

# THE POSITIVE DIVORCE MOVEMENT

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Positive Divorce White Paper

# The Quick Divorce: The Smart Way to Get the Peace You Deserve

Looking back on 2020, we see a year marked by virulence in America – both from COVID-19 and from bitter contention running rampant. Social injustice was definitively unmasked, political rivalries tore at our union, and conspiracy theories spun a wide shroud of mistrust, while the daily pandemic death tolls were staggering. Cupid did not escape unscathed either, with couples parting ways at unprecedented levels and a 34% increase in divorces from March to June 2020 vs. 2019.

Now, as we anticipate a new dawn in our nation, we are gifted with the opportunity to bring a kinder reality to the process of separating and divorcing.

The application of spiritual principles can remove toxicity from the D-word, sparing all parties—including any children – unnecessary emotional and mental trauma. It also results in significant savings and a faster process. My goal is to help people going through a split, whether married or not, find the smartest, most pain-free path to freedom and achieving their ultimate life goals. Toward this end, I will provide simple, step-by-step instructions to dissolving unions without the need for attorneys. But first, let us begin by quickly reviewing the current reality of divorce in the United States and its unfortunate fallout.

According to the 2019 American Community Survey, there are 14.9 divorces per 1,000 marriages. The uptick in 2020 reflects the stress couples have struggled with in the face of lockdown, illness, loss of loved ones and of income, and national turbulence. Additionally, more than 20 percent of first marriages end in divorce within five years, and 48 percent of marriages do not survive the 20-year mark (National Survey of Family Growth). As one of life's most stressful events, breakups—especially contentious ones—can take painful tolls on every aspect of life: emotional and financial, impacting physical and spiritual health.

The financial consequences alone can be devastating. Nationally, the typical divorce runs about \$15,000, but that is very low comparatively, for most metropolitan cities. It goes well north of that when there are children or contested divisions of assets involved. Hostilities are often stoked by attorneys thinking that they are acting in their clients' best interests, or attorneys who "churn the file." As a family law attorney, I have witnessed how divorce can turn two people who once genuinely cared about each other into mortal enemies who will go to any lengths to hurt one another.

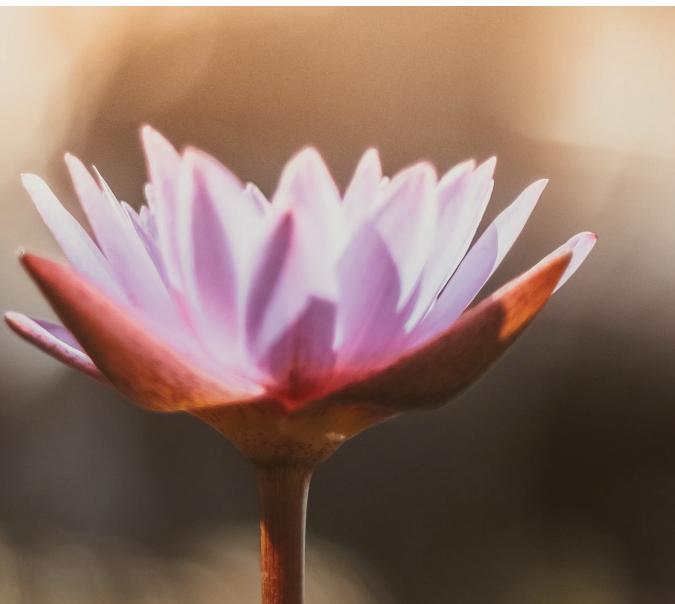
I represented a former husband in a divorce so full of discord that it lasted over six years, post judgment, cost more than half a million dollars, and led the eldest daughter to attempt suicide. The mental health of the other two daughters also suffered, as the wife used them like pawns to try to make the husband look bad and score points for herself. For example, she would stir up confusion by falsely claiming that it was the husband's turn to pick up the girls from a soccer game, even if this left the girls stranded at the park.

This kind of behavior is atrocious and the wounds it causes can take years to heal. Children should always be shielded from the discord. It would be best if they did not have to witness severe conflict, listen to accusations of the other parent, be enlisted as confidantes, or forced to pick sides. The impact on their psyche can be devastating and life-long. Sadly, cases like this have been all too prevalent.

Research indicates that "high levels of parental conflict during and after a divorce are associated with poorer adjustment in children." Conversely, there also is evidence that children of divorce "fare better if parents can limit conflict associated with the divorce process or minimize the child's exposure to it" (<https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/is-divorce-bad-for-children/>). Of course, the same applies to children of unmarried parents. If you have kids and are dissolving your union, keep in mind that because of your offspring, you will always be in each other's lives. There will be school plays, and football games, graduations, and celebrations: it is in everybody's best interest to have a civil— or if at all possible, cordial— relationship. However, even in childless relationships, vicious splits only lead to noxious outcomes, including ill health, depleted bank accounts, ruined reputations, and more.

Fortunately, none of that is necessary if you prioritize the most important thing in life: peace of mind. Navigating a healthy breakup begins with a more methodical approach with the goal of remaining focused, pragmatic, and well-grounded. You must change the old narrative and shift the paradigm from tension and hostility to empathy and compassion.

The first step is to accept that the relationship is over and that you must give yourself the time and mental space to properly grieve this fact. It is a loss and you will feel the effects of it. There is no sense in pretending it won't hurt,



so be gentle with yourself, engage in healthy selfcare and take action steps designed to help you move on. Next, acknowledge that your partner is not your enemy, regardless of the reasons for separation. Try to recall that at one point you loved each other and whatever pain was caused is in the past. This mindset should help you find it easier to cooperate and collaborate through the divorce or separation. Of maximum importance is to exercise integrity throughout the process to preserve your dignity and self-respect. You can fight injustice, but it doesn't have to mean meeting fire with fire.

Keep in mind that the dissolution of your union will mean a new beginning for each of you. Focusing on your next bold move rather than on the painful past will also help give a lighter tone to the process. People with purpose tend to be less mired by depression and negative thoughts. Make that new beginning a positive one by laying the correct groundwork. If you commit to this suggested spiritual approach, contention will be minimized and your life enriched by the knowledge that you handled yourself with grace during what could be one of the most trying chapters of your life. You also will be setting a priceless example for your children and loved ones of what it means to be "the bigger person" in a conflict and to exhibit poise under pressure. A commitment to this way of extricating yourself from a relationship involves deliberately refusing to exalt the values of "winning" and "being right" and instead, insisting on empathy, compromise, compassion and common ground.

Because we are human, we can tend to err on the side of pride, anger, greed, lust and envy when we feel our livelihood is being threatened. These are our preprogrammed responses, but we have the capacity to override these base instincts and deflate our egos in the interest of self-preservation with a higher vibrational energy. We must act thoughtfully and with the intention of not doing any harm.



There are well-documented cases involving mental health issues including a variety of personality disorders, narcissism and bi-polar disorders that lead to gaslighting, and emotional and psychological abuse. In these instances, you must prioritize self-care and extricate yourself delicately and decisively. Seeking professional assistance is strongly encouraged. Know that you are not alone and that there are entire communities of men and women healing from the destruction these unhealthy people lead behind. There is light at the end of the tunnel, even in these excessively difficult situations.

Consider the teachings found in the Tao of the Tao-te Ching which suggest that our judgment of people, places and things should not be so readily relied upon, but rather we benefit from letting matters take their natural course until chaos and self-righteous fighting can disappear.

Seeking harmony involves finding balance, which requires accepting the part we play in the circumstances of our lives. Sometimes our part in the problem is active misconduct, or it could be a passive role, or simply that we stayed too long and tolerated too much. The size of our perceived contribution to the chaos is not the issue, but rather recognizing that we were willing participants until we reached our proverbial tipping point. Viewing it this way obviates the victim mentality and eradicates the need to have a villain. If there is no one to blame, then we can focus on the matter of separation at hand. "Simplicity, patience, compassion. These three are your greatest treasures. Simple in actions and thoughts, you return to the source of being. Patient with both friends and enemies, you accord with the way things are. Compassionate toward yourself, you reconcile all beings in the world." Lae Tzu, Tao te Ching.

Once you have decided that you intend to split up in a quick, efficient and inexpensive manner, you will be happy to know that you and your partner have the capacity to complete the legal process on your own. Attorneys are not actually necessary to dissolve a marriage or union, only a judge can formally enter judgments dissolving marriages or establishing parental rights. Online services such as TheQuickDivorce.com help you to easily navigate the process and paperwork. Remember that at the end of the day, only you know the best timesharing and financial arrangements for your family, so whether lawyers are involved or not you will always have the last say in the negotiations.

The Quick Divorce offers support staff to assist you through the DIY process of your divorce or separation so that you maintain control of your future. Once you upload your paperwork, The Quick Divorce e-files everything for you at a minimum cost.

Here are some practical tips for the work that has to be done.

1. Before you meet to discuss with your partner, have a clear picture of your finances by reviewing your Assets, Liabilities, Income, Expenses, and Time-sharing (ALIET).
2. Set a meeting time in a neutral location, in 2-hour increments.
3. Discuss each of the elements found in the PEACE acronym: Parenting Plan, Equitable Distribution, Alimony, Child Support, and Everything else (which may include such matters as a special needs child).
4. Narrow the issues pending between you by putting down on paper those that you agree to first.
5. If you have children, prioritize their best interest, always. You will forever be a "family" so treat each other appropriately.
6. Speak to each other with respect, empathy and compassion.
7. Focus on neutral/non-confrontational facts and avoid inflammatory judgments. For example, do say: "Because you have to work such long hours, it makes sense for Jimmy to spend more time with me." Conversely, stay away from such statements as: "You never pay any attention to Jimmy, so I should have him more."

In short, listen with an open mind to what your partner has to say and try to put yourself in his/her shoes. Don't lose sight of your goal: finding solutions that work for your family. If at any point you start losing your peace, take a break. It is better to slow down and refocus than to blow up a good agreement over a dispute. Taking a grounded, spiritual approach will not always be easy, but you will reap what you sow.

Once you have the framework of your agreement, you will be ready to buy the online package that fits your needs. The choices are as follows:

1. The Marital Settlement Agreement (if married with no children);
2. The Marital Settlement Agreement + Parenting Plan (if married with children); or
3. Parenting Plan Agreement (if have children but are not married).

We will send you the settlement agreement that best fits your profile's needs, based on a few preliminary questions that you answer. This Agreement contains the boilerplate language that I have been developing over years of practicing in Family Law. This language is suggestive and not necessarily required. Read it. Keep what you like and remove the rest. Then, fill in the P.E.A.C.E sections with your specific facts and details. Along with the agreement, you'll receive the form Financial Affidavit and our proprietary Equitable Distribution Sheet, and if you have children, you'll also receive the form UCCJEA.

Once you upload your completed forms, you will receive a second set which contain the required pleadings, notices, and other documents you will need to finalize your legal process. We have simplified the forms so that all you have to do is fill in the blank and sign.

With those forms signed and uploaded, the complete package is electronically filed with the court. You will have to pay the Court's filing fee. See our FAQs for your particular county's filing fees. Those fees are paid directly by you to the Clerk of Court.

As we stand on the threshold of a new dawn in America—one marked by greater unity, equality, and justice—it is my mission to change the narrative around divorce and separation. It is not to say that it will always be easy, but only that we do not have to make things worse for each other.

"If powerful men and women could remain centered in the Tao, all things would be in harmony. The world would become a paradise. All people would be at peace, and the law would be written in their hearts."

—Tao De Ching by Lao Tzu  
(Stephen Mitchell)

