



TEN DIVORCE TIPS YOU WISH YOU'D GOTTEN

Whether you are thinking about divorce or in the middle of one, there are a few things you need to prepare yourself for. No matter how many questions you ask your attorney or how much advice you get from friends, there are going to be some tips you typically don't get. Here are 10 of them.

1. **Sit tight, it's going to be awhile**

The hurt does not go away once the ink dries on the divorce papers. In some cases, it may take years to put your life back together. Give yourself time to grieve and process your feelings properly from the start. If you have trouble, see a therapist. There's no harm in asking for help.

2. **Expect physical reactions to divorce**

Stress has a way of impacting the body. From stomachaches to insomnia to weight gain (or loss), your mental well-being will affect your physical well-being too. Put your health first and avoid overdoing junk food and alcohol.

3. **Expect feelings of hate**

Anger is a stage of grief and one most people recovering from divorce go through. If you have not had anger toward your spouse yet, it's likely that you will at some point. Try to manage your feelings so that your children don't detect those feelings and so that your actions don't make the divorce even more difficult.

4. **You might hear wedding bells and they might not be yours**

Despite how happily divorced you may be, hearing that your spouse is remarrying is tough. This opens old wounds and will make you re-evaluate your life. Look at it as a chance to grow, but give yourself room to be sad. Whatever you do, don't spend the wedding day alone. Find friends to distract you.

5. **Try a kind word or two**

When seeing your spouse in court or at future events that include your kids, you will most likely feel uncomfortable and stressed out. It's hard to know what to say or how to approach your former spouse.

With time, it will get easier and after awhile it may not be an issue at all. When the divorce is fresh, try walking up to your former spouse right away and saying hello. You don't need to have a long conversation; just share a positive word or two about the kids. If you're really feeling generous, ask how he or she is doing, but then be on your way.



Don't pick fights and don't allow room for a conversation to escalate to an argument. The goal is to cut the tension and re-learn how to be around one another as formerly married people.

6. **Child support and parenting time are two different things**

Child support is not on a sliding scale. In other words, if the child spends less time with the paying parent one month and significantly less time the following month, the support payments will not fluctuate accordingly. There is no cause-and-effect between visitation and child support.

7. **Being the favorite parent gets you nowhere**

Kids often play favorites and make claims about loving one person more than another. While it may feel good to hear you are the favored parent, to hear that you aren't the favorite can be devastating – at least until your child changes his or her mind and considers you the favorite again. Don't ask your child to pick a favorite parent; teach them to love both parents equally.

8. **Flaws remain flaws**

If there were things about your spouse that you didn't like when you were married, you can count on those things bothering you after the divorce. Chances are you will be bothered even more. Instead of getting caught up in your ex's "flaws," learn to accept him or her for who they are and overlook what you can in order to get things done.

It will be tempting to ask your attorney to help "explaining" certain things to your spouse so he or she will see your side. Unfortunately, your attorney can't change your spouse. Save the money in attorney fees and recognize the differences between the two of you.

9. **Be prepared to throw out the plan**

Life is about change. The parenting plan and divorce agreement provide some type of order and consistency, but as years go by things do change. Expect negotiations and trade-offs for the years to come.

10. **It's possible to remain friendly**

As the famed author Constance Ahrons says in her book "The Good Divorce," it is possible to go through a divorce amicably. Families remain families even after divorce, and it's up to the adults to treat others with respect.