



# Clueless

*Signs you should speak with a divorce lawyer (because chances are your spouse already has).*

BY HILLERY R. KAPLAN

We all know that divorce is common, but we never think it will happen to us. There are warning signs, however, that your spouse may be consulting a lawyer about how to best divorce you.

## Financial Clues

1. Your spouse becomes unwilling to share financial information, or hinders your access to financial information, such as by changing passwords for online access to bank accounts.
2. You see significant cash withdrawals from bank or savings accounts. If your spouse is withdrawing more cash than usual, he or she may be stashing away money to hire a lawyer, saving to move into a new home, or hiding money to spend on a paramour.
3. You receive a financial statement in the mail from a bank or financial institution where you were not aware that you or your spouse had an account.
4. Your spouse suddenly shows an interest in the family's finances, including how much things cost, how much equity is in the house, how much the car payments are, how much income you make, and so on. If the spouse has spoken with a divorce attorney, the attorney would have told him or her to get a handle on the family's finances.
5. Your spouse is unwilling to make financial commitments. He or she may be hesitant to purchase a new house or car or to make any new investments, knowing

that the two of you will not be together in the long term.

## Clues Relating to Children

If you have kids, you may see some changes in the way that your spouse interacts with the children and the perception he or she tries to create of parenting involvement.

1. Your spouse suddenly becomes more involved at your child's school, showing up for lunches or attending more school events than usual. He or she may insist on attending parent-teacher conferences despite having been too busy in the past.
2. Your spouse wants to take your child to the doctor when previously you had been the parent who did such tasks.

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3. Your spouse starts attending all of your child's extracurricular activities instead of working late or volunteers to take your child to the activity when this has always been your job.
4. Your spouse initiates special one-on-one time with your child, suggesting that they spend a Saturday or Sunday together without you.
5. Your spouse takes on new duties that create the impression of being very "hands on" at home, like cooking dinner for the family, helping the kids with homework, putting them to bed at night, or driving them to school.

While any one of these things could be a positive development, in a shaky marriage an ulterior motive may be at work. Your spouse may be creating a new image of being an involved parent who can handle all aspects of child-rearing alone. He or she may even be trying to edge you out of face time with teachers, day care workers, pediatricians, etc. A lawyer may have advised your spouse to become a known presence with these important people in your child's life, despite having expressed little interest before.

### Warning Signs of an Affair

Everyone has encountered a story—whether from a friend or on a TV show or in a magazine article—about the signs of a cheating spouse. Here are some of the less obvious signals that your spouse may be straying from the marriage:

1. Your spouse guards the cell phone, changes the cell phone password, or no longer leaves the phone lying around the house. You see a significant increase in data usage on the phone bill, or a huge increase in the number of texts. If you no longer have access to the detailed information on the phone bill, that should concern you. Frequent texts and calls to the same unknown number can be a dead giveaway, and your spouse may need to hide the bill from you for that reason.
2. More and more time passes without physical intimacy. It's easy to chalk this up to hectic schedules and busy lives. However, it might be that someone else is meeting your spouse's needs.
3. Your spouse's physical appearance changes. Your spouse may start a new workout regime and lose weight. He or she may start to dress differently, wear new cologne or perfume, or change hairstyles without your input. Some cheating spouses (or those looking forward to the single life) spend money on dental work or plastic surgery.
4. Your spouse begins spending more time on the computer. Social media has made it significantly easier to either contact an old flame or find a new one. What may start out as "friending" on Facebook can quickly transform into an illicit relationship. A spouse may claim to be working on the computer but could really be messaging or emailing a potential or existing lover.
5. Your spouse may be noncommittal about future vacation or holiday plans, knowing the two of you will be separated by then. Worse yet, he or she may already be making plans with someone else.
6. There may be unusual credit card charges, like a Victoria's Secret transaction when your husband hasn't bought you anything from there or you haven't seen your

wife in any new lingerie. You may see a hotel charge for your spouse's "business trip" that is atypical, and you can't find evidence of reimbursement by your spouse's employer.

Divorce is not easy under any circumstances. However, being prepared can help. If you see any indications that your spouse has been having an affair or is doing some unusual financial planning, it is important for you to speak with an attorney so that you can learn about the legal and everyday implications that a divorce may have on you. **TBJ**



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