Most resolutions get broken anyhow – and pretty quickly at that. But you don't need to make a resolution in order to make a change. Think about your life as it is currently or as it has been for the past 12 months. Are you satisfied with it? If not, what would you like to change about it?

What's stopping you?

**Related Link:** [Cupid's Weekly Round-Up: Find True Love in the New Year](#)

Of course, if you'd like to be living in a mansion with servants and what's stopping you is that you only make so many dollars (fill in the blank) a week/month/year, then you're dreaming impractically. Instead think of the things you'd like to change that are *feasible*. Plausible. Possible. And then I'll ask you the same question: What's stopping you?

Would you like a better relationship with your kids? Do you think it's impossible as long as they maintain their attitudes and there's nothing *you* can do? Think again.

Yes, they're the ones with the attitudes, the ones with all the eye-rolling, the ones who are being smart-mouthed or bratty or just plain obnoxious. But have you sat them down and had a talk? A non-judgmental, non-accusatory talk? Have you elicited from them the specific reasons they behave and talk the way they do? If they can't come up with a single one, maybe they'll realize that they're wrong. Maybe they'll change. It's not impossible. And if they do come up with some reason and it reflects on you, maybe there's something *you* can do that's different. (Hey, if you can ask them to change, isn't it reasonable to ask yourself to change too?)

What about having a better relationship with your ex in the year ahead? Is that something you'd like? I don't mean for you to get back together or anything of the sort. I just mean for you to normalize the way you relate to each other, so every request to change visiting days doesn't escalate into a skirmish.

Leaving aside your relationship with your kids and your ex, what about the way you feel about *yourself*? What do you like about yourself? Focus on it. Expand on it. What *don't* you like about yourself? Work on changing it. Do you want to be a less cynical person? A more forgiving person? A more accepting

person? Give yourself an attitude makeover.

You're a single mom with kids, and you're not likely to change that in the New Year unless you get married or move in with someone—which is not a change that can come from within so isn't under discussion here. But what you *can* change about yourself is your *attitude* toward that status. If you've been desperately looking for a new husband, you can work to become comfortable in your own skin, a self-sufficient person, a person who's happy with herself and her life. And if you've been in I-hate-men, men-all-stink mode, maybe it's time to let it go and realize that one bad marriage doesn't mean the whole barrel of apples is rotten.

**Related Link:** [Celebrity Relationships in Need of a New Year's Resolution](#)

What else would you like to change about your life? Which of those things *can* you change?

Well, what's stopping you?

It's a new year. How about a new you for the New Year?

Get started!

*For more information on Hope After Divorce, click [here](#).*



*Cynthia MacGregor is a multi-published author. She has over 100 books to her credit. They include "After Your Divorce," "Divorce Helpbook for Kids," "Divorce Helpbook for Teens," "Solo Parenting," "'Step' This Way," and others. Forthcoming books include "The One-Parent Family," "Why Are Mommy and Daddy Getting Divorced," and "Daddy Doesn't Live Here Anymore." She hosted and produced the TV show "Solo*

*Parenting,” which was broadcast in South Florida over WHDT. Cynthia writes for HopeAfterDivorce.org, FamilyShare.com and LAFamily.com.*

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## **P.A.C.E. For New Holiday Traditions**



By Amie Greenberg, JD, MBA for [Hope After Divorce](#)

Here is a four-step process to help divorced families handle traditions and changes during the holidays.

**P: Planning and Positive New Traditions**

- Planning the holiday schedule in advance reduces the chances for miscommunication and gives parents time to iron out any conflicts.
- Plan something special for the children over the holidays, so they have something to look forward to with each parent.
- Take some “me” time for you to rest, relax and recuperate.
- Focus on the positive aspects of these changes. Your children have two parents who love them and want to spend holiday time with them. Involve your children in planning and experiencing new activities and holiday traditions.

**Related Link:** [Readying Your Single Self for the Holidays](#)

#### **A : Acknowledge Sadness and Differences**

- Anytime there is a life-changing event, such as a divorce, family traditions and routines are affected. Children see the family unit as broken. Recognize and acknowledge that it’s sad that you won’t be together over the holidays.
- The disruption of holiday and family traditions is difficult. Children generally want to be with both parents during this special time of year. Help your children deal with these emotions by talking about the changes.

#### **C: Cooperation and Communication**

- Try to cooperate with scheduling and have added flexibility which reduces conflict. If you can’t work it out, let it go.
- If possible, do something special with the children for the other parent. A simple card or dinner during the holidays sends a positive message to your kids.
- Allow the other parent to easily communicate by phone or

Skype with the children over the holidays. A lack of communication during the holidays can lead to conflict. This is an easy way of co-parenting.

**Related Link:** [How to Get Over a Broken Heart During the Holidays](#)

### **E: Encourage and Empower**

- Children often feel divided and torn in a divorce, so give your children permission to enjoy holiday time with the other parent. This way, children can look forward to spending time with each parent without feeling guilty.
- Encourage your children to talk about their feelings and give them say in what they want over the holidays.

*For more information about Hope After Divorce, click [here](#).*



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## Best Friends and the Search for Love



By Patricia Bubash, Ed.S., LPC for [Hope After Divorce](#)

“He is my best friend.” These words came from the lips of a

wife. It isn't the first time I have heard a wife say this about her other half, but it is the first time that I really thought about the impact of a "best friend" relationship in a marriage – and even more impacting, in a remarriage.

Statistics show that most divorced men and women are still desirous of finding a lifelong partner. More than half of first-time divorced spouses choose to walk down the aisle again. We really don't need to read the statistics; observation is enough. The overwhelming number of dating sites, divorce support groups, and friends trying to "set" single friends up easily convinces us.

Research will show we indeed live in a couples' society. Most people feel the need to have a partner, a companion, a person to share interests, socialization, and good and bad situations – a soul mate. Finding that someone special is a desire shared among the single. We are inundated via all modes of communication – television, radio, written word, and personal conversations – with the necessity of "being in love." Unhappily for the love-seeker, many of their hopes for the real thing are relationships founded "in lust" rather than "in love."

**Related Link:** [Daniel Radcliffe Says Girlfriend Erin Darke Is "Definitely" His Best Friend](#)

An author friend, Pam Evans, is an expert on finding love. Her problem wasn't finding love but *keeping* it! As a self-proclaimed "multiple marrier," she is familiar with the search for a soul mate, a replacement for a previous spouse. In her book *Ring ExChange*, she shares her misdirected view of what was important in a relationship. It was this perception that led to her four failed marriages. A good thing for the readers of her book, she didn't give up easily.

A lesson from her book coincides with my premise to find a best friend first. If the new love meets her criteria, then

chances are high that a soul mate will follow. She provides these words of wisdom: "When two individuals approach a relationship first in the spirit of friendship, then true bonding leading to the deepest unconditional love, where affection, respect, compassion, sensuality, and kindness join together, can develop." I reread this lengthy quote several times to really "get" the depth of it. But, once I did, I heartedly agreed with her "friendship first" suggestion.

We know, typically, a physical attraction is usually the "first" connector for two people looking for a serious, long-term relationship with the end result being marriage. Through our own personal experiences or those of friends, we know that physical attraction is short-lived. No matter how gorgeous or how handsome, if our choice is based on exterior qualities rather than best friend qualities, our relationship will soon end, and a new search will begin again.

**Related Link:** [Can Love Be Better the Second Time Around?](#)

A close friend who has a PhD in counseling with many years of private practice and is also one of the divorced who is "searching" shared some personal and professional insights: "In the past, I found myself trying to be who my date wanted me to be. I found myself trying to please, to make him happy. In doing that, I wasn't making me happy, and I was being dishonest."

I think in our anticipation of making up for the loss of our marriage, our need for finding love again, a replacement for that lost love, we aren't always true to "me." First, I believe it is essential to be a best friend to yourself. Then, find that "best friend" who will be a true love.

Returning to this "best friend first then love" theory, ask yourself this question: "What qualities or virtues do I need in deciding that someone has achieved best friend status with me?" For me, it is the following:

1. Be supportive and honest. I don't want someone to agree with me just because disagreeing might hurt my feelings.
2. Be willing to listen to me *without* giving advice. My view of advice: "Fools never heed it, and wise men don't need it." So skip the advice, just listen.
3. Let me know about the spinach between my teeth!
4. Encourage me in my goals.

When you find that someone who fills these four (my best friend) criteria, I believe you have found someone worthy of being your partner. Also worth thinking about: Don't rush it! Best friends tend to evolve over time, but once in place, they last forever. One day, you will be repeating the words of the woman whom I interviewed: "He is my best friend."

*For more information about Hope After Divorce, click [here](#).*



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# Making Special Occasions Comfortable for Children After Divorce



By Michele Sfakianos, RN, BSN for [Hope After Divorce](#)

It's very important to make special occasions comfortable for children after a divorce. You may find it's better to have birthday parties or Christmas morning at both homes, and most children will love the extra attention. However, there will be

some events that can't be divided, and that's where communication between the parents is essential.

Children don't get a say as to what's going to happen due to a divorce, so it's up to the parents to always keep their best interests in mind. When your child has a dance recital, a school play, sporting events, dances, and even graduation, they will want both parents to be in attendance. You don't want everyone to be tense due to who will be attending the event either.

**Related Link:** [Brandi Glanville Talks About Dating as a Single Parent](#)

There are many children from divorced families with sad stories to share. They will tell you how their parents were fighting during a certain gathering. Some children will stop being involved in various activities just so they can avoid the conflict that will arise when their parents show up at the same event for them.

Other children have stories of one parent refusing to attend a special occasion due to the other parent planning to be there. A child should never be placed into such a difficult situation where they have to choose one parent over the other! It can backfire on the demanding parent too because their children may end up resenting them for acting in such a manner.

It doesn't matter how old the children are either – it will still affect them. I have seen women cry on their wedding day because their mother wouldn't attend the ceremony if their father was walking her down the aisle. Young children are deeply affected by this type of conflict. Don't assume that they don't know what's going on, as children tend to pick up on many issues that parents don't give them credit for.

For many newly divorced couples, this can be very hard to do. They may still be struggling with their own emotions from the

divorce. It can be difficult to see the ex-spouse at events. It's okay to feel this way, but you need to be honest about your feelings. You may express to your child that it's difficult to see their other parent at the event but that you're willing to give it a try for their sake. They will appreciate both your honesty and your effort.

**Related Link:** [Ryan Phillippe Says He's 'Proud' of How He and Reese Co-Parent](#)

It's the parents who really want their children to be happy who will work to make special occasions comfortable for everyone after a divorce. They may not want to sit together at the event or hang out afterwards, but they can be respectful of each other. They can also set a very good example for other people on how to always put the needs of your children first.

For most couples, this will get easier as time goes by. The wounds from the divorce will start to heal. They may even become somewhat of friends as they are able to focus on the good things about each other again. This is a process that is going to take some work though. It won't just happen, so a conscious effort by both of the parents has to be there. Don't let your own foolish pride prevent your children from being able to shine at their special occasions.

*For more information about Hope After Divorce, click [here](#).*

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# Your Soul Needs Nourishment



By Janeen Diamond for [Hope After Divorce](#)

*“Stay in bed a few extra minutes in the morning and listen to the birds chirping outside your window...”*

Fall is my favorite time of the year. Besides the cooler temperatures and beautiful colors in the mountains, I love what it represents. The holidays are coming, and family time is more prevalent. I get to make soup for dinner more often than not, and it's time to turn the fireplaces on and bring out the blankets. Plus, it's by far the best time of the year for driving around in my convertible PT Cruiser with the top down. I tell myself it is good for my soul; it makes me feel



happy and alive. And if it's too cold for the top to be down, I put it down anyway and blast the heater. I know that there are others out there who do the very same thing!

I believe whatever it is that makes us happy – the small pleasures, in particular – is what we should do on a regular basis. Life can be full of challenges and trials, heartache and sadness, hard work and stress. We have to take control of our own happiness and involve ourselves in things that bring us joy. We need to feed our own souls and look for those little things that make us tick. And while we're at it, I think we should help our family members do the same.

**Related Link:** [Clear the Clutter](#)

Make a list right now of the things you would do more often if you had time – and then make the time and start doing them *now*. Here is a short list to get you started:

- Do something creative. Attack a difficult recipe or make some clever Christmas ornaments.
- Play with your pets! Put on a warm sweater and take them for a walk or to a dog park.
- Get in your cozy robe and sit by the fire and paint your toenails.
- Stay in bed a few extra minutes in the morning and listen to the birds chirping outside your window.
- Plan a pie-making party with some of your friends.

I decided a few years ago to begin making the holiday season less stressful and more meaningful. I stopped giving such expensive gifts and started focusing more on enjoying this time of the year and helping others enjoy it as well. I would rather spend time eating lunch with my friends, having parties with my family, and attending events that instill the Spirit into my soul rather than spend my time shopping, paying bills, and worrying about what to buy for everyone.

**Related Link:** [Date Idea: "Fall" in Love](#)

Take this special time to begin making a change. Focus on becoming healthier and happier...whatever that means for you personally. Those around you will benefit greatly too. And once the New Year hits, you'll be prepared to continue moving forward with more ideas that will help you nourish your soul. Make it an ongoing activity. Always be searching for new experiences in life and ways to enjoy being alive. When you feel nourished – body *and* soul – you will be available for yourself and others to love, to serve, and to make life better. So get going on your list!

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*Janeen Diamond, author of Save Your Marriage in 30, was a newscaster for KUTV News until 2001. Since that time, she has been actively producing commercials and special programming through her company, Your TV Spot. She has hosted several television and internet productions and has been a spokesperson for several products and companies. She is a leader over the youth in her church and takes a special interest in helping kids stay on track with their lives. Janeen is currently co-creating "Teen Impact TV," a website for high school students to give them a creative and emotional outlet. She is a contributing expert for HopeAfterDivorce.org, DivorceSupportCenter.com, FamilyShare.com, and CupidsPulse.com. Follow her on Twitter @janeendiamond and www.facebook.com/janeen.diamond.*

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# Solo Parenting: Divorce with Children



By Cynthia MacGregor for Hope After Divorce

Celebrity moms Tori Spelling and Kendra Wilkinson are both contemplating divorce due to their unfaithful husbands Dean McDermott and Hank Baskett. They have a lot to consider and process before making the life-changing decision to divorce. Not only will it change their own lives, but it will change their children's lives. They say divorce changes who children are – and that's a very serious reality we parents must not take lightly. A second chance is certainly worth the effort when kids are concerned, as long as there is no abuse happening (physical, emotional, or mental) in the home.

If Spelling and Wilkinson do end up divorcing their husbands, here is a reality check of what they will be facing as divorced parents with young children. Learning to respectfully co-parent together is essential for the well-being of their kids.

Now that you're divorced – or perhaps you're still going through the legalities of the divorce process, but at any rate, you and your husband no longer share a roof or a bed – the dynamics of your family have changed. Whether you have one child or more, it's just you and your child or children, and you've likely become aware that they're interacting with you in different ways than before.

**Related Link:** [Keep Talking to Your Kids After Divorce](#)

How? Well, actually there are several possibilities, but they mainly fall into two categories. One is that they seem to be clingy and staying closer to you than ever before. The other is that they are distancing themselves from you. How can two opposite reactions result from the same circumstances? Easy! Different personalities perceive the divorce with different sets of eyes...and, accordingly, react differently.

**Clingy:** Kids who fall into this group are afraid that you'll leave him too. Being self-centered, a child will perceive the divorce in terms of Daddy having left him rather than this being between Dad and you. The child will cling tightly to you to avoid this fear.

**Distancing:** Again, the child perceives the divorce in terms of Daddy having left him and is afraid you'll leave him next, but this child, having a different personality, distances himself from you rather than clings to you. His methodology is to get used to losing you before it happens, so that when you leave him, it won't catch him by surprise and hurt as badly as when Daddy left.

Then, there is the child – typically a little older – who

comprehends that the divorce was between you and Daddy but blames you for making Daddy leave. This child will distance himself from you out of anger.

The child may also act out as well as being cold and distant because he is testing you. He is trying to see if you will leave if he does his best to push you away. He doesn't really *want* you to leave; he's just testing you to see if you will.

**Related Link:** [Source Says Kendra Wilkinson Is Going 'Back and Forth' About Divorce Decision](#)

**Togetherness:** A few visits to a good therapist who specializes in children or families may be in order, but there are things you can do on your own as well.

- Have another talk with the child. Kids don't always "get" the concept of divorce the first time it's explained to them. Your child needs to understand that Daddy didn't "leave him" and that, even if you were the one who asked for the divorce, it's not as cut-and-dry as "it's your fault." And above all, he needs to understand that you're not going to leave him – ever.
- Get involved in a project with the child. Any kind of project will do: scrapbooking, redecorating his room, a knitting or crocheting project, or a gardening project – anything that will have you two working closely together.
- Be yourself, unchanged and unchanging. Show the child through your actions that you are still Mom. You are still loving; you have not changed; and you are not going anywhere – no matter what happens and no matter how the child behaves.

Time will help heal the situation. You can do your part to make it better too. As with so much else in parenting, patience is called for, but by now, you should be an old hand at that.



*Cynthia MacGregor is a multi-published author. She has over 100 books to her credit. They include "After Your Divorce," "Divorce Helpbook for Kids," "Divorce Helpbook for Teens," "Solo Parenting," "'Step This Way," and others. Forthcoming books include "The One-Parent Family," "Why Are Mommy and Daddy Getting Divorced," and "Daddy Doesn't Live Here Anymore." She hosted and produced the TV show "Solo Parenting," which was broadcasted in South Florida over WHDT.*

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## **Child Expenses After Divorce**





By Michele Sfakianos, RN, BSN for [Hope After Divorce](#)

The expenses for caring for children continue to rise, and that doesn't make it any easier for divorced parents. Each parent attempts to keep their own household going, and at the same time, they often try to share expenses for their children. This may be court ordered or due to a mutual agreement between the parents.

Whether the divorcing couple is a celebrity couple in the public eye or a private couple, the children's needs and welfare should be the number one priority. You must accept and embrace the reality that your children's expenses to live will not change. They are our greatest responsibility and deserve the best care and protection we can give them, whether married or divorced. Some divorced celebrity couples, like Demi Moore and Bruce Willis and Reese Witherspoon and Ryan Phillippe, seem to put their children's best interest ahead of their own as they co-parent together.

**Related Link:** [Ryan Phillippe Says He's 'Proud' of How He and Reese Co-Parent](#)

Routine check-ups at both the doctor's office and the dentist are essential for your children. One of the parents should have both medical and dental coverage on the children, as the cost of this type of preventative care out of pocket is very high. If one of your children have an emergency for either place, it can be a bill you have to pay for a very long time.

Childcare is another expense that can add up when a divorce takes place. Perhaps one of the parents was the caregiver, and now both are in the workforce. The parents should decide on a childcare provider together. It may be a licensed facility, a nanny, or even a family member. The cost of childcare should be second to the quality of care that your children are receiving.

Inevitably, there will be additional expenses for your children. Who is going to pay for school clothing and supplies? Many parents who pay child support assume that they pay enough for such items with that monthly check. Yet it may be just enough to help the family with food and shelter. You don't want your children to go without due to lack of money.

Many children love to be involved in extracurricular activities as well. It can be sports, dance, or clubs. There will be expenses involved, including special clothing and shoes needed and even enrollment fees. Parents need to be willing to share these expenses so that their children can take part in such events.

**Related Link:** [Helping Your Child Through Divorce](#)

Summer is also a time when there are more expenses for children. They may want to go to swimming lessons, camping, or even to a summer camp. All of these things cost money, and someone has to pay it! Some feel the parent who makes more money should cover the cost. This is up to the parents though, as many want to do everything 50/50. Problems could arise when one parent can't afford their share.



As you can see, there are plenty of additional expenses to consider for your children when you are divorced. Make sure you are willing to discuss these expenses with the other parent. You always want to do what's in the best interest of your children. Bottom line: Get as much in writing as you can when it comes to who will cover expenses. This way, everyone involved knows what to plan for.

*For more information about Hope After Divorce, click [here](#).*

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## Is Your Life Working?





By Janeen Diamond for [Hope After Divorce](#)

*...it's impossible to have genuine, solid, meaningful relationships with other people if we don't think much of ourselves.*

During an interview this week, I found myself talking about how important the relationships we have in our lives are. And as we talked, we brought up the fact that the relationship we have with ourselves is, by far, one of the most important ones we can have. Why? Because it's impossible to have genuine, solid, meaningful relationships with other people if we don't think much of ourselves.

Sisters Jessica and Ashlee Simpson are two good examples of celebrities who have both experienced divorce. What is inspiring about these two well-known siblings is that they each took time out for themselves afterwards. They took time for self-care to heal from the inside out, becoming the best they could be. Jessica and AshLee offer us hope that we can love ourselves even after a great loss. Then, we can find true love all over again.



Jessica Simpson and daughter Maxwell at sister Ashlee's wedding. Photo courtesy of Ashlee Simpson's Instagram.

If we can't trust ourselves, how are others going to trust us? If we don't like who we are, how are other people going to care for us? If we don't enjoy being alone with ourselves, how will others find it enjoyable to spend time with us? If we feel we have nothing to offer, why would we think anyone else believes we have value?

**Related Link:** [Don't Let the Good Guys Finish Last](#)

Consider the life you lead right now. Is it what you want? Are you doing the things that fulfill you and bring you joy? Do you wake up in the morning and look forward to the work you have to do? Do you plan to talk with friends today? Do you

have something fun planned for yourself? Will you offer service to someone today?

There are a lot of things we have control over in our lives. If something isn't working or if there are ways you could improve, decide right now to make a change and begin working toward it. I always like to start with small goals. Perhaps you want to feel more energetic and you just don't know what you're doing wrong, or maybe you have a habit of watching too much television and you want to start reading more.

So decide on one thing you would like to change in yourself, like "I want to have more energy!" And set three goals toward accomplishing it: I will have a set bedtime and get a full eight hours of sleep; I will begin a diet overhaul, but this week, I will simply eat two more servings of veggies every day; and I will begin exercising, but maybe this week, I will just start slow by walking twenty minutes each day.

**Related Link:** [Clear the Clutter](#)

Or if you want to stop watching so much TV, turn it off for just one hour a day and spend that time reading a book you've been interested in.

These are simple examples, but you get the idea. Simple fixes are usually the most far reaching and impactful in the long run because you have a greater chance of actually sticking with the changes. You might have physical, emotional, spiritual, or mental things you want to change. Think about what those desired changes are, and set up a plan to start improving a few things in your life. You may find your relationship with others will begin to improve drastically. You will begin to like yourself more – and that will lead to positive vibes towards family, friends, and co-workers.

Just remember that loving yourself will have a positive impact on everyone you know – especially you!

For more information about Hope After Divorce, click [here](#).



Janeen Diamond, author of Save Your Marriage in 30, was a newscaster for KUTV News until 2001. Since that time, she has been actively producing commercials and special programming through her company, Your TV Spot. She has hosted several television and internet productions and has been a spokesperson for several products and companies. She is a leader over the youth in her church and takes a special interest in helping kids stay on track with their lives. Janeen is currently co-creating "Teen Impact TV," a website for high school students to give them a creative and emotional outlet. She is a contributing expert for HopeAfterDivorce.org, DivorceSupportCenter.com, FamilyShare.com, and CupidsPulse.com. Follow her on Twitter @janeendiamond and [www.facebook.com/janeen.diamond](http://www.facebook.com/janeen.diamond).