



Onward™ Guides:

Contemplating Divorce

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Common Reasons for Divorce

While every relationship – and every divorce – is unique to the individuals involved, there are some prevalent reasons for divorce across couples. What follows are common causes and accompanying signs to consider in your own marriage.



Common Reasons for Divorce

Persistent Unhappiness

According to the American Psychological Association (APA), dissatisfaction in marriage can lead to various mental health issues, including depression and anxiety. If individuals find themselves consistently unhappy and unable to recall happy memories, this may be a significant indicator of a marriage in trouble.

Lack of Communication

Studies have shown that effective communication is one of the foundations of a healthy marriage. The inability to communicate openly and honestly can result in unresolved conflicts, resentment, and emotional distance. A 2013 study published in the Journal of Marriage and Family found that poor communication is highly correlated with marital dissatisfaction.

Irreconcilable Differences

The National Center for Family & Marriage Research identifies irreconcilable differences, such as differing goals, values, or lifestyles, as common reasons for divorce. If fundamental issues remain unresolved after attempts to discuss them, it may be time to consider separation.

Emotional or Physical Abuse

Research indicates that emotional and physical abuse are and should be clear indicators for leaving a marriage. The World Health Organization (WHO) emphasizes that leaving an abusive relationship can significantly enhance victims' physical and mental health.

Loss of Intimacy

According to the research, emotional and physical intimacy is critical for marital satisfaction. An enduring lack of connection can indicate deeper problems within the relationship.

Lack of Individual Fulfillment

Experts suggest that personal growth and self-fulfillment should not be sacrificed in a marriage. If individuals find that their personal aspirations continuously clash with their marital life, it may lead to frustration and disillusionment. Equally, research indicates that both partners flourishing individually contributes positively to marital satisfaction.

Financial Strain

Financial issues are one of the leading causes of marital discord, as highlighted in a report by the Institute for Divorce Financial Analysts. Constant financial stress, or disagreements about financial priorities, can erode the foundation of a marriage, leading to resentment and conflict.

Infidelity or Trust Issues

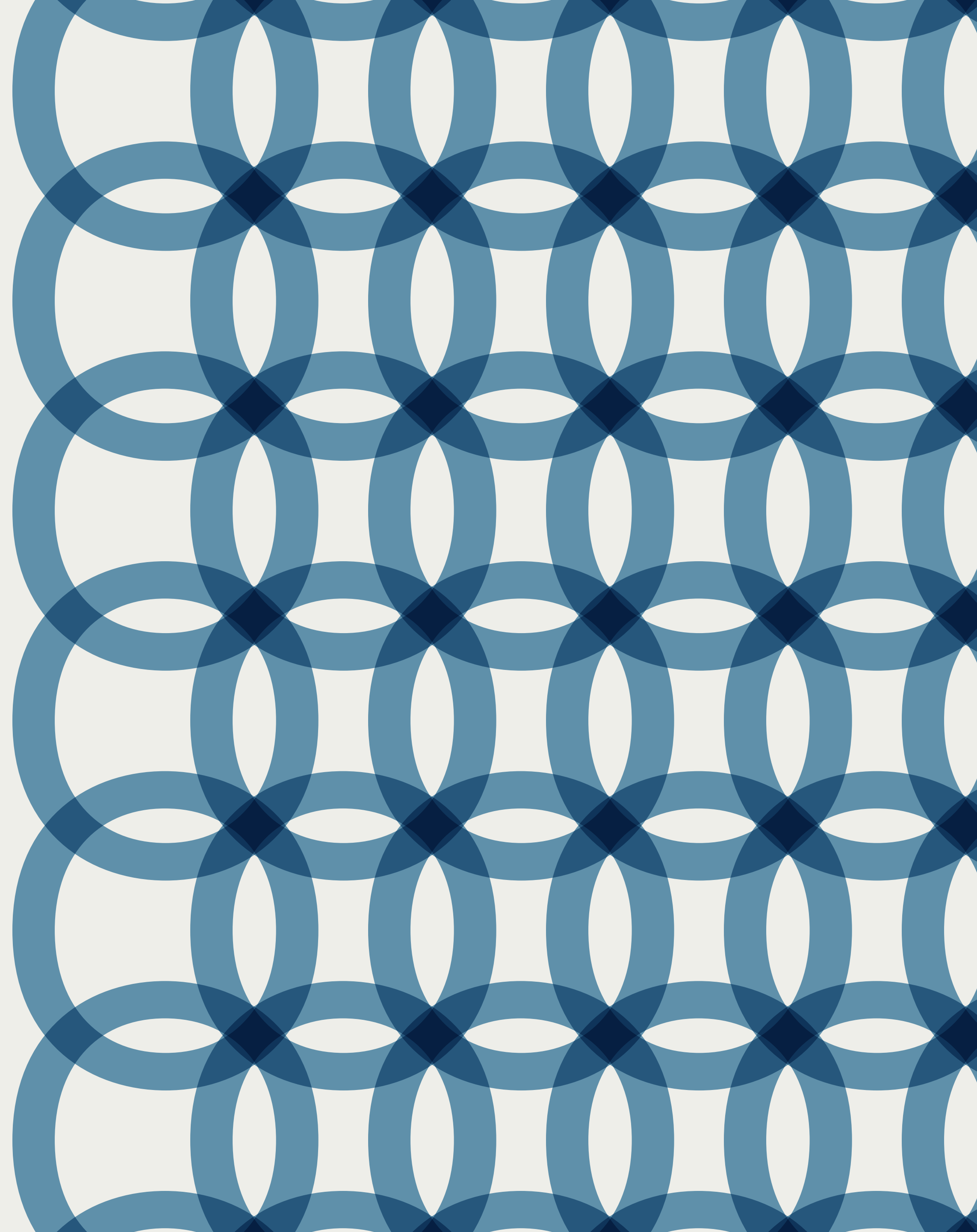
Betrayal in the form of infidelity can be one of the most challenging obstacles in a marriage. Infidelity is a major cause of divorce in this country (anywhere from 20% to 40% of divorces are linked to infidelity). Research shows that trust is a key ingredient for any healthy relationship. If trust has been broken and both partners are unable or unwilling to rebuild it, the relationship may be irreparable.



Marriage & Mindset Questionnaire

Deciding whether to get a divorce is a deeply personal and complex process. Asking yourself the right questions can help clarify your feelings and guide your decision-making.

On the following pages are some questions to consider.



Personal Feelings & Well-Being

Yes	No	Unsure	
			Am I happy in this marriage?
			Do I feel emotionally and physically safe with my partner?
			Am I emotionally connected to my spouse?
			Do I feel valued and respected in this relationship?
			Do I feel like my needs (emotional, physical, sexual) are being met?
			Is this marriage holding me back from personal growth or feeling like my true self?

How would my mental and emotional health be impacted by staying in or leaving the marriage?

Relationship Dynamics

Yes	No	Unsure	
			Is there mutual effort to work on the relationship?
			Are we still compatible in our values, goals, and life direction?
			Is there a pattern of recurring problems that never seem to get resolved?
			Can I forgive past hurts, or do I hold resentment?
			Is there any infidelity or breach of trust?
			Have we tried marriage counseling or other methods to resolve our issues?

Future Vision

How do I envision my future if I stay in this marriage?

How do I envision my life without my spouse: with relief, freedom, peace? Or with regret or loneliness?

If I might regret leaving this marriage – why?

Children & Family Considerations (If Applicable)

How will divorce affect my children?

Am I modeling a healthy relationship for my children?

Would staying together for the sake of the children ultimately help or hurt them?

Practical Considerations

Yes	No	Unsure	
			Can I manage the financial and logistical challenges of divorce?
			Am I staying in the marriage out of fear of being alone, financially dependent, or other practical reasons?
			Would my lifestyle and standard of living change drastically if I got divorced?

External Pressures

Yes	No	Unsure	
			Am I staying in this marriage because of societal, cultural, or family pressure?
			Am I worried about what others will think if I get divorced?

Timing

Yes	No	Unsure	
			Are there significant life events (job changes, illness, etc.) influencing my perspective?
			Is this just a rough patch?
			Have I considered all steps before divorcing, such as separation or counseling?

Legal and Long-Term Implications

Yes	No	Unsure	
			Have I considered how divorce will affect property, finances, and custody?
			What will my life look like legally and financially post-divorce?



What's next?

By reflecting on these questions, you can gain a clearer understanding of whether divorce is the right choice for you. If you're feeling unsure, it may help to consult a therapist, counselor, or trusted advisor to work through these questions further.

Emotional Readiness Defined

Emotional readiness for divorce involves reaching a place where you're mentally and emotionally prepared to navigate the complexities of ending a marriage. Here are key elements that indicate emotional readiness:

- 1. Clarity in Decision:** You've taken time to reflect on your decision and feel confident that divorce is the right choice for you, without acting impulsively or out of heightened emotions like anger or frustration.
- 2. Acceptance of Change:** You've come to terms with the reality of divorce and are prepared for the emotional, financial, and lifestyle changes it brings. This includes understanding that life will be different, but believing that it's a step toward a healthier future.
- 3. Emotional Stability:** You're not constantly overwhelmed by negative emotions, such as sadness, anger, or guilt, and you can approach the process with a level of calm. While divorce is emotionally challenging, being able to manage your emotions is crucial.
- 4. Letting Go of the Past:** You're ready to let go of resentment, blame, or fantasies of reconciliation. You no longer focus on what went wrong, but instead on what's needed to move forward.
- 5. Willingness to Communicate:** You're prepared to have difficult conversations with your spouse about divorce logistics, finances, and potentially co-parenting, without avoiding these talks or being consumed by hostility.
- 6. Support System:** You recognize the importance of having emotional support from friends, family, or a therapist, and you're willing to seek that support when needed. Emotional readiness doesn't mean you have to handle everything on your own.
- 7. Focus on Healing:** You're committed to your own emotional recovery and personal growth post-divorce, understanding that this is a process that may take time. You're open to therapy, self-care, or other means of healing.
- 8. Preparedness for Co-Parenting (if applicable):** If you have children, you're emotionally ready to co-parent and prioritize their well-being, working to create a stable and supportive environment for them.



Emotional readiness doesn't mean the process will be easy or free from emotional pain, but it means you're prepared to face those challenges with resilience and self-awareness. If you choose to join our [Onward community](#), we will lead you through assessing your emotions so you can be aware of how you are feeling day-to-day.

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