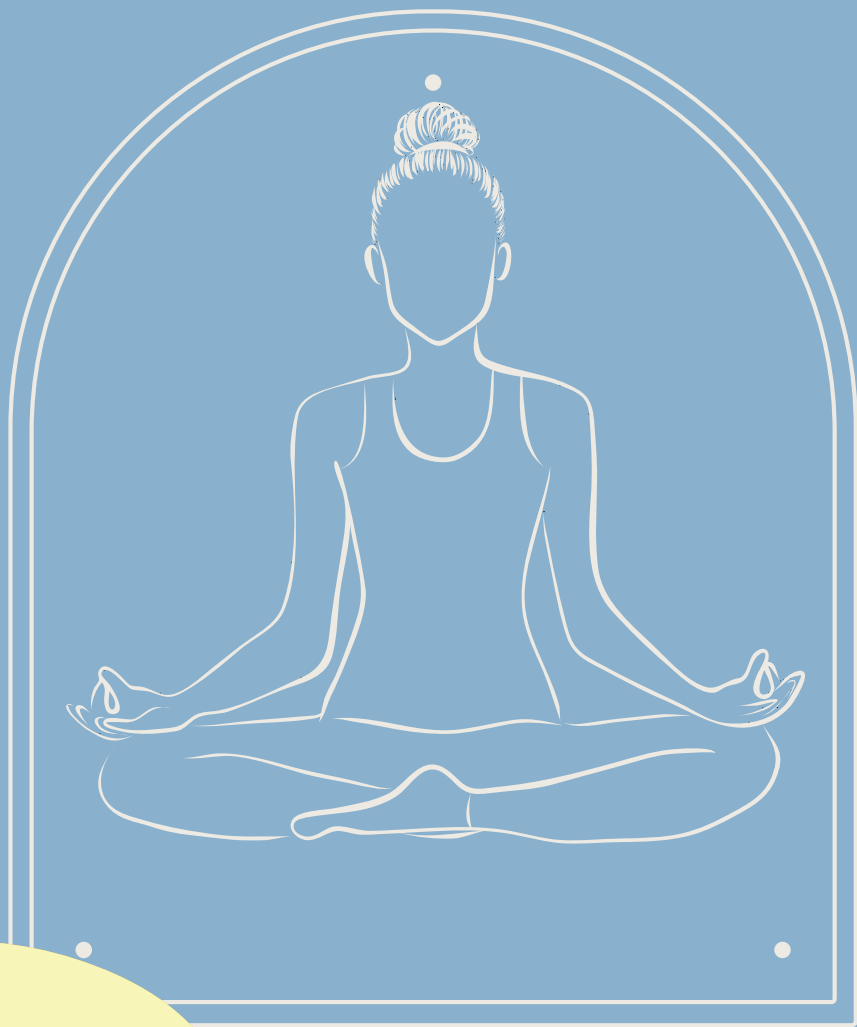


Managing divorce and separation



Your guide to managing divorce and separation so you can heal and flourish.

Celia Jarvis

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Divorce and separation, whatever the circumstances, can really shake your self esteem. It's perhaps one of the most stressful and unpleasant events you'll ever go through

But, even in the trickiest of times, there are things that can help. It's my hope that this guide, will comfort you and provide you with a path to move through your pain.

In the midst of depression, anxiety and overwhelm, it can feel almost impossible to hold on to hope. But please believe there is a new, and worthwhile, life waiting for you.


This guide will start with some inspiring quotes from famous women who've separated and thrived, followed by two full pages of research backed tips to help you manage your mental wellbeing, after this I'll offer you my pick of the best books on the topic, before finishing with signposting to supportive organisations who specialise in relationship advice.

I hope this guide is of service to you, and if you have any questions or please email celia@cappuccinocounselling.com




When love is no longer
being served it's time to
leave the table.

Maya Angelou, writer

A sunset scene with a large white circle containing text. The sun is low on the horizon, casting rays of light across a sky filled with colorful clouds in shades of orange, red, and blue. The white circle is positioned in the upper left quadrant of the image.

“Imagine spreading everything you care about on a blanket and then tossing the whole thing up in the air. The process of divorce is about loading that blanket, throwing it up, watching it all spin, and worrying what stuff will break when it lands.”

Amy Poelher, comedian

A field of cosmos flowers in various colors (white, pink, purple) is shown against a warm, golden sunset sky with soft clouds. The flowers are in the foreground, and the background is a bright, hazy orange and yellow. A large white circle is overlaid on the upper left portion of the image, containing a quote.

“It was extremely traumatic and awful and horrible. At the same time, it turned out for the best. I wouldn't wish it on my worst enemy and yet (it opened up my life so much) I'd wish it for everyone.

Elizabeth Moss, actress

Science backed tips for managing your mental health and self esteem after a relationship breakdown

Don't panic

Deep breath. If you feel really, really bad, and you most likely do, because heartbreak hurts, and not just in an abstract, theoretical sense, but in a very real pressure across your chest and pain in your stomach type way... then don't panic. This state is unpleasant, but very normal. There are physical symptoms associated with emotional loss and shock, and these include loss of appetite, insomnia, sleep disruption, general aches, nausea and heart palpitations. While these symptoms are awful, they won't stay intense forever, and should begin to fade in the forthcoming months. Prioritise staying hydrated, sleeping if you can, and taking some form of gentle exercise until you feel more robust. Treat yourself like you have the flu and take it easy, if you can.

Stay connected

It can be tempting when you're feeling heart broken to hunker down, pull the duvet over your head and withdraw from friends and family. But try and push yourself to stay connected with those you love. Research published in [The Lancet](#) shows that isolation deepens feelings of despair and depression. So keep on organising low-key meet ups with those closest to you, whatever you can manage is good - even if it's just a 30 minute coffee.

Manage your money

Successful money management and feeling in control about the future go hand in hand. Knowing how to organise your finances will increase feelings of wellbeing and agency. Although it can be hard to take that initial step and look your accounts square in the eye, getting to grips with your incomings, outgoings and any government support you may be entitled to will help you feel less overwhelmed and more confident. There are links to organisations that can help you get your money in order, in the signposting page at the end of this guide .

Use all the available resources

Separation may be painful, but it's certainly not uncommon. So there are many organisations out there that can provide you with vital, free support and information. A good starting point is your GP, who can offer medication for low mood, refer you for counselling and signpost you to local organisations that specialise in relationship advice. It's also worth looking at the mental health charities in your area, or support groups, to see what they offer that may meet your needs.

Numerous studies over the years, have shown that having a rich social network leads to greater resilience, and improved physical and mental health.

Prioritise self care

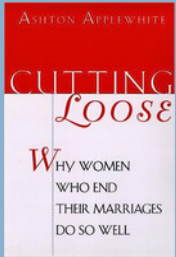
Now, more than ever, is the time to put self care at the top of your list. Divorce and separation are deeply unpleasant, and the process of splitting assets and deciding what your future life will look like can be overwhelming. Because it is so inherently stressful, it's vital to make time for things that you enjoy. Not just eating well and getting enough sleep but pastimes that replenish you and people who feed your soul. Good self care will get you through some bad times, so take it seriously.

Resist the urge to compare

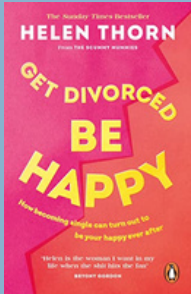
Comparison is never a good idea. But now is an especially bad time to get caught in the compare and despair cycle. If your partner has left you for someone else, then it can be tempting to seek the person out on social media. If your friend had a really awful divorce then it's easy to think yours will go the same way. But don't.

Author of Seven Principles of Parting, Wendy Paris, advises readers to only focus on their own divorces, feelings and potential futures. She writes in Psychology Today, "Studies purporting to show the 'unavoidable' ills of divorce don't have anything to do with you. In general, we maintain a basically stable level of well-being throughout our lives, regardless of circumstances. But those who continue to suffer pull down the average—and this average is what you see in studies purporting to show the unavoidable ills of divorce."

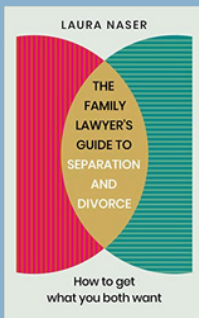
The best books on separation for their solid advice, warmth and wisdom



Cutting Loose, by Ashton Applewaite, is an upbeat and inspiring book which shatters the myth of the lonely, cash-strapped and regretful divorcee. Instead, via the pages of this book, she introduces you to hundreds of women, from all different walks of life, who share their stories and all agree that getting a separation is the best thing they've ever done.



Comedian Helen Thorn shares her own personal story of divorcing her husband after discovering his affair. She recounts with real emotion her shock, heartbreak and worry for her children before she turns a corner and embraces her single life. Shot through with humour this is like a chat with a reassuring best friend who's been there before.

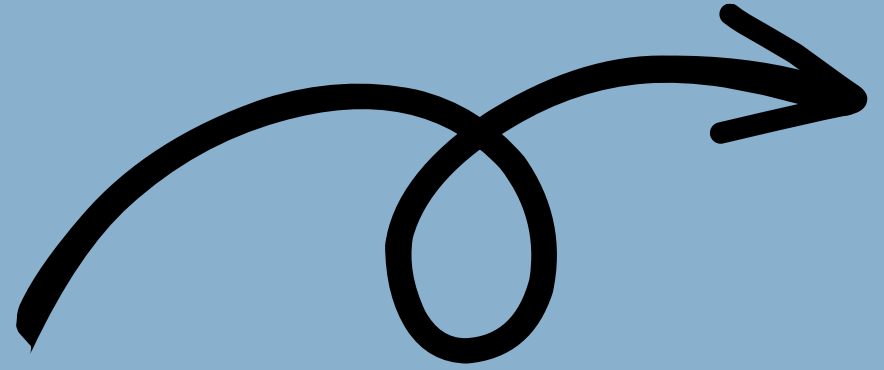


Introducing Laura Naser, aka the family lawyer and, as you'd hope, she knows her stuff. She guides you through the legalise of getting a divorce or separation in clear plain English. After reading this book you'll feel reassured, well informed and ready to tackle whatever lies ahead.



If it's you who's unhappy in your relationship and has decided to call it a day, then How to be a Lady who Leaves could be the book you're looking for. The author Emma Heptonstall, takes you by the hand and leads you through the planning you'll need to put in place for your new life as a single lady. Offering emotional, financial and relationship advice this is a small but mighty manual on going it alone.

Signposting: organisations that can give you the support you need



The best approach for getting back on your feet and flourishing once more, is a three pronged attack: mental health, money and legal advice. Here are the UK organisations that have you covered.

Citizens Advice - if you don't know what to do or where to start, then start here. Citizens Advice can put you in contact with lawyers, financial advisers and housing officers who will help with the legal aspects of of divorce or separation. Most branches offer days where you can walk in (be prepared to wait, though) and speak to an advisor face to face.

Gingerbread is a wonderful organisation if there are children involved and you want to find out about child maintenance, parental rights and visitation.

Mind aim to be a one stop shop for all mental health challenges. They provide counselling, psycho-education, a variety of wellbeing groups and advice on all manner of things from finance to physical health.

I really hope you've found this guide useful, and that you now feel a little more reassured and positive about the future.

Separation is tough, but you will get through this challenging time and you will find a way to manage your mental health and self-esteem.

If you're interested in learning more about self-esteem, self-compassion or considering counselling with me, then get in touch [**celia@cappuccinocounselling.com**](mailto:celia@cappuccinocounselling.com)



Cappuccino Counselling

Where better self-esteem begins