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Article

Title: Divorce – what is it about this time of year?

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by **Ann Corrigan, family lawyer at Phillips Solicitors**

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‘Christmas holidays can be one of the most testing times for a rocky relationship’, says Ann Corrigan, family lawyer at Phillips Solicitors. ‘Families get thrown together, often for long periods with members of their extended family whom they may not even like, and as a result the marriage suffers. If your survival tactics haven’t worked, you may be one of the many couples considering divorce as the only option.’

Almost one in every two marriages ends in divorce but let’s face it, the breakdown of any relationship is painful and traumatic for everyone involved. When you end your relationship, essentially cutting your partner from your life, the wound that is open on both sides is painful and deep and can last years, so if it’s at all possible, try to avoid the trauma and save the relationship. But if you really can’t go on together, you need to think long and hard.

How will you manage financially?

It’s not just families and children that divorce affects but finances too – financial arrangements need to be settled and the best way to achieve this is by agreement. But there are pitfalls to be aware of, for example if you live in the matrimonial home after divorce and your former spouse goes bankrupt, the court may rule that the house has to be sold to help pay the debts.

What about your children?

You may be preoccupied with your own problems, but you continue to be the most important people in your children’s lives and they may well be frightened or confused by the threat to their security. Tell them what is happening, that it’s not their fault, how they are involved and what will happen to them.

Look out for changes in your children’s behaviour – they may become aggressive, sad, uncooperative, fearful of the threat to their security and of course their schoolwork may suffer.

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The last thing they need is a long custody dispute or pressure to "choose sides". They may feel that their world has been torn in two but try not to involve them in the divorce. They will do best if they know that their mother and father will still be their parents and remain involved with them even though the marriage is ending and you and your partner won't be living together.

Consider some alternatives

Before you consider the most painful and costly experience of going through the courts, consider the other options – can you mend the relationship or could you benefit from counselling? If all else fails, try mediation: it's cheaper, it's less acrimonious, it's a way of finding a solution and reaching an understanding that you both agree on and it enables you both to have an ongoing relationship afterwards – essential if you have children.

Is there life after a divorce?

'Of course there is!' says Ann Corrigan, family lawyer at Phillips Solicitors, 'If you manage your divorce well, you should both be able to remember the good times you have shared and move on with new wisdom. Sometimes it takes more courage to end a relationship that isn't working than to remain in a destructive relationship. So give me a call and I'll help you make important decisions about your future.'

ENDS

Note to editor: Phillips is a leading law firm in Basingstoke, with nearly 60 members of staff. We offer a comprehensive range of services to business and private clients, locally and nationwide. We specialise in helping clients achieve what they want.

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