



HEATHER BRYAN LAW, P.A.
Law Firm

Creating a More Harmonious Divorce

You've watched TV, you've seen the movies, you've read your friends' Facebook statuses. As a result, you have heard more than a few divorce horror stories over the years. *That's not how this has to go for you.*

There are specific steps you can—and should—take to ensure that your divorce isn't the catastrophic event you're worried about experiencing. We've compiled a few of those steps into this free resource so you're prepared for anything that comes your way.

1. Are you positive you want to go through with the divorce? You might think this item is odd coming from an attorney who helps spouses go through the divorce process. However, knowing for sure that you no longer want to be married to your current spouse is key to minimizing stress during your divorce. For one thing, you want to be sure your decision to divorce is not made out of anger or other intense emotions. If you told your spouse you wanted a divorce after he or she did something to upset you, then, chances are, divorcing won't fix the underlying anger you felt.

If you are able, in an unemotional and matter-of-fact way, to come to the logical conclusion that filing for divorce is best for you and your kids, then you are likely coming to the right decision. Even if you aren't able to do that, be aware that there are countless ways unhappy spouses convince themselves that divorce really isn't the best option for them.

Once you conclude that filing for divorce is what's best, commit to the process and go forward with conviction and purpose. There will be speed bumps along the way, but knowing for sure that divorce is the right option for you will make the legal proceedings a little easier.

2. Have a plan to tell your children. If you have kids, this is probably the step you're dreading the most. In fact, it might have been the reason you held off on filing for divorce for so long. Remember what we said above—once you've made the decision to file, it's time to execute the plan in an efficient no-nonsense manner.

Now, on to actually telling your children: you might have to make some slight modifications to these guidelines depending on the ages of your children, but generally, you should:

- Meticulously plan what you're going to say. If you decide to wing it or speak off the cuff, there's a chance of your saying something the kids shouldn't hear. After all, your emotions will understandably be raw at the beginning of this process.
- If at all possible, sit the whole family down to break the news. Yes, this includes your soon-to-be ex-spouse. If you have fears of violent confrontations breaking out as a result of the news, then absolutely change course to ensure everyone's safety.
- Tell your children in a matter-of-fact manner what's going to happen. Keep it age-appropriate. Children need to know what will change and what will remain in the near future. What you need to stress and reiterate is that your children are not the cause of your divorce, you don't love them any less, and you are always available to talk. Under no circumstances should they know any details of the upcoming litigation.

3. Find the right attorney for you. There's no question that you won't have trouble finding more than a handful of attorneys right near your house who *say* they can help you during your divorce. You might not have a shortage of options, but you really want to know: am I picking the right one?

That's a great question, and one you'll be able to answer after doing your due diligence with your top choices. When you've found the one you think will be effective, book a consultation and be prepared to ask some pointed questions during the appointment. Some good inquiries are:

- **Who in your firm will I be dealing with?** Our team at Heather Bryan Law, P.A. is quite small. In fact, you can be sure your legal representation will be Attorney Bryan. While you might interact with multiple members of our staff, you can be sure that your attorney knows your name and the particulars of your case.
- **What is your approach to handling divorces?** This is an open-ended question, to be sure, but what you need to know is how your divorce attorney will treat your spouse (the other side). Plenty of attorneys jockey for position among those contemplating divorce by making proclamations such as, "Your spouse won't get one penny from you when all is said and done!" and "We'll get you sole custody of your children!" For one thing, an attorney with any integrity won't make such bold proclamations. Secondly, it is not necessarily in your best interest to take a scorched-earth approach to your divorce. We strongly believe that too many divorcing spouses view divorce as something to be "won." This toxic approach can make co-parenting that much harder and needlessly stir up strong emotions for you and everyone else. The far better approach, we feel, is to go through the process as amicably and efficiently as possible.
- **How will I communicate with you throughout my case?** Perhaps you want to be briefed on every single development or are content with being fairly hands-off. Maybe

you don't want to speak with your attorney on the phone and prefer emails. Whatever you prefer, make sure you and your lawyer see eye-to-eye.

4. Gather important documents. Plenty of spouses are bewildered at the number of documents they must produce before proceeding with a divorce. The full list of documents is far too long to lay out here; instead, you may visit [this page](#) on our website to see what our firm needs from you when you file. Some of the documents you need include:

- Federal and state income tax returns for the past three years
- Pay stubs and other documents showing your income (including Social Security earnings)
- Real estate deeds and/or leases
- Statements for your financial accounts (including lines of credit)
- Health and dental insurance information
- Any prenuptial and/or postnuptial agreements

While gathering these forms, you might get an even better idea of your financial situation. Keep in mind that a good divorce costs money; start saving money as soon as you can. Additionally, create your own bank accounts and get your own credit card if you do not already have those.

We're Ready When You're Ready

Make no mistake—divorce is a major life event. You should only file for it if you are sure you're ready. You will need to lean on your support system, and there will be difficult times ahead.

With the right divorce attorney—especially one that is caring, compassionate, knowledgeable, and experienced—you will make it through, probably better than you thought you would. There's no way to completely eliminate stress, but we're confident you will make it through divorce with compassion, harmony, and integrity.

Ready to get started? Fill out an intake form [here](#) or call the firm at (863) 825-5309. A better future is right around the corner.