

# The Consequences of Walking Out.



## Timing Your Split Better Could Change Everything.

OK, we get it! You're an unhappy guy. It's all painful-all of it! You can't wait to get out of this situation, but the timing is never right. When your head is telling you to go, your heart is saying, "wait, maybe next week." Some people simply say "what the hell? I'm outta here! I have to think of me, for a change." The problem isn't necessarily the fact that you wanted to get away from your spouse, but the fact that you didn't give any consideration for the needs of your spouse or your kids. That's where the fallout takes place.

So, let's take a look at some situations where the timing was all wrong. In each story, we'll see what the couples learned. See if you agree.

## DON AND MARGE

It was the day before their son Cody's 10<sup>th</sup> birthday. The tension in the house was so thick you could cut it with a knife. Don was about to explode. It never occurred to him that this was a big occasion for his son and for all of the family. He also didn't care that his anniversary was coming up in just over a month. Don was so emotionally distraught that he felt he was going to have a nervous breakdown.

In Don's mind, he had only two choices:

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1. Have it out with Marge right now and be over and done with the marriage.
  2. Leave

He chose #2. Why? Because it was the easy way out. It wouldn't cause as many waves. And, even though this option was the quieter of the two, the impact would be just as devastating either way.

On his birthday, Cody had to wake up to the news that his Dad was gone. Cody was devastated and thought Don had left because Cody had done something wrong. This was no longer the best day of Cody's life, it was now the worst! Obviously, when Don heard about how Cody felt, he was beside himself. It finally dawned on him that he should have prepared the family better for leaving and perhaps waited a week to leave.

### **Lessons Learned:**

- Prepare your family mentally, emotionally, and financially for what you are about to do
- Don't leave during a big event or holiday

Here's another look at bad timing for something as important as ending your marriage.

## **BOB AND SARAH**

Bob and Sarah had been doing a lot of fighting, so Bob finally decided to move out. He didn't try to get any counseling, or guidance, or read up on the subject. Bob simply decided that divorce was the answer.

Their 14-year old daughter, Kristen, was at the height of her ice skating career. She was in every junior Olympic competition and winning medals at all of them. She was home-schooled and they traveled all over the world to compete. This was Kristen's world. She was headed for the big time.

It never occurred to Bob and Sarah that Kristen's career would be hugely impacted if they split. But now that they had two households, the money for coaches, her skating program or travel just wasn't available.

Kristen's entire future had fallen apart. Secretly, Kristen felt a little relieved that she didn't see her Dad as often because she could now avoid a lot of that tension in the household. The other problem, however, was that without her life's focus, she became clinically depressed.

Kristen's grandmother tried to offer financial help six months later when she found out what had happened, but it was too late. The skating program deadline had passed and the next season registration would fall after Kristen's birthday and she would be too old. If Bob and Sarah had just worked on some type of financial plan, or researched scholarships, which they later found, or had gotten assistance from friends, family or divorce professionals, this kind of impact on Kristen's life could have possibly been averted.

### **Lessons Learned:**

- Ask for help before making hasty decisions regarding financial, emotional and personal assistance.
- Think about how this will impact your children and do everything possible to maintain consistency with schools, programs and support.

No time is a good time. Sometimes you'll never know if you're making the right decision until after-the-fact. But getting all the resources, information and support can make a huge difference.

## **How Can I Cope With Dad Leaving?**

When Joan's father left home, Joan was only 13. Because of his addiction to alcohol, he made few attempts to contact his kids after he left. Unfortunately, many kids find themselves in a similar situation when their fathers leave. And if you are one of those to find yourself in this situation, you may have a hard time coping with this situation. You may be feeling pain and anger, which are strange to you. You might even feel the urge to rebel.

## **Don't Act Crazy**

When James's father left home, James just went "crazy". According to James, "I didn't listen to anyone, even my Mom. I was getting into fights, lying, sneaking out of the house. There was no discipline. Mom tried, but that didn't work." Did all of this rebelling help his situation? Of course not. Before he knew it, James was into drugs, skipping school and flunking out. Eventually, he was robbing stores, mugging people and wound up in jail.

Why was James so rebellious? James admits it was because his father was gone and he had no discipline. This was hurting his mom, his siblings and himself. All he thought about was his lack of attention and the discipline of his dad.

## **Get Over the Anger**

So how do you deal with all of this anger and resentment? Above all else, remember that this was NOT your fault. And it also doesn't necessarily mean that your father doesn't love you. Sure, it hurts when he doesn't even try to call or visit. But many fathers lose touch with their children because they are simply overwhelmed with guilt. And, in some cases, these fathers are addicted to drugs and alcohol, which dramatically curtails their ability to function on a civil level.

Whatever the situation may be, just remember that parents aren't perfect. We all make bad decisions from time to time, and sometimes we have to just let the anger and resentment go.

## **Take the Initiative**

You might want to be the one to take the initiative, even though your father is the one who left. You may rightly feel that he should make the first move. But, if he

hasn't, and you're really feeling bad about it, it may be worth the effort to reach out. It may not be as hopeless as you think. Maybe if you made a phone call or wrote a letter, he would respond. It's worth the effort. And even if there is no response at first, give it some time, and then try again.

## **Coping With Rejection**

Occasionally, you simply have to accept the fact that your father just doesn't want a relationship. If that's your case, one day he may realize what he has missed by not having a relationship with you. In the meantime, just remember, this in no way means that you are worthless. It's his loss.

Your mother can also help and offer support for you, even though she may be suffering, as well. Just let her know how you feel. She will, undoubtedly, respond to you.

## **Support For Your Family!**

When a father leaves the family, the impact can be widespread. Your mother, you and your siblings may have to add jobs and assume additional responsibilities, but you can cope. Just maintain that positive attitude. Knowing that you are helping your Mom and your siblings will make you feel better.

When fathers leave their families it's a painful and tragic event in everyone's life. But with the help of your friends and family and your positive attitude, you and your family can make it through and get on with your lives.