

If Cupid's arrow has lost its way – Here's what to do before you do anything else

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Valentine's Day can be a stressful time if your relationship is in crisis. It's often a time to celebrate relationships, but so often hearts and flowers have turned into arguments and recriminations with feelings of hurt, resentment and anger being common place. Many of us battle on because we feel it is the right thing to do and often because of fear of the unknown. After all, once you take that step to separate and start the divorce ball rolling, who knows what life will be like!

Deciding to end a relationship is never easy. It's a big decision and one that has probably taken months if not years to reach. As a family solicitor I see the problems encountered by many going through a relationship breakdown and I know from experience that many can be avoided by taking some simple steps. Here are 5 key points to guide you through the initial stages of separation which will help you take the first steps into your new life.

1. Remember to reset the boundaries of your relationship

A lot will have changed in the family household if you have decided to end a relationship. However, the one thing that will not have altered is your role as parent. This can be an extremely traumatic time for children and they need to know that they are safe and loved. Stability is essential for them and they need to know that everything is going to be ok. Talk to them and ensure they know what is happening and how it will affect them.

2. Discuss the issues

Set a time and place to meet that is convenient for both of you. Make sure your partner is aware of what you wish to discuss as this will lead to a more constructive meeting which is more likely to progress matters forward.

It is also wise to allow the other person time to process the problem and give them thinking and breathing space. It is also a good idea to confirm any agreements reached or arrangements made in writing to avoid any future misunderstandings.

3. Avoid criticising and blaming your partner

The most important thing to remember if you have children is that your ex-partner is the parent of your child and your child will still hold as much love for their mum/dad as ever. Avoid scathing personal attacks on your ex in front of your children. It puts them in a difficult situation which no child should have to deal with.

4. Avoid reacting when angry

This is not the time to make any rash decisions. Have your emotions in check and always try to think of the bigger picture and how your choices and reactions will impact upon your future. Listen to what your partner has to say and if it makes you feel angry or hurt take some time to think before you respond.

5. Do not have heated arguments in front of your children

Children are a lot more aware than we may think. Events which occur early in life can have a lasting



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impression. For children there is nothing worse than seeing their parents argue. It can cause great emotional distress which they will carry with them. Is this something you want to inflict on your child?

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