

family TIMES

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When Divorce Is the Choice

Attorney Ron Ousky has seen people that handle their divorces with amazing composure, and others who make "The War of the Roses" seem like "The Brady Bunch." And he has some tips for people who want to try for the former kind.

1. Cultivate your ability to separate feelings from the legal decisions. Anger and fear hamper the clarity needed to make the hard decisions during this crucial time. Mental health professionals are equipped to deal with the emotional upheaval during these high-stress times, attorneys are not.
2. Set goals that really matter. The natural tendency of divorcing couples is to focus on money, houses or other material possessions, but usually dollars are not really the primary objective. First and foremost, most parents want stability for their children. Placing that intention before any other on your list will keep you centered on achieving that aim.
3. Spend time and effort developing alternatives to the toughest challenges. The templates of traditional divorces may not be the best choice for your circumstances. Some situations demand high levels of creativity and problem-solving skills for the best solutions.
4. Separate the things you can't control from those you can. If your spouse decides to let the children stay up past their bedtime watching videos, there is

little you can do about it. The private decisions of a parent can't be legislated. Instead, rely on a proactive stance. You can have a consistent bedtime at your house. You can read stories to the kids before they go to sleep.

5. Consider collaborative divorce. As a gentle, reconciliatory hybrid of an often-adversarial process, collaborative divorces assemble a support team for the divorcing couple. These groups might include financial neutrals, therapists, mediators or attorneys specializing in collaborative law. The experts can usher divorcing people through the process with a minimum of difficulty and a maximum of efficiency.

www.divorcechoice.com leads to resources dedicated to preserving the dignity of the family—whether dissolving or saving a marriage is the goal. Options to click on include finding an area professional, asking an expert, discovering information on low-conflict divorces and attending free seminars.

www.aamft.org is the site for the American Association of Marriage and Family Therapists. Search for a therapist near you or explore books and articles about specific topics.

www.apa.org guides visitors to the American Psychological Association's website. Whether looking for a therapist or the latest research about children and divorce, you'll find alternatives and direction here.