



# Marriage and Divorce

## 5 Things You Need to Know About Divorce and 5 Tips For a Long and Happy Marriage

As a divorce attorney I see people during a very difficult time in their lives. It is hard to witness at times, but I feel it has provided me with unique insight on marriage and divorce. Here are the things that I feel everyone should know and understand to have a successful marriage.

### 5 Things You Need to Know About Divorce Before Getting Married

1. **It is harder (and more expensive) to divorce than it is to get married.** To get married you need a marriage license (\$100) and someone to perform the ceremony. To get divorced you will need to pay the court filing fees (\$400—and if the divorce is contested BOTH parties will pay that) and get a lawyer (while it is not required you have a lawyer, you *really should* have one). Depending on how contested the divorce is, the process could take up to 2 years.
2. **Property and debt acquired during the marriage is marital property.** All property and debt that is acquired during the marriage will be considered marital property. It does not matter who spent it, who earned it, or which name is on the account. In the event of a divorce everything will be divided “fairly and equitably.”
3. **Some things are non-marital property.** Property or debt that exists at the time of the marriage, or inheritances or gifts from a third party to one spouse during the marriage can be considered non-marital and won’t be divided during a divorce. As long as there is proper tracing and documentation.
4. **You will be responsible for your spouse—’till death or divorce.** If your spouse has a spending habit you will likely share the responsibility in a divorce. If your spouse gets a DUI, you will also be driving a car with whiskey plates. If your spouse incurs significant medical bills, you will be paying them. If your spouse needs Medical Assistance for nursing home care, you will be responsible.
5. **We will assume all decisions were made jointly.** Minnesota is a no-fault divorce state. We don’t get into the details of why a marriage fell apart or why the situation is the way it is. We assume that the married couple made joint decisions throughout the marriage. So if one parent stays home with the children, while the other parent generates all of the income, we assume that’s the way both parties wanted it to be.

### 5 Tips for a Long and Happy Marriage

1. **Communicate!** Don’t ever stop talking. Talk about your day. Talk about your goals. Just talk.
2. **Work on finances together.** Both parties should be involved in all financial matters.
3. **Be a team.** Discuss your expectations and make decisions together. Reevaluate when necessary. Put your marriage first, don’t let outsiders in.
4. **Make time for each other.** Marriage is hard work and life often gets in the way. Always make time for each other, even if this means scheduling dates.
5. **Be intimate.** Intimacy doesn’t always equal sex. There are different ways to show affection and be intimate. Make it a priority to show affection in some way every day.