

Your New Start

Your Step-By-Step Guide To Starting
Over After Divorce



GALBRAITH
FAMILY LAW

PROFESSIONAL CORPORATION

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Chapter 1:

Who Is to Blame?

The blame game. It's natural to point fingers and blame your separation on your spouse. It's also common to lay the blame on yourself. It helps make sense of an unfair and often hurtful situation. The truth is, it takes two to make or break a relationship. Both parties have contributed to the end of the marriage, at least to some extent.

Everyone makes mistakes. The challenge is to learn from them and then forgive yourself and your spouse. I know. Easier said than done.

Sometimes, clients want to go to court to get revenge. We understand. This is a natural response to the pain of divorce. The problem is that the court will not determine who is to blame. Pursuing vengeance will only result in higher legal fees and disappointment. It won't give you a sense that justice has prevailed. It will just make things worse for you and your children.



Others come to us feeling guilty and want to cave to every demand from their spouse. We tell these poor souls that caving in will result in much regret in the future and we try to help them come up with an agreement that is reasonable and fair.

As lawyers, we know strong emotions, such as blame, can negatively affect negotiations. Even if you don't want to go to court, getting help to deal with the emotions of divorce is a good idea.

We believe you are best able to make rational decisions for yourself and your family when your emotions are not controlling the decision-making process.

An insightful book about the causes of separations and the ensuing insanity afterward is aptly called *Crazy Time*, by Abigail Trafford. It is widely available and will help you gain insight.

We strongly encourage you to work with a family coach to help you understand the cause of your separation and help close the door on the past. Your family coach will help you move through the stages of divorce quickly, prepare you for negotiations and teach you ways to communicate effectively with your spouse.

We can help you get through this difficult time by providing the legal support you need to resolve legal issues efficiently. Our lawyers will explain your options and help you make the best choices for yourself and your family. Call us for a consultation. We can help.

Chapter 2:

Are You Feeling All Alone and Going Crazy?

Like a death in the family, divorce is a huge emotional journey. You may feel shocked, angry, humiliated, depressed, sad, ashamed, victimized, guilty, excited, liberated, fearful or accepting.

Sometimes you may feel all this and more all at once. One moment, you may hate your spouse and then in a few minutes later have deep feelings of love for your spouse. It can be very confusing, overwhelming and frightening.

For most of us, the uncertainty of the situation is most disconcerting. We feel alone and don't know what the future holds for us.

This is normal.

Almost 50 percent of first marriages end in divorce, and an even higher percentage of subsequent marriages end in divorce. You are not alone.

You are not going crazy either. Divorce has a tremendous impact on everyone, but you will get through it.

Time heals everything, but frankly, who wants to wait around for time to help us through? We strongly urge our clients to work with family coaches. They will help you understand and move through the emotional stages of divorce by offering you appropriate tools and advice. You don't need to let time do its trick. Work with a family coach to get through it faster.

Our lawyers can refer you to a family coach who fits you and your situation best.

We will help you close this chapter of your life and move on to new beginnings and new opportunities.

Chapter 3:

What Happens When I Meet Someone Else

Part of the rebuilding process is meeting someone. It can be thrilling to become interested in someone new. You gain confidence and feel more attractive. It's a good thing!

Of course, it comes with worries:

- Will people tell me it's too soon?
- Am I ready?
- How will my kids react to someone new?
- How will their kids react to me?
- How can I make sure I don't get hurt?
- Will this new relationship end like the last one?

These questions require a lot of thought.

When blending two families, you may worry that you're facing twice as many obstacles. It's certainly never easy, but Sue Cook, owner of Family TLC, a company that offers counseling services, says you need to approach the situation with a mix of realism and patience.

“Be realistic – things won’t be perfect overnight, things may get worse before they get better, and your progress may even move backwards at some points.”

She adds, “The second strategy is patience. Kids need time to trust and count on you. Let them adjust to their new situation gradually and give them plenty of time to make a successful transition.”

This is one area where you shouldn't be afraid to ask for professional help. Family counselors are trained to help you build a stronger family. They'll help you see what's coming, and help you every step of the way, so nothing blindsides you.

Chapter 4:

Should I Go Back to Work?

It's time...

If you've been a stay-at-home parent for any length of time, you may think, "I have to support myself." Or, "I need a life outside this house."

Of course you do. Getting a job can be a positive step toward rebuilding your confidence and your life.

"You start bringing home cheques and cashing them, and watch what happens to your self-esteem," wrote Jackie Pilossoph, blogger at DivorcedGirlSmiling.com.



Check out her article at the Huffingtonpost.com titled [Why Going Back to Work After Divorce Could be the Best Thing For You.](#)

Pilossoph added, "Your manager calls you into his office and tells you how well you are doing and you are on top of the world in a

way you never knew you could be. It's wonderful!"

"Your kids love you to death and they appreciate you, but they will never tell you what a great job you are doing, cooking, cleaning and caring for them. But your company sure will!"

... But it's scary

It's always terrifying to start a new job. The process of looking for one is frightening enough.

People re-entering the workforce share common fears:

- Leaving the kids alone/with other people.
- Having outdated skills.
- The prospect of failure.
- How people will react to them in a new workplace.

It's daunting, but manageable, and there are plenty of success stories.

We invite you to read Katia Hetter's story at CNN.com called [Back to work! Re-entering the job market in the New Year.](#) She recounts leaving the media industry to start a family, only to return years later after her divorce.

"Soon after I stepped out of the rat race to parent my child full-time, the media industry appeared to collapse before my eyes. Newspapers were laying off colleagues everywhere, magazines were shutting down, and everyone was expected to do more with less."

However, she was smart, patient and calculated in the way she approached her industry and her family, and it led to a happy ending.

"I started out as a freelancer at CNN.com, writing mostly about parenting. I knew I was auditioning for my potentially future bosses, but I was also seeing how they edited my stories and how they

treated me as a freelancer.”

“A few months later, when a contract position opened up, I got the call. A few months after I was hired on contract, a full-time permanent writing job opened up.”

It sounds like a Hollywood story, worthy of Sandra Bullock playing the lead. It sounds amazing, but it’s absolutely attainable.

Commit to the process 100 percent. Attend job-search workshops and work with a counselor who can help you get back out there. They can also help you find your footing, even if this is the first time you’ve entered the workforce.

Chapter 5:

How Do I Deal with Shared Custody?

Child custody battles can be vicious. One parent may try to vilify the other in the eyes of the courts (and children) to frame themselves as the better parent.

Even when things are settled, there can be a lot of resentment. Maybe your spouse doesn't agree with the court's decision. Maybe



you don't. Maybe the kids don't. Maybe nobody does! The most important thing to remember is the court's decision will be enforced by a court of law and must be respected. Like it or not, everybody needs to work to make the most out of the situation.

Kate Bayless wrote a great article at Parents.com called [9 Rules to Make Joint Child Custody Work.](#)

Bayless' rules are:

Rule #1: Speak no evil (Don't trash your ex).

Rule #2: It's not about you.

Rule #3: Be realistic about your own schedule and commitments.

Rule #4: Choose a custody arrangement that accommodates your children's ages, activities, and needs.

Rule #5: A bad spouse doesn't equal a bad parent.

Rule #6: Find an agreeable way to communicate.

Rule #7: Pick your battles.

Rule #8: Let your child feel heard.

Rule #9: From time to time, review the arrangement and adjust as needed.

Just because you and your ex didn't make great spouses, it doesn't mean you can't make great parents. We've seen lots of people rise above years of distrust and animosity between each other and co-parent effectively. They put aside their grievances for the sake of the children.

It takes time, patience and humility, but we promise, it's doable and it's worth it for your children.



Chapter 6:

Lessons From My Own Divorce

Divorce can be scary and sad. It means the dream of living “happily ever after” is over. Every couple's experiences are different.

Check out what Brian Galbraith, owner of Galbraith Family Law Professional Corporation, learned when he navigated the road of his own personal divorce.

1. I love my children deeply.
2. Friends and family may take sides. It stinks either way.
3. Even divorce lawyers cannot escape the emotional journey.
4. It's embarrassing.
5. It is scary.
6. It is lonely.
7. Being served court papers is very upsetting.
8. It takes about two or three days to fully recover from four-way meetings.
9. The process of negotiations goes as slow as the slowest person.
10. Your spouse's shortcomings won't get better after separation.
11. It takes a couple of years to get over the sadness of going through a separation.
12. Holidays are especially emotionally difficult to survive for the first two years after separation, but they get better too.
13. I sometimes lose my cool. Sometimes I am amazingly patient.
14. Unresolved issues can make it difficult to focus on parenting.
15. The best way to get rid of anxiety and stop worrying is to repeat a mantra. I say "I give this to you God. I give this to you" over and over.

16. It is surprising how many other single people my age are out there.
17. After time, many of my old friends who took sides came around again.
18. A family coach gave me a different perspective.
19. Exercise helps me cope with stress. Gyms are full of recently separated people.
20. Co-parenting gets easier.
21. Happiness is possible.

For more information or to book a consultation with one of our lawyers, please go to our website: www.GalbraithFamilyLaw.com.