

**PROFESSIONAL'S MINI-GUIDE TO DIVORCE
10 COMMON MISTAKES THAT PEOPLE MAKE WHEN SEPARATING**

1. DO NOT LEAVE THE HOME

If you leave the home you reside in with your spouse, you may lose a huge tactical advantage. Stay put unless there is violence or unless you have the advice of divorce counsel.

2. DO NOT THREATEN OR PARTAKE IN ANY VIOLENCE

The moment that violence or threats occur, restraining orders and criminal charges often result. These sorts of acts greatly affect children and custody/timesharing matters.

3. DO NOT THREATEN TO KEEP THE KIDS FROM THE OTHER PARENT

Threats of withholding the children increase distress, escalate the conflict, are not usually supported by the courts and will usually backfire. This behavior places the children in the middle of YOUR issues (not their issues).

4. DO NOT THREATEN TO FINANCIALLY BREAK THE OTHER SPOUSE

Threats surrounding money and security tend to escalate the conflict and may result in an expensive court battle later.

5. DO NOT THREATEN TO QUIT YOUR JOB

Courts generally do not support the spouse who quits a job to avoid support.

6. DO NOT SEND STUPID LETTERS, E-MAILS OR RECORDABLE VOICE MESSAGES TO YOUR SPOUSE

Whatever you write and say to the other spouse may end up being evidence before a Judge. Always be respectful, even in difficult conversations whether verbal, e-mail, blogs, text messages, posts on social sites such as Facebook, MySpace, Twitter, etc. Remember, the information (text and photos) that your friends and family post on these sites may cause an issue as well, and can be seen by anyone, including your children.

7. IF YOU CAN, OBTAIN COPIES OF YOUR FINANCIAL DOCUMENTS BEFORE LEAVING THE RELATIONSHIP

Obtain copies of all relevant financial documents available in the home and elsewhere. Knowing the types of accounts and where they are held will help expedite your case.

8. DO NOT FLAUNT A NEW RELATIONSHIP

If you are involved with someone else, that relationship may not be legally relevant, but it may create practical problems in negotiations. Discretion is a key factor during a transitional period, especially when children are involved. Discretion will help mitigate

anger, and social embarrassment of you or your spouse being seen with a new boyfriend/girlfriend in public

9. DO NOT PURCHASE A NEW HOUSE

Committing to buy a house may put you in a poor and desperate bargaining position. You should first have a written agreement.

10. DO NOT PROCEED WITHOUT LEGAL ADVICE

Having appropriate legal advice at the earliest stages will help reduce conflict and increase your chances for success. Be smart. Knowledge is power. An initial consultation can provide guidance on whether or when to broach the subject and to understand initial actions to pursue or avoid.

At Harris & Hunt, P.A., our lawyers limit their practice to Family Law. We provide timely, practical advice on difficult issues facing families in crisis. We appreciate your referrals. (813) 223-5421