

# The Guide to Good Divorce 2017 Summer Enews

## Women at midlife more likely to initiate divorce, yet have the most to lose

*By Trey Yates, Board Certified Family Law Attorney*

According to [a survey conducted by AARP](#), women facing divorce in midlife are especially vulnerable financially, and more likely than men to be troubled about becoming financially destitute.

In her book, *He's History, You're Not: Surviving Divorce after 40*, Erica Manfred writes, "Older women's losses are greater. They have been married the longest and take the hardest hit both financially and emotionally. They lose happy memories of times past, and the expectation of a secure, comfortable future."

Many women facing divorce in this age group feel as if they have lost control over every aspect of their lives – financial, emotional and spiritual. They are thrust into an unfamiliar legal maze and called upon to make important, irreversible life changing decisions.

Despite these challenges, however, I have witnessed women who come to see divorce as a catalyst to propel them into their next best life, and emerge from divorce stronger, wiser and in more control of their destinies than ever before.

That is why I created the [Guide to Good Divorce](#), a seminar series designed to help women get the information and support they need to transition successfully through the divorce process to a healthier, happier life.

Our seminars provide women with vital information they need to make informed decisions about divorce and the divorce process. Yet, it goes one step further and addresses the transformative potential of this opportunity as a time of self-discovery and personal growth – offering advice and tips on life skills, as well as psychological and spiritual wellness.

Our half-day seminars include sessions on the law of divorce in Texas, divorce financial planning, life skills, and spiritual wellness. In addition to providing information and access to experts, these workshops offer women the opportunity to meet and share with others facing the challenges of divorce, and start to build new communities of support.

*For more information, visit [www.GuidetoGoodDivore.com](http://www.GuidetoGoodDivore.com), or call 713-932-7177.*



## Looking for clues of *bad behavior* during divorce

By Patricia Barrett, CFP, CDFA

In my many years of advising couples and individuals on how to achieve an equitable divorce, I have seen antics on both sides that can only be described as "the good, the bad and the down-right ugly." It is unfortunate, but true, that couples embarking on divorce sometimes behave badly during the process. Many professionals who work in this space say, "divorce can bring out the worst in otherwise good people." I would have to agree.



So, if you are considering divorce or have started the process, you may want to watch out for a number of red flags that could indicate bad behavior on the part of your spouse may be taking place or is about to.

Keep in mind, these red flags can occur even before the decision to get a divorce has been made. Marriages typically start to fall apart months, sometimes years before most couples seek counseling and before the word "divorce" ever comes up. Yet, marriage problems can trigger perceived threats and acts of self-preservation at the expense of one spouse -- some of which may be unlawful.

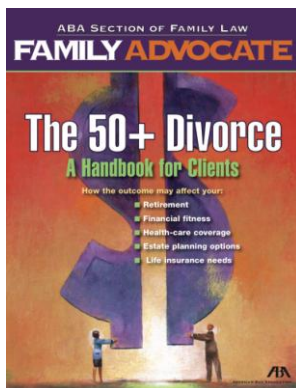
Here is a list of red flags to look for:

- Removal of financial documents from the home, or the sudden, unusual interest in such documents and where they are stored
- Closing or opening bank accounts
- Opening of online bank accounts or moving financial statements to online only
- Unusual or unexpected financial information on income tax forms
- New lines of credit being opened or new credit cards appearing
- Unexplained charges on credit card statements
- Moving of funds
- Staying away from home
- Wanting you to sign documents you don't understand
- Having important financial statements sent to a work address

None of the above activities prove that bad behavior is taking place. They simply are clues to where bad behavior may show up. In fact, each spouse should have a thorough understanding of the couple's marital financial picture, regardless of the status of the marriage. Here is a list of steps you can take to make sure you are current on your marital finances and have your own copies of all pertinent financial documents:

- Find and review the last several months or years of all bank and financial statements -- investment accounts, retirement funds, mortgage statements; make copies of these and all other pertinent documents and store in a safe place;
- Order credit reports on you and your spouse;
- Gather and copy proof of income for your spouse -- especially if he or she is the owner of a private business;
- Make copies of the last 3-4 years of your income tax forms and supportive documents; store in a safe place;
- List all marital debts;
- If you've recently refinanced your home, make copies of all the paperwork and store safely;
- Visit your safe deposit box and take photos of all contents; make copies of important papers and store safely;
- If you brought separate property into the marriage -- savings accounts, investments, retirement accounts from former or current employers, real estate, collections of high value such as art, for example -- document it with financial statements and receipts showing ownership of these assets before you were married.

*For more information, visit [www.lifetimeplanning.cc](http://www.lifetimeplanning.cc)*



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This manual was created by the American Bar Association section on Family law. It is a primer for anyone who is becoming or has recently become divorced in middle life. The articles are designed to help you avoid potential problems. It also includes discussions on some of the issues you may confront and provides helpful suggestions to facilitate the economic transformation from married life to that of a single person.