

Year's End Causes Many to Choose a Different Path

By Rebecca L. Palmer

The end of the year is a time for celebration and deep reflection. When we look back and review proud moments and achievements, we are more likely to take stock of what we want our lives to look like and what we need to do to achieve these goals. This is also a time of year when couples realize they are not satisfied in their marriage, and their relationship is standing in the way of their happiness.

In my law practice, it is common to see an increase of divorce filings spike after the holidays. Many couples decide to hold off on announcing their breakup until after family obligations, so most filings are submitted from January through March. After two years of stress, financial strain, and political discord around Covid, divorces continue to be filed at a high rate.

The pandemic has put unprecedented strain on relationships. It has tested couples with a complete disruption of their work-life, isolation from family and friends, gaps in childcare, and loss of loved ones. The entire shift in social connections has revealed many relationships built around other activities such as children's activities, social gatherings, and work-related travel. The removal of these activities has caused many couples to realize that they do not have a connection beyond these events.

Even couples on solid ground may be susceptible to breakups because the pandemic has taken away well-established roles that provided comfort and stability. The pandemic's significant stress demanded a great deal of vulnerability and communication. For some, this tested their relationship and the inability to communicate about these hardships, chipping away at its foundation.

Even though the emotional stress of the holiday season and

Covid has caused an increase in divorce, filing for divorce is a practical option that allows couples to file joint taxes for one last year and gives them a runway to complete the divorce proceedings.

With all the stress during this time of year, particularly if you are in the midst of a breakup, it is a good reminder for us all to take a moment and remind ourselves that even though next year may be very different, today is a gift.

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