

BUILDING FOUNDATIONS

FOR

A BETTER
DIVORCE

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INTRODUCTION

Divorce is of course a challenging life transition — but it doesn't have to be destructive.

This guide outlines the early steps you can take towards a better divorce process — for you, your family, and your finances.

There is much you can do to move through this with a more constructive mindset, even if amicable collaboration isn't possible.

Some days it may feel that nothing is possible — but, if you can, I encourage you to view this as a project to be managed, one step at a time, to get to the other side.

Keep your eyes on the horizon— this is a finite process, and there is a better chapter ahead.

Wishing you well,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Dede".

APPROACHING DIVORCE

Can you remember who you were in the early days? You once got along well enough to commit your lives together.

If you and your partner can view your separation as a shared problem to be resolved, this new commitment to your future selves can change the whole experience of divorce.

A certain level of conflict is natural — you are both finding your way — but it doesn't have to be a war. If you can begin amicably, I would like to help you keep it so.

In reality, this won't always be possible, or even appropriate. Where couples are on very different pages and cannot work together, there is still much you can do as an individual to steer a better course.

This involves:

- Working with your lawyer efficiently and cost-effectively
- Being in the best mindset to advocate for yourself, your children, and your future self
- Accessing the right support, at the right time, throughout the process.

Whatever the reasons for your divorce, having an early roadmap, clear thinking, and good, sensible allies is key.

The pages that follow set out seven core takeaways to help you navigate this process in a more constructive, grounded way.

THE KEY TAKEAWAYS

Take a breath

Take care

Take stock

Take your team

Take the help

Take the leap

Take it forwards

TAKE A BREATH

Don't rush yourself unless you are sure the marriage is really over. Even when the decision is made, a couple can be on very different emotional pages. You may need to find your balance — or allow a little time for your partner to do so. Take time to get clarity about how best to proceed.

If you are driving your divorce, you want to do all you can to avoid excess trauma, hostility, or regrets down the line. **Having said that however**, in cases of domestic abuse (emotional, physical, or sexual) towards you, please seek professional help and press on without delay.

Equally, if you suspect your partner is trying to dissipate or obscure finances, don't hesitate to see a lawyer swiftly. You might also need a protection order or court injunction and your lawyer will help you with these. Legal aid may well be available depending on jurisdiction and circumstances: www.legalaidboard.ie or www.gov.uk/legal-aid — Ireland, and England & Wales respectively.

Worried about your children? Research consistently shows it's not divorce itself but exposure to conflict that harms them. A stable, low-conflict environment — even across two homes — is far better than a toxic unified one.

Providing a happy home environment away from conflict and unhealthy dynamics, however you do that for your children, is likely in their best interests in the long run.

TAKE CARE

Before you engage any professionals, see to your wellness first. Anyone who has been through divorce — even amicably — will know the toll it can take on your wellbeing.

No one enters marriage expecting this outcome, and no matter who initiates the divorce, multiple emotions will be at play. Grief, overwhelm, anger — none of these are conducive to good decisions — or indeed some days even being able to face the day.

“Your emotional wellness is neither a luxury nor selfish.”

All this happens at a time when you need to make some of the biggest decisions of your life, and anyone who has gone through trauma might recognise the effect it has on your brain.

Julia Samuel describes divorce as a time of mourning — “a living loss.” In my own experience of grief, as in many others’, a brain fog can descend and take up residence for weeks or even months. It's a temporary response designed to protect us while we process the loss but in limiting cognitive function we cannot access our best or clearest thinking.

Your emotional wellness is neither a luxury nor selfish. You will need to be in the best mindset possible, and mind yourself throughout. If you feel you need support, you probably do.

Whatever the circumstances, this is a challenging life transition, with likely layers of emotions for all involved.

Gain an understand of
the process before you
begin and explore your
options and the support
available to you...



TAKE STOCK

Know your options early. There is more than one way to divorce, and the traditional positional approach should be adopted only where adverse circumstances dictate.

An early “see you in court” is a dangerous stance and will rarely be the best option (with exceptions previously outlined). The collateral damage of adversarial family court proceedings can be devastating.

Children and financial issues are the main points of contention in divorce — both need to be protected. Alternative dispute resolution forums should be seriously considered, from the outset and at appropriate junctures.

Mediation is not the court’s “country cousin” — on the contrary it is the smart way forward in cases that are suited to it — trust me.

In England and Wales the ‘One Lawyer One Couple’ facility and direct access to counsel are both worth considering — I can guide you around these. Arbitration can be considered in place of a court forum too.

In Ireland, the process options are more constrained, but there are still ways to mitigate costs and fallout. Please take time to understand how best to navigate this — again, I am happy to help you here.

TAKE YOUR TEAM

Remember: divorce is a financial and emotional untangling — supported by a legal process. You will need input and support in different ways from different people, both professionals and friends.

“Team” may sound expensive, but it needn’t be — any professional you engage should each work in their specialisation without duplicating costs.

Good friends and family come into their own here but have your “trusted few.” Don’t feel you have to explain everything to everyone.

Have your people you discuss your current situation with but be able to get away from your ‘breakup story’ as well. People generally feel that they need to give an opinion (they will be many and conflicting) and this can be harmful territory too.

Finding the right lawyer is so important, and personalities matter. Don't just google 'divorce lawyer' or automatically instruct whoever acted for your friend. When you get your team right early it can make a real difference in terms of both financial and emotional costs in the long run.

If you feel you need professional support in either of these areas that is a solid investment and one I would encourage early on.

Build your team thoughtfully. Choose a lawyer who aligns with your values — aggressive litigation should be a last resort, not the default.



TAKE THE SUPPORT

The research shows that men tend to suffer highest stress following the start of the legal process whereas women feel it most prior to the decision to separate, and more women than men actually take the decision to file for divorce.

While women are generally more at ease in seeking support in their social network and family, men are far less likely to open up around what they are going through— and I strongly plead that you / they do.

“Seeking support is not an imposition — it is an act of courage.”

When you are going through this or any difficult life challenge — please remember so often where you feel it might be an imposition, those who care about you will feel it the greatest privilege to be able to help.

These times that test us are when the real meaning of human connection comes to the fore.

TAKE CONTROL

Divorce is not just a legal process — it's also a project. While it can be tempting to hand control over entirely to your lawyers and leave the outcome to the “roulette” of family courts, managing your divorce strategically may be one of the most important projects you ever undertake.

Knowing your options and understanding the process will serve you well. Take legal advice — this is a legal process — but don't allow yourself to be funnelled into unnecessary conflict.

Make the most of free resources to understand what lies ahead. Work to understand your finances — and ask, ask, ask about anything you don't understand. While I say this bear in mind that legal professionals will charge in 6 minute chunks — be organised and clear in your correspondence with them.

This is your family and your divorce. How it begins, evolves and ends is more within your control than you know.

TAKE IT FORWARDS

Please remember: this is just a scene in your bigger life, it is not ‘your story’.

If you decide to separate or divorce, or separating or divorce is thrust upon you, it is a transition to be managed - and manage it you will. It may at times feel like ‘hell in the hallway’, but we are resilient and capable of withstanding far more than we realise. I have had very real personal experience of this – when you think you can’t, you pause, breathe, take help, and take a step... **AND YOU CAN.**

“It may be an ending, but it is also a beginning.”

Yes, it may be an ending, but it is also a beginning – with the potential to be a beautiful one. Keep your eyes on the horizon throughout.

A GENTLE REMINDER



Wherever possible, find your common ground. It might only be that you don't want to lose your finances and wellbeing in the process — and that's enough. You need just one cornerstone — then build on that.

Divorce is the unwinding of a legal contract—but it's also a deeply personal journey. Done right, it doesn't have to destroy families, or futures.

HOW I CAN HELP

If you would like support in applying these principles to your own situation — calmly, strategically, and with care — I can help. I work with individuals and couples at different stages of separation to reduce conflict, protect finances, and create clearer outcomes

If you are at the early stages of separation or divorce, I can help you approach the process calmly, strategically, and with care.

I work with individuals and couples to:

- reduce unnecessary conflict
- protect emotional wellbeing and finances
- help them find the right professional help
- understand options before decisions are made
- build a clearer, more constructive path forward

Support can be tailored to where you are — whether you are still finding your footing, considering next steps, or already engaged in the legal process.

DEDE GOLD



I am Dede Gold, a dual qualified solicitor (Ireland and England & Wales) now practising as a Divorce Consultant, Mediator, and Coach. I support individuals and couples in both jurisdictions to navigate separation and divorce in ways that best serve their families, finances, and future selves.

My approach is informed by professional experience across law, mediation, and coaching — as well as lived experience of the divorce process itself.

If you would like guidance tailored to your own situation, I would be very happy to speak with you.

CONTACT

I always offer a complimentary initial call which you can book directly [here](#).

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