

## **Reasons for Divorce**

**Ryan Bennett, Lisa K. Lashley, Charles J. Golden**

**Nova Southeastern University**

Today, divorce is a common result for many couples regarding marital conflict and discord. The impacts of divorce have been linked to increased psychological distress, increased risk of substance abuse, depression, and poorer overall health when compared to non-divorced individuals (Amato, 2000; Hughes and Waite, 2009). Per Shelby Scott and colleagues, there are ten likely reasons for a couple to get divorced (Scott et al., 2013). By understanding these ten reasons, one may better conceptualize the overall factors that contribute to divorce.

First, couples are most likely to get a divorce due to lack of commitment. Lack of commitment constitutes lack of assurance to their family or to their partner. From a family systems perspective, this lack of commitment may result in separation from the family which in turn leads to divorce.

The second most likely reason for divorce is infidelity, or extramarital affairs. Per Janis Spring in "After the Affair," women are more likely to continue working on their marriage after their husbands have an affair, while men are more likely to leave the relationship (Spring, 2013). Spring relates this to women feeling as if they need to work harder and strengthen this relationship to successfully continue their marriage. Men on the other hand tend to feel sexually inadequate when their wives are not faithful, and this sexual inadequacy leads the man to leave the relationship without trying to work through their problems.

Excess conflict and arguing is the third most likely reason for a couple to get a divorce. The tension caused by the conflict and arguing results in less marital satisfaction. To achieve

happiness, some couples feel that removing the tension in their life is the best thing for them. By getting a divorce, the couple is freeing themselves of their interpersonal conflicts.

The fourth most common reason for divorce is getting married too young. Some argue that this can be problematic because neither individual has fully matured. As one changes and matures independently, so does their relationship and marriage. The individual's changes may not be congruent with their ideal relationship which may in turn lead to marital conflict and eventually divorce.

Financial problems are the fifth most common reason for divorce. Financial stress may directly correlate to strain in marriage. Furthermore, each person has a way in which they feel their finances should be handled. When a couple disagrees with each other's financial solutions, they begin to pull away from their relationship.

The sixth most common reason for divorce is substance use. Substance use includes alcohol, tobacco, or any illegal substance. Substance abuse can lead to many physical and cognitive changes. These changes may affect a marriage because their partner feels as if they are not with the same person that they married. The marital changes and substance dependence are why this problem can lead to divorce.

Domestic violence is the seventh most common reason for divorce. This refers to behaviors that result in violence or abuse from one partner to the other. While this is a common reason for divorce, it is very difficult for individuals to act on. The abuser may instill fear in their partner, which delays them filing for divorce and leaving the relationship.

Health problems are the eighth most common reason for divorce. This may include both physical and mental health. The instability of one's health has been linked to instability in their relationship.

The ninth most common reason for divorce is lack of familial support. Building from the ground up, the lack of foundational support of one's family can lead to conflict between partners.

Religious differences are the tenth most common reason for divorce. Tying in familial support, conflict may be generated when two individuals have conflicting religious views. Due to religion being highly associated to one's core values, couples who disagree on their faith may choose to find another partner.

While these are independent reasons for divorce, one cannot neglect the overlap between them. The comorbidity of these problems further exacerbates and amplifies the potential reasons for couples to get divorced, usually for multiple reasons.

### References

- Amato, P. R., & Previti, D. (2003). People's reasons for divorcing: Gender, social class, the life course, and adjustment. *Journal of family issues*, 24(5), 602-626.
- Hughes, M. E., & Waite, L. J. (2009). Marital Biography and Health at Mid-Life\*. *Journal of health and social behavior*, 50(3), 344-358.
- Scott, S. B., Rhoades, G. K., Stanley, S. M., Allen, E. S., & Markman, H. J. (2013). Reasons for divorce and recollections of premarital intervention: Implications for improving relationship education. *Couple and Family Psychology: Research and Practice*, 2(2), 131.
- Spring, J. A. (2013). *After the Affair, Updated Second Edition: Healing the Pain and Rebuilding Trust When a Partner Has Been Unfaithful*. Harper Collins.