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[Home](#) > 11 Signs of Impending Separation

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We all know separation doesn't just happen. It starts in the "little-big-things" and settles in, until you and your partner see no reason why you should stay together any longer.

It may be the stress of everyday life, your jobs, your frustrations. You might have become too preoccupied with running around after your kids, and could have forgotten how to be a couple. Your decision for a divorce can be the result of a big fight, or a series of small arguments, it can be fuelled by the "silent-treatment" or it may happen because you have simply grown apart.

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Stopping on Time

How it starts is relatively insignificant, but what does matter is how you can "hit the brake" before hitting the wall and going into a separation scenario. It is also important to weigh your options and carefully consider the circumstances, before deciding to split up. Ultimately, not all situations are irreparable.

Agreeing to Disagree

According to marriage counsellor and psychologist Dr. John Gottman – author of “The Seven Principles of Marriage” (1999) alongside Nan Silver, most couples have a subject or a specific matter they will never agree on. They will return to it and argue about it, probably throughout the entire relationship. This is not necessarily a bad thing, as long as the couple can agree to disagree on that matter and respect each other’s opinions. Just remember: there is always something you’re not going to agree on with your spouse or partner, and that’s okay.

Following Dr. John Gottman’s research, of more than 30 years, we have compiled a series of warning signs for divorce.

Signs That Your Relationship May Be on Its Last Breath

1. **You don’t have a mutual project.** Happily married or cohabitating couples see their relationship as a project they share together. This may include raising children, or helping each other achieve goals and dreams.
2. **You do not work as a team.** On the opposite side of the spectrum, sometimes you might feel like your cohabitee is an opponent, rather than your team mate, and does everything to make you look and feel poorly. If your partner is not in your corner, then who?
3. **You have unfinished arguments.** And rarely resolve your issues. It’s not the fighting itself that may put a relationship in trouble, it is leaving matters unfinished and never getting anywhere, that wears a marriage or a cohabitation out.
4. **Positive emotions are scarce.** There seems to be only resentment and grudges between the two of you. You don’t laugh together anymore, you don’t have your own down time, and it seems like you don’t have anything nice to say to one another.
5. **You are no longer able to forgive.** You start hurting each other on purpose and there comes a time, when you can’t find space to forgive.
6. **You do not feel like talking.** Or fighting. There is just no point in it and it’s not worth it. You’re just about ready to throw in the towel.
7. **You’ve grown apart and lead different lives.** Successful couples are the ones who share their lives with one another and at the same time respect each other’s space. It’s always a good thing to have an activity of some sort with your spouse, like playing a sport together.
8. **You can no longer see positive qualities in your spouse.** “Why did I even choose this person? There is nothing I like about them.” If your answer is something similar to that, you no longer see the person in front of you as someone worthy of your affection and

that's a dangerous path to go on.

9. **There is no respect between you.** When you fight, or even outside of arguments, you don't have anything nice to say to one another. You cross lines and offend one another, while intentionally doing things to hurt the other person.
10. **You and your spouse/cohabitee do not invest emotionally in your relationship.** You don't feel like having a romantic meal together, going out to have fun, you are no longer concerned with the other person's wellbeing or emotional needs. You prefer to spend time and effort on someone else, such as your children or friends.
11. **You feel more alone than ever.** Being in a committed relationship and feeling alone is one of the most difficult experiences to go through.

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