**‘Don’t make hasty decisions on Divorce Monday’ - says Sheffield coach**



**January big divorce month**

**Nik Farah**

**After the soaring high of Christmas comes the thud of January - and with it a day that is widely known in the legal profession as Divorce Monday.**

After ‘holding it together’ over the festive period, record numbers of couples are expected to haul themselves to their local solicitors on this day - the first working Monday of January - to announce the demise of their marriage.



**Today is Divorce Monday**

“The first week of January is the time of year when people reflect on where they are in life, especially in their relationships,” explains Jayne May, a therapist and facilitator from Clear Pathway Hypnotherapy in Sheffield.

“In the run up to Christmas unhappy couples keep it together for the sake of the kids or for the wider family, not wishing to spoil the magic. They pretend to take part in the festivities, while constantly comparing themselves with other couples and other families.

“Finally, the New Year arrives and they decide to take action.”

January 2016 has also been predicted to be the strongest month outside of the summer for property lettings activity, fueled by a flurry of post-Christmas divorce and New Year starts.



**Many couples hold it together over Christmas, only to break up as soon as the New Year hits**

What’s more, with the Government set to hike the court fees to file for a divorce from £410 to £550 this April, online divorce company Divorce-Online revealed they’re expecting this January’s surge in divorce filings to be even bigger than usual, as couples race to file their paperwork and beat the massive 34 per cent rise.

But while a new start in the New Year might seem appealing to many, while stuck in a rut of arguments and financial pressures, therapist Jayne is appealing to South Yorkshire couples to take some time to really think things through before making any hasty decisions.

“Many people set their expectations of themselves, of life and of others too high and, in doing so, spend a lifetime comparing themselves and what they have, or don’t have, against their expectations of what they think they should have,” says Jayne.

“They constantly look at the negatives and forget about the positives right under their noses.



**Jayne May, of Clear Pathways Hypnotherapy in Sheffield**

“Christmas and New Year especially raise expectations and sharpen ‘compare and despair’ distorted thinking.

“Our perception is that everywhere is magical and romantic, apart from in our own backyard. We have distorted beliefs about how we think relationships ‘should’ be compared to the reality. We begin to see things through a negative filter which affects our views, thoughts and actions. Soon, everything is a worst case scenario.”

A common problem is that people carry past experiences into their relationships, such as fears, doubts and bad habits.

Combined with expectations of a Hollywood style romance, many couples can find it hard to make reality live up to fantasy.

Jayne added: “In reality no relationship is perfect. After the initial early days, every relationship falls into stability dominated by domesticity, with bills and the associated financial worries, the pressures of providing for a family, and the worries and stresses this may bring.

“This is real life. This is a real relationship.”

Money worries are often cited as a reason for relationship pressure - but Jayne says that divorce tends to be ‘financially destructive’ as splitting a family reduces joint family incomes and increases living costs.

Jayne urged people to ask themselves probing questions.

She said: “Does it feel like you are having constant rows? Divorce may put an end to this, however, you may also find the arguments continue, only now they are about maintenance and whose turn it is to have the children.

“Perhaps the Christmas festivities have coloured your thinking that there is someone else out there who would be better for you.

“How do you know the grass is greener on the other side? Isn’t it just different grass?”

Before making any decisions about the future of your relationship, Jayne advises taking a few minutes to make a list of all the qualities that first attracted you to your partner, the contributions you both makes emotionally, physically, practically and mentally to the relationship, and the aspects of a relationship that you would realistically like to see.

Jayne adds: “If you’re willing, just as an experiment, to view a different perspective and see where it leads, you might just see something with a fresh pair of eyes that the negative filter was previously blocking.

“Are your lists really that different? Are the gaps really that huge? Are your differences as insurmountable as you thought? Or are their areas you think it may be worth trying to work on and improve with your partner?

“Decisions around relationships shouldn’t be made lightly, especially as your emotions are involved which can cloud your judgement. All too easily you can become judge and jury, acting as the accuser and never taking the time to look at things from the defence viewpoint. This is where making lists can help you see a different perspective, or talking to a third party who isn’t involved or connected emotionally.

“Challenging your unhelpful thoughts and perspectives in this way can help you see things from a more balanced and realistic viewpoint. You can then decide in a more informed way what is right for you.

“Remember that no relationship is perfect. No one can give you 100 per cent of what you are looking for.

“You may just find that what you are looking for  is right under your nose  after all.”

Email jayne.clearpathway@gmail.com if you would like a free, informal chat.

Read more: <http://www.thestar.co.uk/news/don-t-make-hasty-decisions-on-divorce-monday-says-sheffield-coach-1-7654310#ixzz3xVAQATpp>