

4 Mistakes to Avoid During Divorce

A messy divorce is often a result of mistakes made by either you or your ex-spouse. This fact can be difficult to accept, but once you do, the path to divorce will be much easier since you can actively work to avoid them. Here are some common mistakes to avoid during divorce.

1 – Forcing People to Take Sides

The first and most common mistake made during divorce is forcing people to take sides. Whether out of anger or spite, couples tend to share information with anyone willing to listen. There's a natural tendency to seek confirmation that you're in the right and make the other person suffer for their wrongdoings. Unfortunately, this puts friends and family in an awkward position and may not work out the way you hope.

If your ex does the same, there's no telling whose side people will take. If your ex chooses to stay silent and take the high road, you will appear the unreasonable one. It's also possible that so much negativity causes both of you to lose friends and family in the process. Either way, no good can come from forcing people to take sides. The best approach is to find one or two confidants to vent and share details with. Avoid oversharing with mutual friends and family.

2 – Leveraging Children

Divorce is complicated and confusing enough for adults. Imagine how difficult it must be for children to understand. When children are forced to take sides or are leveraged in a divorce, it can cause irreparable psychological harm. Unless there's a safety concern, children benefit from having a relationship with both parents. Interfering in the relationship with the other parent can cause resentment in the future. For their sake and yours, shield your children from the inner workings of the divorce and allow them to stay on good terms with both you and your ex.

3 – Bad Mouthing Your Ex

Another of the biggest mistakes to avoid during divorce is bad mouthing your ex. Whether it be in conversations with friends and family or through postings on social media, a campaign to hurt your ex's reputation can backfire. First and foremost, if you're seeking spousal or child support, tarnishing your ex's reputation may limit his/her ability to earn higher wages. Ultimately, this reduces what you may receive for support. Another consideration is how your actions may be viewed by a [mediator](#) or judge. You may gain less sympathy if your actions appear malicious. You could also face a defamation lawsuit.

4 – Purging Cash

Avoid the mistake of intentionally dwindling financial assets to hurt your spouse. This includes selling physical assets for below market value, damaging property, and/or intentionally prolonging divorce proceedings to incur unnecessary attorney and court fees. Marital assets belong to both you and your ex. Causing your ex to lose money will reduce what you may receive during or after the divorce. We've seen so many couples make this mistake and then struggle for years after. Remember that your goal is to move on after divorce and financial stability will help you do so more quickly.

Other Mistakes to Avoid During Divorce

These are just a few examples of mistakes to avoid during divorce. It's important to follow the guidance and advice of your attorney when it comes to what you should or shouldn't do. Your attorney will help you make better decisions to secure a better life for you and your children. [Contact our team](#) for assistance with your divorce case and other family law matters.

4 Divorce Mediation Tips

Mediation is an important resource when going through divorce. As we often mention, it can save money, shorten the length of the divorce process, and reduce stress. However, it only works if you approach it correctly. Here are a few divorce mediation tips to keep in mind before starting mediation.

1 – Be Willing to Compromise

Compromise is the premise of mediation. As much as you may want a divorce to go entirely your way, the reality is, there will be some give and take. You can make that process easier or more difficult by your willingness to compromise. When you approach divorce with more flexibility and fairness, that might also encourage your ex-spouse to do the same.

2 – Set Aside Emotions

We know that divorces are filled with emotion and it's nearly impossible to set that aside. However, when it comes to divorce negotiations, sometimes our emotions can get the best of us. As difficult as it may be, think of negotiations from a business perspective. How will one decision hurt or benefit your life after divorce? How does it fit with your overall goals? Will giving up one thing help you attain something else that's even more important? Looking at it from a risk versus reward perspective can help you make better decisions.

3 – Communicate Your Thoughts and Opinions

Communication is key in any negotiation. Mediators are there to help you find common ground, but they can only do so if they understand where your position and the reasons behind them. Instead of giving yes or no answers to proposals, share why something is not acceptable or why you prefer a one option over another. Successful mediation is only possible with good communication, which is why communication is

one of our top divorce mediation tips.

4 – Be Open to Creative Solutions

When divorce cases get in front of a judge, there are limited options considered. Judges don't have as much time to review cases or to come up with alternative solutions. Additionally, laws may restrict what judges can order. Since mediation occurs outside of formal court proceedings, they provide an opportunity to be more creative and flexible. Take advantage of this and be open to different ideas. It often leads to much better outcomes!

Summary of Divorce Mediation Tips

Mediation can be the best approach to a divorce. Using creative solutions, you can leverage the mediation process to achieve your set goals while saving time and money. This only works if you approach it with an open mind and a willingness to communicate and compromise. We hope these divorce mediation tips are helpful and that you can take advantage of the many [benefits of mediation in divorce](#). Please [contact us](#) to schedule a consultation with one of our Massachusetts family law attorneys. We can guide you through mediation and/or complex proceedings.

Benefits of Mediation in Divorce

Divorce can be lengthy, stressful, expensive, and complicated,... but it doesn't have to be. There are many ways to make it more amicable, which ultimately benefits everyone involved. One resource that couples can take advantage of is mediation. This involves an objective third party who facilitates negotiations and helps both parties come to a fair agreement. Here are some of the key benefits of mediation in divorce.

1 – Save Money

You've probably heard horror stories about how divorce can lead to financial ruin. As difficult as it may be to hear, this is often the result of either or both parties being too stubborn to make concessions to the other. Instead, excessive money is spent fighting it out in court. As much as you want to financially hurt your soon-to-be ex and/or stand your ground, it's important to realize that this ultimately hurts your own financial health. Significant money can be saved through mediation.

2 – Save Time

Mediation can also save time. Scheduling time with a mediator is easier and more flexible than formal court hearings. You can essentially have several mediation sessions within the same time frame as one hearing in front of a judge. If you and your ex approach mediation with in good faith, everything can be finalized much more quickly. Settling a divorce allows you to move on with the next stage of your life, so a quick resolution offers huge benefits.

3 – Reduce Stress

Divorce is probably one of the most stressful experiences in life. Mediation is designed to encourage cooperation and compromise, making it inherently less stressful. Rather than the argumentative approach of a court proceeding, mediation sessions are a less formal and calmer meeting between parties. The mediator's job is not to take sides or to decide who is right or wrong. Rather, it's to help you and your ex find a comfortable middle ground.

4 – Maintain Privacy

One of the most essential benefits of mediation in divorce is to maintain privacy. Court proceedings and the corresponding documentation is all public record. Divorce is hard enough without everyone knowing your business. If you prefer to keep the details of your personal life and financial affairs private, mediation can help you do that. Mediation sessions are private. Thus, any information

divulged and agreements made are not available to the public.

5 – Better Outcomes

Ultimately, mediation leads to better outcomes. As we mentioned before, if your focus is to hurt or punish your ex, you're ultimately hurting yourself. Draining his/her funds reduces your portion of those same assets. Asking family and friends to take sides to help argue your case in a contentious court battle can damage relationships. If you have children, their role in divorce proceedings can be psychologically and emotionally damaging for them. Mediation can be more peaceful, protect your children, and preserve other relationships in your life.

Additionally, when divorce cases get in front of a judge, there are few options available due to limited time and/or legal constraints. Mediation is more conducive to creative solutions, limited only by the willingness of the parties involved. Your relationship is unique and sometimes solutions need to be as well. This creates better outcomes for everyone involved.

Summary of Benefits of Mediation in Divorce

As you can see, there are many benefits of mediation in divorce. It all starts with your willingness to participate in it and to work towards finding common ground. Divorce can leave you stressed, broken, and financially distraught,... or it can leave you whole and with the resources to start a new chapter in your life. Consider mediation as your choice of the latter. Regardless of which path you take, understanding your legal rights and options is essential. [Contact our team](#) of Massachusetts family law attorneys to discuss your impending divorce. Be sure to also read our article on [4 divorce mediation tips](#).

The Financial Impact of Divorce

Divorce is a life-changing experience. Beyond altering family ties, friendships, and living arrangements, there's also a financial consequence. Understanding the financial impact of divorce can help you better prepare for and recover from it. Below are a few examples of what may occur as a result of divorce.

Lower Credit Score

A lower credit score is a common result of divorce. This happens for several reasons. First, you and your ex-spouse may close joint accounts such as credit cards. 30% of your credit score is determined by the percentage of credit card balances compared to credit limits. By closing accounts, you reduce the amount of credit available, making any balances relatively higher.

For example, if you have \$30,000 in total available credit and a \$5,000 balance, you're using 16.67% of your available credit. If you close joint accounts with \$20,000 in limits, your remaining credit limit is \$10,000. Assuming you still carry a balance of \$5,000, you're now using 50% of your available credit. This will naturally reduce your credit score.

You can offset some of these negative changes by maintaining good payment history, paying down balances, and not opening too many new accounts.

Reduced Household Income

One of the biggest adjustments after divorce is living on a single income. Divorce will prompt you to re-evaluate your overall expenses, spending habits, and lifestyle. Taking smart steps during and after divorce can help you quickly adapt and thrive, despite the drastic change. Sit down with a financial planner to evaluate your income, expenses, assets, debts, and investment strategies. By creating a plan and making necessary adjustments, you can maintain a healthy financial balance.

Alimony/Child Support

Alimony and/or child support is another major financial impact of divorce. It may seem like a double hit since your household income was reduced and you're adding new debt obligations on top of that. Working with a good attorney to negotiate alimony and child support is extremely important to establishing an amount that is fair to both you and your ex-spouse. Also, if your circumstances change, your attorney can assist with renegotiating court ordered payments.

Less Retirement Savings

In many cases, divorcees find themselves contributing less to retirement savings. Funds are often diverted to alimony, child support, or living expenses. Meet with your investment advisor to discuss how you can offset reduced contributions while still adequately planning for future retirement. Changes in your investment portfolio may be helpful to achieving those future goals.

Other Tips on Minimizing the Financial Impact of Divorce

Mitigating the financial impact of divorce starts long before your divorce is completed. Everything from the moment you decide to get divorced will play a role in the eventual outcome. Working with a Massachusetts divorce attorney from the start can be extremely beneficial. Your attorney will guide you through making important decisions and understanding how each will affect your life after divorce. If you do not already have a divorce attorney, [contact our team](#) to schedule a consultation.

5 Things to Do Before Filing for

Divorce in MA



With so much going on in the world today with COVID, employment uncertainty, financial difficulties, and self-isolation, couples are under tremendous stress. Even the healthiest and happiest of relationships are being put to the test. If divorce has crossed your mind, consider these 5 things to do before filing for divorce in MA.

1 – Seek Counseling

Marriage counseling or individual counseling can be extremely beneficial during this time. It can help you find pathways to reconciliation or solidify your decision to get divorced. By going through the counseling process, you can better understand your emotions and avoid making rash decisions. Counseling can also help with the emotional and psychological aspects of a divorce itself, whether you are initiating the divorce or trying to understand your spouse's desire to divorce.

2 – Organize Finances

One of the most important things to do before filing for divorce is to gather information about your joint and individual income, assets, and debts. In many marriages, one spouse is responsible for the finances while the other knows little or even nothing about the

matter. If you're not aware of the family's finances, it's time to get up-to-speed. This is essential for your own protection. Not everyone is great with numbers but, thankfully, there are many online resources to improve your financial literacy. Don't be scared to seek professional assistance as well.

3 – Gather Important Documents

In addition to financial documentation, gather other important documents. This includes passports, social security cards, prenuptial agreements, deeds or titles to property, etc. Keep originals of anything that exclusively belongs to you and make copies of everything else. Should you proceed with a divorce, you will need this information. Gathering it ahead of time also prevents your spouse from destroying documents, should things become contentious.

4 – Consult with a MA Divorce Attorney

Taking the right steps early in the divorce process can avoid complications later. Consult with a Massachusetts divorce attorney early on for valuable advice and guidance on your case. Every divorce is unique and having an advocate who understand the legal process and potential pitfalls will ensure a better outcome for you.

5 – Prepare a Strategy

Your attorney will help you prepare a legal strategy, but you must also have an overall strategy prepared for during and after divorce. Where will you live? Who will you turn to for emotional support? What financial resources will be available to you? How will you transition from your current situation to your future life? Sitting down to think about some of these things is important, even before you start a divorce.

Summary of Things to Do Before Filing for Divorce in MA

As with any major life change, understanding your options and having a plan in place can directly impact outcomes. The above are just a

few possible things to do before filing for divorce in MA. Your divorce attorney may suggest additional steps to take based on your personal circumstances. Although every divorce is unique, relying on professionals to help you with the legal, financial, and emotional aspects of divorce can be a huge help during what will be a challenging process.

If you are thinking about divorce, [schedule a consultation](#) with our team. We will take the time to understand your circumstances and provide personalized recommendations. With over 26 years of experience with divorces in Massachusetts, we can leverage our knowledge to help you through the process.