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About You

Your love life...your work life...your life life

Sorry, We Are *Not* Breaking Up!

A guide to staying together forever...straight from divorce lawyers! They know what tears couples apart, and they'll tell you how to avoid it.

By Emily Mahaney

Most people spend their lives hoping to never talk to a divorce lawyer. But when you think about it, who better to dish out relationship-extending advice? They know exactly what brings couples to the breaking point and into their offices; in fact, the six young female divorce lawyers *Glamour* interviewed for this story have all had a front-row seat at some major marital battles. But guess what: They're all happily married themselves, and they'd like you to get—and stay—that way too. Listen in on their horror stories, love stories, and strategies for keeping a ring on it. *Continued on next page* ▶



Do Not Name-Call

"I've had clients whose spouses have called them everything: f--king bitches, the C-word, bad parent, liar—every nasty word in the book. Just don't go there.

You can't take it back, and people carry that stuff with them for years. In litigation, one spouse will say, 'You called me a [blank] five years ago,' and the other says, 'I don't know what you're talking about!' You've got to choose your words wisely and learn to fight well. I really think that is the key to maintaining a marriage. If my husband says something to me that's hurtful, I will say, 'What was the purpose of that?' I won't respond in kind or feed into it. Don't hit someone in a sensitive spot, like where they're insecure, especially if they've opened up to you about it. That's really hurtful. It destroys trust. People forgive, but they do not forget. Trust me."

—*Jacqueline Newman, 38, partner at Berkman Bottger Newman & Rodd, LLP, New York; married for eight years to Jarrod, 40, also an attorney.*



Limit Your Venting

"My husband and I are very open, but we try not to vent too much to each other. He's in his medical residency, and sometimes he complains about the hours.

I let him go to some extent, but if I've been hearing it for a week straight, I'll—supportively—point out that this is what he signed up for when he decided to become a doctor, and at the end of it, he is going to have a fulfilling job that he loves. Then I'll ask what we can do to make it better, because here's the deal: Venting isn't productive. It's a drain. And it won't break a marriage right away, but if one spouse keeps unloading, it leads to bigger, marriage-breaking issues, like infidelity, which is what happened to one of my clients. Her husband had a negative outlook on everything. Everything. He was always the victim. He leaned on her constantly. She was being his rock, but he wasn't hers. Eventually, she looked for that support elsewhere, and she had an affair. It's easy to vent at people you love because you think they'll still love you at the end of the day. But if you keep doing it, they might not."

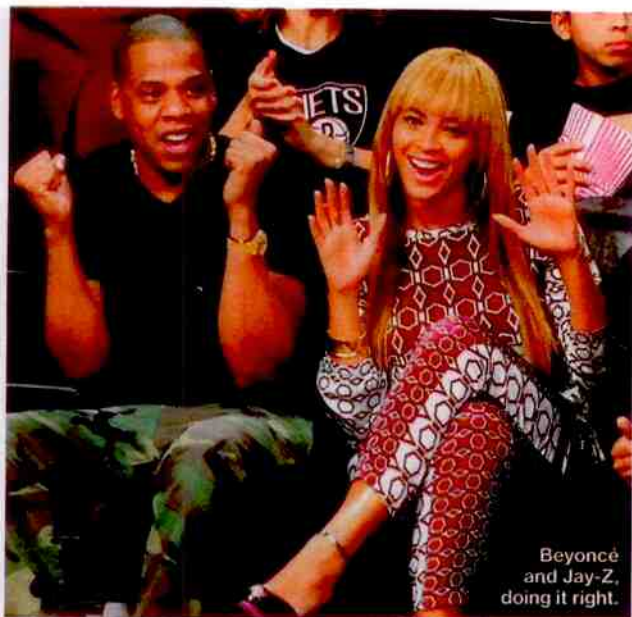
—*Jessica Winkler Boike, 30, associate at Beermann Pritikin Mirabelli Swerdlove LLP, Chicago; married for three years to Justin, 30, a medical resident.*



Make Sex a Really Huge Priority

"I had a case like five years back where the wife served my client with divorce papers the same day they had been sexually intimate. He said, 'Not to be crass, but the reason I'm shocked is that she just gave me a blow job!' We were all laughing—he was quite a character—but that's not usually the case.

By the time most cases get to my desk, there's no sex at all.



Beyoncé and Jay-Z, doing it right.

"You need to have fun together. If you don't, one of you will start having fun somewhere else."

—*Shana Vitek, divorce lawyer*

My husband and I are both working full-time, we're moving, we have a two-year-old, and we have to remind ourselves that we need to keep things romantic. It's important. You can't just go to work and pay the bills. Marriage is not a business! When my clients complain about a lack of intimacy, it's not because they stopped being attracted to each other. It's that sex usually goes when you're stressed. But you have to make time. Sex is important to staying married."

—*Roxana Taghavi Morgan, 35, associate at Meyer, Olson, Lowy & Meyers, LLP, Los Angeles; married for four years to Tad, 40, a lab tech and singer.*



Date Your...Husband

"When people come to my office, they'll say, 'This is not the person I married.' And I ask, 'When did you stop knowing each other?' And they can't put their finger

on it. Well, they haven't been taking the time to get to know their partner the way they did when they were dating. People's interests change over time; mine definitely have. You have to keep on learning about each other. I've seen people who don't take that time to reconnect, and when they come to me, they're leading two separate lives. Sometimes it's not too late, though: I worked with one couple who had *Continued on next page* ▶

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And the Divorce Lawyers' #1 Rule for Not Splitting Up Is...

Talk about *everything*, say Tara and Adam. They met in court!

In 2008, divorce lawyer Tara Scott represented the husband in a contentious case for her Los Angeles law firm. Her opposition? Adam Lipsic, an equally tough attorney. Their clients may have fought like crazy, but the lawyers began dating soon after they finished the case, and in January 2011—you can't make this stuff up—they were married by the same judge who divorced their clients. Now they're the proud parents of baby Lily—and they say their jobs watching other couples' marriages go down in flames have *helped* them do things smarter.

"We both get enough arguing at work," says Lipsic. "The last thing we want to do when we get home is fight." Another lesson from the office: function as a team. "A lot of people continue to



operate as single people who are married," says Scott. "Separate lives lead to secrets and betrayals. We discuss *everything*—finance, careers, who's in charge of groceries." Lipsic agrees: "I don't think most couples have the conversations we, given our line of work, consider standard."

And they try to keep those talks from becoming blow-ups. After all, "there is no winner in an argument," says Lipsic. "If you're fighting, you've both already lost." —E.M.

on. Instead, she let that anger build up, and eventually she cited it to me as a breaking moment in their marriage. What that tells me is that you've got to work through things that bug you as they come up. My husband and I talk about everything. We know: If we handle little problems now, we can work through them. But when you hold onto those issues, they compound, and that leads to a blow-up or, worse, a grudge. And let me tell you, people are *good* at holding grudges." —Teresa Evans, 37, shareholder at Quilling, Selander, Lownds, Winslett & Moser, P.C., Dallas; married for 11 years to Scott, 52, a dentist.

basically just grown apart, and they took a week off during the divorce, went on a vacation, and it rekindled their romance. They put their divorce on hold—and we haven't heard from them since! It's all proof that you need the 'dating element' in marriage. You need to schedule time to see your spouse and continue to get to know them. I even need to remind myself of that. My husband and I don't get out to dinner as often today as we did when we were dating, but when we do, it's exciting—and energizing. We reminisce. We laugh. We reconnect. You need to have that fun together. If you don't have fun together, one of you will have it somewhere else. We see that again and again."

—Shana Vitek, 33, partner at Beermann Pritikin Mirabelli Swerdlow LLP, Chicago; married for four years to Eric Kessel, 39, a medical sales rep.



Be Prepared for Curveballs

"Talk about all the big issues—career, religion, where to live—before you get married, but know this: People flip-flop

on those issues all the time. I've had several cases where the husband says, 'My wife said she'd go back to work after having kids, and she didn't go back.' It happens in religious contexts too: Couples start off at the same level of faith, then one person becomes less devout, and there's stress about the religious education of the children. This came up in my own marriage in 2008. After seven years of living in Atlanta, my husband, Kevin, told me he wanted to move back to Charlottesville, Va., where we both went to college. I did a lot of laps in the pool, which is my version of prayer, thinking, What do I do now? And I agreed to do it for him. I quit my job, and we went. Everyone evolves. Everyone revises their life plans. It's up to you to decide if you can work with your partner to find a mutually agreed-upon course of action. We're now *back* in Atlanta, but I'm so happy that I agreed to that move. It showed I took his feelings seriously."

—Sarah McCormack, 37, partner at Kessler & Solomiany, LLC, Atlanta; married for 10 years to Kevin, 37, a Web producer.



You're Upset? Say Something, Woman!

"I have a whole list of personal questions I ask all my clients when they come in. I call it my skeletons-in-the-closet list—and

they'll tell me examples of issues in their marriage. Oftentimes, the issues don't sound like that big a deal to me, but to my client? They're huge. One woman had planned on going to a big family party, and it fell on opening day of deer-hunting season, which is something her husband did every year. He made an appearance at her event, then left to go on his hunting trip—and she was so mad! It was a big deal to her, but she didn't express it until years later. If she'd said something back then, I think he probably would have apologized, and they would have moved

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