

THE GOOD DIVORCE

Divorce is always painful - it implies loss and failure for the couple, but the reality is that 50% of couples divorce and of those who re-marry another 50% divorce. So like it or not it is a reality in our modern world. For most women divorce implies a lowered economic status and for most men a financial burden. My main focus in this article is to give parents some tips on how they can make the divorce situation easier for their children. The fundamental goal of a good divorce is simple, but challenging. The children must experience their parents as a working parental partnership, regardless of how estranged the parents may be from each other.

Before making this life-changing decision it is recommendable to engage in pre-divorce counseling so that you get clear about whether it is possible to work things out and to try first to make the changes necessary to keep your family together. Being able to talk about your relationship with a third, neutral person, with professional experience allows you to acquire some distance and clarity about what you need and feel and what is possible to do. When you are able to see things as they are and are clearer about your own feelings, it is a good moment to decide if you feel that it is possible to maintain your marital relationship.

In marriages with children, which is my primary concern in this article, I make a plea for parents to put their children first, which does not mean to stay in a destructive marriage. But it is the parents responsibility to manage the situation in a form which least damages their children. This implies respecting and managing their own feelings toward each other and separating the parental and marital relationship. The parental relationship involves the responsibility to be a parent to your children, it is different from the an adult marital relationship.

No child likes to see his parents separate, but it is true that children suffer from living in strained, conflictual and negative family situations. But if one decides to divorce, seek out mediation as a way of working out the divorce agreement-these agreements have long-term impacts on children. Be honest with your children about the reasons that the marriage does not work out. This is especially important because, unfortunately, children often feel responsible for their parents separations. Truth-telling also means apologizing to children for causing them pain. Let them know what is going on, but try to protect them from feeling in

the middle of conflict situations, feeling to blame for the problems of the adults, feeling loyalty conflicts or abandoned or not loved by either parent.

Divorce is about managing and respecting feeling , but it is also about purely practical arrangements that help children thrive. Children are helped to develop reasonably well after divorce, especially after the overwhelming adaptations and difficulties of the first phase, if they feel that both of their parents are there for them that they as children are loved will be taken care of . They should not be burdened by feeling like they have to take care of their injured parents. They are the child. If the parents relationship cannot survive the parental relationship can. Regular visits are important and dependability and quality is more important than quantity. A room at the house of the non-custody parents residence-if possible is ideal ,as well as, periodic family meetings in which children and parents have the chance to openly assess the “family divorce”. Try to keep yourself out of your childrens relationship with their non-custody parent if you cannot be positive. They have a right to their own relations and it is their father or mother-forever. Sometimes divorced parents, usually fathers feel too displaced, angry or guilty to keep paying attention to their children. Try to help this parent be able to parent-it is so important for your children.

It is also very helpful to widen the circle of support systems with extended family and, of course just to be involved in the interests and activities and give them positive messages about themselves , to do what you need to get yourself on your feet so that your kids don't suffer for you, to let them know that you love them and that they are cherished. Like this you help shelter them and give them a chance to survive the break-up well..