

# Divorce research paper

[Family](#), [Divorce](#)



Divorce is a big scary word for many. To some, it is a word that represents failure and a reason for them to raise the white flag in defeat. Trials and tribulations seemed to take their toll and cause reason for a significant change in lifestyle, routines, and marital status. To others, divorce is a reason to escape from a difficult and harmful relationship. Divorce is the final straw and the symbol of courage to leave when they had had enough. For whatever the reason, divorce has become extremely prevalent not just in the United States, but across the Earth. It is also a large reason for debate.

Many feel as though divorce is looked at as a “get out of jail free card” and that people use it when they have decided that they want to move on. Many also see divorce as a harmful tool to tear a family to pieces. Regardless of how divorce is perceived, the fact is that it creates a very powerful change in families. The exact cause of a divorce is interchangeable from case to case. The cause and effect dynamic may display a pattern as to why many marriages fail. Factors and warning signs that may contribute to a failed marriage include factors before the marriage, and during a marriage.

Such factors before a marriage include; his or her parents divorcing, either partner is under the age of 21, family is opposed to the marriage, cohabitation before marriage, a previous divorce of either partner, or a large discrepancy in age, background, interests, and values. (Berger 2009) While one may say that catching these warning signs early could prevent a couple from immaturely embarking on the trip down the aisle, many signs are simply ignored by pre-marital bliss. The warning signs for divorce while in the marriage may be more detectable.

Such signs include; divergent plans and practices regarding childbearing and child rearing, financial stress/unemployment, substance abuse, communication difficulties, lack of time together, emotional or physical abuse, and relatives who do not support the relationship. (Berger 2009) It has been said “ many distressed marriages are happier after divorce, while those in merely distant marriages are less happy than they thought they would be. ” (Berger 2009) Many go into a relationship ignoring the faults of others; completely blind to potential risk factors or warning signs of a failing relationship. Why would they?

To constantly look for fault in others and to always search for the problem could lead to a potentially lonely life. The saying that no one is perfect, while completely true, can ring in the ears of a man or woman looking for love. This statement can cause one to experience the common “ overlooking the flaws” syndrome, and therefore send such star-crossed lovers down the aisle; never stopping to take a breath and consider the impossible...what if they are not truly compatible? The good news is that more so now than ever, individuals are deciding to examine their partners and themselves a little bit more carefully before tying the knot.

The United States was the first nation to see the divorce rate rise significantly years ago. However, the divorce rate has remained steady for the past 15 years. (Berger 2009) To more closely examine the reasoning behind the steady rate, you have to consider where society was fifteen years ago. Fifteen years ago it was 1997; the year where the average income was \$37, 006. 00. (PeopleHistory. com 2004) Whether you consider it low or high today, the fact is that that \$37, 000 dollars was now being shared more

frequently between powerful men and women. These women were executives, lawyers, professors, and collegiate professionals.

One may say that these women had an unwavering sense of feminism and the mentality of being a strong, career-driven individual. It is at the age where women are not defined by their husband's careers, but by their own accomplishments. With women taking their place in the workplace, it may be safe to say that many found that a career was her top priority. Being a businesswoman and climbing the corporate ladder may have been reason enough for women to shy away from marriage until later in life; or quite possibly altogether. Whatever the case, women were allowed to be choosier in who they married, causing a lull in the divorce rate.

Maybe women were realizing that they did not need marriage to feel fulfilled. Or maybe for the lucky ones, they really could have it all; maintain corporate executive status...and find and keep love. Although the divorce rate in the United States has kept steady for the past 15 years, the rates are still considerably high. Current divorce rates state that almost one out of two marriages end in divorce. This number is without considering that half of all adults do not get divorced. In fact, a large number of people never marry or many marry multiple times. (Berger 2009) This brings up a great point as to why divorce rates are so high. We all know the tragic stories of those who have married multiple times on their desperate hunt to find happiness and true love. It evokes the question; while women and men can be wildly successful, why are they always looking for the fairytale? Why do we insist that somewhere, out there, our knight in shining armor will canter down the beaten path into our front yard and ask to be ours? Why do men proclaim

that they will only settle down for the right woman; who coincidentally mirrors the only perfect woman in their life... their mom?

We have been told since we were young that we should never settle. We prepare ourselves for our futures, demand our friends to tell us the truth about “ what’s wrong with us”, and have our hearts broken a million times because in the end, we are destined to find the one...right?? As a little girl, I remember my mom telling me to never settle for just anyone. “ You have a lot to give and a big heart. Make sure the one who gets it really deserves it. ” I have spent my life carrying around a heart that is locked up tight until I find that one perfect person who holds the key to it.

It sounds like a fairy tale doesn’t it? For someone preaching about the idea that many marriages end because women expect a fairy tale, I still hold that fantasy in my own heart. We are told to not let just anyone in, but how do we know if they are that right person. In our favorite fairy tales, there is always a sign. For Snow White, it was true love’s kiss. If it were the wrong prince and not her true love, his kiss would not have woken her up. In which case, Snow White would experience her own trial and error process without ever having to go through the heartache of a breakup.

For Sleeping Beauty, her Prince Charming would have never walked into her life without an arranged marriage. Luckily for her, true love’s kiss also woke her from her slumber. Apparently her betrothed just happened to be the right man for her. Watching these fairy tales growing up reinforces the idea that everyone has a true love. Everyone, no matter how difficult the situation, will eventually find the person that they belong to. Unfortunately for us, there is no sleeping spell that can wake us up with true love’s kiss.

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We have to continue searching for the perfect man; kissing any frog that comes our direction.

So the question is, do we believe the fairytales too much? Do many marriages end in divorce because the man we marry just doesn't turn out to be Prince Charming? Many go into a relationship giving the benefit of the doubt and hoping that just this one time; he or she will be perfect. Could it be possible that many marriages end because of disappointment? Another theory as to why divorces do occur so frequently is the fact that we watch men and women in the media divorcing their spouse like it is a right of passage; like after the 3rd one, you get a discount on your next wedding. Take Elizabeth Taylor for example.

The glamorously successful film star earned her star status by acting in films since the age of ten. She was considered to be one of the last great movie stars of her time. While she is known for her films, she is better known for her precocious love life. With all of her star success, one would think that she would be content; but like any other human being, she longed for love. When she didn't find it the first time, she continued to search for and marry anyone who made her happy for the time being. Taylor married eight times. This leaves one to question whether her marriages were a matter of love, or acts which filled a void in her heart.

A more recent star that has followed the same path is Jennifer Lopez. Wildly successful and envied by many, one may say that she has it all. Lopez has also been on the search for love. She has married and divorced three times. This draws a fine line between when it is morally right for a divorce to take place. One may say that a couple must divorce when one or both parties are

unhappy. This being said, how unhappy is unhappy enough? Couples fight, argue over petty things, and question their compatibility, but when is it right to call it quits? Fighting for a marriage may be as important as preparing for one in the first place.

Celebrities such as Jennifer Lopez who get out of a relationship do not set the best example for those fighting for their relationship. The divorce factors that make divorces likely during a divorce; such as emotional and physical abuse, financial stress/unemployment, etc. are rarely present in celebrity divorces. If celebrities such as Elizabeth Taylor, Jennifer Lopez, Britney Spears, and Russell Brand can divorce for “irreconcilable differences,” why shouldn’t the general public? Divorce may be something that many tend to do on a whim when they have simply had enough, but in many to most cases, it is not just themselves that they have to worry about. Most traditional families that experience a divorce have children who are involved as much as their parents. In certain cases, a divorce may be helpful for those in an abusive environment or those who experience more arguments than dinner conversations. Divorces from harmful relationships can teach children that when you are hurting, sometimes you need to get out. However, divorces that are granted because of “irreconcilable differences” may teach children that when the going gets tough, it’s best to just get going. Divorce can also hurt bonds between a specific parent if that parent and the child were close.

The child could experience a feeling of loss and be subject to the grieving process, which will help them to move on through the loss. If both parents do not assist with this grieving process, problems within the process may be created. Many think that the grieving process is only experienced after a

death. It in fact can and should be followed after any situation that creates great trauma to one's usual state. The process can be quite helpful in maintaining a stable state of being after a loss. There are times that the process may be complicated.

For example, absent grief is a situation in which overly private people cut themselves off from the community and customs that allow and expect grief. (Berger 2009) Another situation of complicated grief is disenfranchised grief. This is “ a situation in which certain people, although they are bereaved, are prevented from mourning publicly by cultural customs or social restrictions. ” (Berger 2009) This would be a situation where a child is told not to cry about a situation or to “ suck it up” and not be bothered by the current situation. These aspects of complicated grief may affect the child later on in his or her adult life.

If both adults in the marriage decide that divorce is the best option for all members of the family, it is important for the child to be informed and to be allowed to grieve in his or her own way. Open communication can be very helpful in getting through a complicated time. With this open communication, the couple must understand that each child, at each age level, will respond differently. An example given by The University of New Hampshire: Cooperative Extension was that a child of preschool age may think that if he/she had done his/her chores or eaten dinner when they were told, their father or mother would not have gone away.

Elementary-aged children may have the most difficult time accepting divorce. (UNH) The children are old enough to recognize that they are hurting, but have no idea how or if they can fix the pain. (UNH) Adolescents



generally take a different approach to fixing the problem at hand. He/she may assume the responsibilities of a parent in order to take less stress off of a specific parent. They are old enough to understand that his/her parents are not only adults, but they are also actual people dealing with a crisis. He/she may take stress on themselves because they feel responsible for fixing a problem that they have no control of.

According to the University of New Hampshire, “ studies have shown that boys raised by fathers and girls raised by mothers may do better than children raised by the parent of the opposite sex. ” This is also a very important aspect to consider when divorcing, who lives with whom. The divorce is not just the dividing of the assets; it is also the dividing of the children. Schedules dictating which holidays are with a given parent, or who has them on the weekends can be stressful for not only the parents, but the children as well.

This relates to the idea that “ the children’s adjustment following a divorce has more to do with the quality of the parent-child relationship than with the gender and age of the child. ” (UNH) If the child has working relationships with his/her parent on each of their visits, the child should not struggle to find a way to adjust. Regardless of the quantity of time between parent and child, the quality of the time should be enough for the child to feel as though he/she is not missing a source of comfort. The relationship between child and parent is quite possibly one of the most difficult aspects of divorce.

As an individual, it is easy to put yourself first. For many, it’s what they have done for his or her entire life. In the beginning, you have an entire world of opportunity in front of you. The stresses of apart-time job and school seem

like the most intense and terrifying aspect of your entire life; because it's not just school, it's everything else. Love lives, career choices, moves to different places near and far away; our minds are constantly churning out new ideas for our futures. Then once you decide on a place to live and a career, you focus on how to move to the top of the ladder and become all that you can be; after all, that is what your college experience has prepped you for, right? Then you meet someone that you decide to settle down with. So now you're balancing a career, marriage, and of course the idea that you still have a long life to live. Then as the song goes, first comes love, then comes marriage...then of course comes children. I've been told that children may quite possibly be the biggest blessing in one's life; but then your days of dreaming for one are over. Your dreams and life changes have now become the life source for someone else who means more than your desire to cross items off of your bucket list.

A divorce is one of those changes that affect many relationships. These other relationships may be more important than the relationship that you have with yourself. In my opinion, this should be the question everyone contemplating a divorce must ask themselves...does this decision affect anyone else? If so, will this decision improve the lives of everyone involved? It is hard to say if a divorce helps or hurts family. Each case is different and each case is full of reasons for a couple to stay or to leave. It is easy to listen to a best friend tell you how much you deserve better, or a mother saying that she wants more for you.

However, in the end the choice is yours. It is human nature to gravitate towards people who make you happy. You would never befriend someone

who gave you the cold shoulder and told you how much they disliked you. Just as someone going into a relationship never sets out to find someone who makes him or her unhappy. Even in the case of celebrities looking for love of their own, they never go out searching for disaster. Whether it is the fairy tale image, the feeling of needing someone in your life, or the initial feeling that you are perfect for each other, no one goes into a relationship hoping for failure.

We are given one shot at life and are constantly told to go out and live passionately; live the life we've always wanted! Why else would our role models tell us that we could have anything we want if we just pursue it? It is my honest belief that we go through life trying to find and hold onto the things that make us ridiculously happy. You could tell the divorcing couple who were once madly in love that you told them so, but it would not change the fact that at one time they were in love. They took a chance and believed that their love could withstand anything.

The reality is that while this couple's marriage failed does not mean that all will. Despite current statistics, the truth is that while one out of two marriages ends in divorce, one half of them work. One can be a cynicist, look at a statistic and look for failure. Or one can look at the statistic and hold onto the belief that they are the fortunate half. Divorce is tragic no matter how one looks at it, however no one can predict the future. If a couple is aware of themselves and their chances for success, their happiness has no expiration date.

Despite the statistics, the prior judgments, and the expectations of others, a marriage has every chance to defy odds and last forever. Stories like that are

those that give this girl every reason to believe that I really can have my own fairy tale. Resources Berger, Kathleen Stassen. Invitation to the Life Span. New York: Worth, 2010. Print. Temke, Mary. " The Effects of Divorce on Children. " University of New Hampshire: Cooperative Extension. University of New Hampshire, May 2006. Web. 13 May 2012. . " The Year 1997 From The People History. " What Happened in 1997 Inc. PopCulture, Prices and Events. Web. 14 May 2012. .