

11 Steps for a Man to Consider Before Filing for Divorce

**By Matthew Crider, JD
Family Protection Attorney**

1. Start with a good marriage counselor: If not marriage counseling, go at least for yourself. A divorce should be a last step, rather than a first step. There are three reasons to go into counseling. The first reason is to see if the marriage can be saved. The second reason is to build a support system for yourself. The third reason is to make sure you know everything you can about yourself, so that you will not make the same mistake and marry the same type of person again and again.

2. Family finances: In many situations, you are the breadwinner. If not, make sure that you know as much as possible about family finances. Have copies of tax returns, investment accounts, bank statements, checking and savings accounts, and credit card statements. Remember, the more you know about your family finances, your assets and liabilities, the better off you are in the event that you decide to go through with a divorce.

3. Custody: If you have children, consider what arrangement makes most sense with regard to custody. Is this a case where there should be shared or joint custody? Keep track of how much time you spend with your children, and how much time your wife spends with the children. More and more cases end up with shared or joint custody, or even with fathers having primary physical custody. These are important things to consider. It is also important to look at the situation realistically. Do not go in with an attitude of trying to punish your spouse, but look at what is in the best interests of your children going forward in the event of the divorce.

4. What you will need to live on? What are the family finances? If your wife works, what will the impact of her working have on the divorce? What are your needs going to be going forward in the future? What about the job market in this economy? How secure is your job? These are things that you should think about before you embark on a divorce.

5. Talk to an attorney. Make sure the attorney is someone who is knowledgeable and experienced in family law. Make sure this is a person you can relate to, and feel comfortable with. There are a lot of good attorneys, but the important thing is making sure that you have the right fit. Explore the costs of a divorce with the attorney.

6. Think about what you want to do about the home. Will you want to keep it? Have your spouse keep it? Or perhaps, sell it? Remember, in these tough economic times, in more and more cases, we are dealing not with a division of the assets, but how the debts are allocated. These are important things to consider in filing for a divorce.

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7. Keep track of situations involving your wife. Issues involving your children. If there are issues with regard to possible domestic violence, or harassment or parental alienation, these are things that you should be keeping track of in a diary or journal. Make sure that these notes or diaries are in a safe place so that you will have them at your fingertips as you go through the divorce process, but also so that your spouse will not be able to find them. Keep track of emails, text messages and other forms of electronic

communications. Avoid confrontations, if at all possible. You do not want to be the “victim” of a situation where false allegations of spousal abuse are made, this can be used as a pretext to have you removed from the home.

8. Come up with a plan for your future. Where do you want to be in one year, five years, ten years? Remember, a divorce is a major step and transition in your life.

9. Build a support system. Consider who among your family and friends you can trust, because it is important to have a support system as you go through a divorce. Bear in mind, when you build this support system, that everyone is going to tell you something different. It is important to have the presence of mind to make your own decisions, but they should be informed decisions.

10. If possible, talk to your spouse. See if there are ways to save the marriage. Try to communicate. Divorce should be a last resort and not the first resort.

11. Evaluate your situation. Are you sure divorce is the answer? Are you sure the timing is right? Think about all the other issues that I have raised, and make sure that the decision you make is not just a knee-jerk reaction, but is carefully thought out. If you have been unhappy for a number of years, then analyze what makes the most sense. If it is because you are involved in another relationship, or thinking about another relationship, be very, very careful. Too many people leave one bad marriage for a relationship, and end up going through more than one divorce. Be true to yourself.

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About Matthew Crider, J.D.

Matthew Crider formed [Crider Law PC](#) in 1999 so he could help individuals through the California divorce process by providing creative solutions as their trusted advisor and legal counselor. His divorce and family law practice focuses on assisting people in dissolution matters, including divorce, child custody and visitation, child and spousal support, spousal support and alimony, and parental rights.

