

Common Causes and Reasons for Divorce

The Romans had an interesting view towards marriage – ‘matrimonia debent esse libera’ or ‘marriages ought to be free’. This meant that either spouse could opt out of the marriage if things weren’t working out for them. Centuries later, Victorian England had a vastly different view. People got married and stayed together for better or for worse. Society frowned on divorce and divorced people were likely to find themselves social pariahs.

In the present century, both these views prevail. It depends on which part of the planet you live in and in what kind of culture. Divorce rates are higher in European or American countries, where individual freedom is given higher stress, than in, say, Asian or African ones, where familial and social opinions cause higher stress. With globalization, of course, the ‘backward’ countries are catching up. Women, especially, with access to higher education and higher salaries, are less willing to put up with traditional roles and expectations. Social and cultural moralists are having a field day, predicting, like always, dire consequences for the ‘social fabric’. In my personal opinion, the social fabric can go stitch itself. No, divorce isn’t joy-inducing, but then neither is a corrosive marriage. In such a case, splitting up is preferable to staying together ‘for the children’ or to keep up social appearances. Anyway, it all really depends upon the kind of relationship you have. Some relationships are worth working on, some aren’t.

There are many different and complex causes and reasons for divorce, each of them specific to that particular couple’s marital relationship, their individual experiences and personal problems. None of them may seem ‘common’ to the people going through a divorce, of course, but many of the reasons recur enough to warrant the term.

Here are some frequently cited reasons for causing divorce:

- Lack of commitment to the marriage
- Lack of communication between spouses
- Infidelity
- Abandonment
- Alcohol Addiction
- Substance Abuse
- Physical Abuse
- Sexual Abuse
- Emotional Abuse
- Inability to manage or resolve conflict
- Personality Differences or ‘irreconcilable differences’
- Differences in personal and career goals
- Financial problems
- Different expectations about household tasks
- Different expectations about having or rearing children
- Interference from parents or in-laws

- Lack of maturity
- Intellectual Incompatibility
- Sexual Incompatibility
- Insistence of sticking to traditional roles and not allowing room for personal growth
- Falling out of love
- Religious conversion or religious beliefs
- Cultural and lifestyle differences
- Inability to deal with each other's petty idiosyncrasies
- Mental Instability or Mental Illness
- Criminal behavior and incarceration for crime

Research done on the causes of divorce reveals that –

- Lack of communication is one of the leading causes of divorce. A marriage is on the rocks when the lines of communication fail. You can't have an effective relationship if either one of you won't discuss your feelings, can't talk about your mutual or personal issues, will keep your resentments simmering under wraps, and expect your partner to guess what the whole problem is about.
- Divorces often happen because people rarely discuss their expectations in detail prior to marriage, are less willing to work on their marriages afterwards, and would like quick solutions rather than having to resolve issues. People have gotten divorced for trivial reasons like snoring.
- People who come from divorced homes are more likely to get divorced than people who come from happily married households. Divorce seems less like a big deal if you have seen your parents go through with it.
- People who get married between the ages of 23-27 are more likely to stay together than people who get married in their teens.
- People who cohabit before marriage have higher rates of divorce than people who didn't cohabit before marriage.
- In many cases, quite a few of the problems that cause divorce have existed in the couple's relationship long before they got married. The problems were either not acknowledged or were ignored in the fond hope that marriage might offer a miraculous panacea. And, guess what, it doesn't. Nobody can make you feel better about yourself and you can't change and save anybody. As someone wise once said, it takes two wholes to make a marriage, not two halves.

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