

Divorce sucks (a view from the trenches)

Part II

Why do marriages fail? This writer has noted that there are a number of reoccurring causes for failure of the marital relationship. Among them, a nonexclusive list of these causes are:

1. **Control issues.** Clearly unwanted control of the marital relationship from this writer's view is the most dominating cause of marital failure. Control can be mental, physical or emotional. It can extend to who manages the marital estate, who has decision powers or input regarding asset acquisition and who shares information that goes to the core and lifetime issues of a marriage. Control is also impacted by simple unsolicited power – who manages the feelings of the husband and wife; are there limitations or artificial prerequisites to expressing feelings; are there false expectations; are there abuse issues. Abuse issues can be mental or physical. Although physical abuse is the most reported, clearly emotional abuse is an overwhelming reason for divorce as it relates to control of one spouse over the other.
2. **Outside forces.** Parents, grandparents, great grandparents influence on the marital relationship, separate estates, proceeds, trusts, lands, stipends, independent wealth issues, religious issues, and step-children issues. Frequently, in blended families, step-children, children of the half blood, adopted or otherwise can be a crowning achievement for the blended family or a death sentence to its continuation. Although men and women wish, choose, and strive to accept another person's child as their own, and in many cases are extremely successful in that regard, more often than not, artificial and unrealistic expectations of one spouse as to the other spouse's attitude toward his or her children disrupt the marital relationship and place the non-blood spouse in an impossible position. Children of another marriage are frequently, depending on age and maturity, excellent adept manipulators of this difficult situation, sometimes terribly aggravating the problem and accelerating the breakdown of the marriage.
3. **Adultery.** Adultery, though a cause of divorce, is almost always a symptom rather than a cause. People seek escape from stress, control, abuse, alcoholism, etc. both male and female, and often adultery (if not obsessive or compulsive) is a mere anesthetic and self-medication for feeling bad. When the emotional divorce has not been accepted, when the relationship has devolved into anxiety, depression, or high stress levels, people seek relief from those pains in others.
4. **Addiction.** Alcoholism, drug abuse, gambling addiction, illicit sex addiction all contribute to and are conducive to a failed marital relationship. By far, alcoholism is the highest and best candidate for failure in the view of this writer. However, any form of addictive behavior which places an addictive person's type of conduct or activity in the center of a relationship, at some point and time in the future, is dooming the husband and wife for the divorce lawyer's office. There have been remarkable strides in treatment in recent years. There are rehabilitative, medical, and therapeutic answers to many of these issues that did not exist in the past. Still, without exception, there must be a full acceptance of the addicted person of his or her problem for these therapeutic means to result in an acceptable end.