



Couple Separation

Separation is one of the most difficult experiences to go through but it is possible to make good decision and come out the other side.

Imagine yourself in five years time talking to a friend. You start the sentence:

“ We separated five years ago and we..... “

Finishing this sentence will help you to think about HOW you want the separation to proceed between you and your partner.

These are some of the issues you will be thinking about:

Where to live?

How to manage money?

How to raise the children?

How to pay for their education, health and upkeep?

How to provide for old age?

Making good decisions about assets and debts.

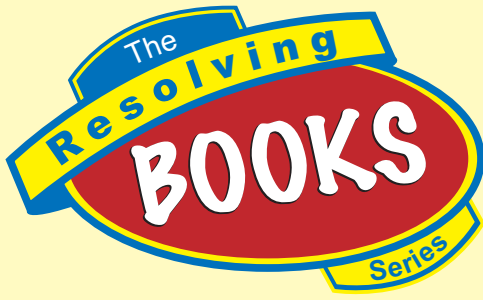
Think about what you and your ex-partner need to agree on.

Try the following:

1. Arrange and agree a time and place (neutral venue) to meet.
2. Decide beforehand:
 - What you are going to discuss ie. Maintenance, parenting plan.
 - How long the meeting will be.
- 2a. Don't try and cover too much. A small success can make a big difference.
3. Make an agreement to treat each other with respect and to avoid provoking each other.
4. Neither of you will get everything you want. It can be useful to use a 70% rule. If both of you are 70% happy you have reached a consensus.

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This idea of talking can seem like a big task but, if there are issues to sort out.

There are only a number of basic choices:

1. You sit down together and work out a plan between you – KITCHEN TABLE.
2. You find someone to help you sit down together and work out a plan – MEDIATION.
3. You each ask someone else to meet and sort it out on your behalf – SOLICITOR.
4. You ask someone else to decide for you – JUDGE.

The earlier you can come to an agreement in the process the better.

Discussing and agreeing all the issues for separation can take a lot of time and you may feel that you are more involved with your partner than ever. However, this is a process that you will both get through and at the other end are your new separated lives.

There are organisations that can help.

Citizens Advice Service: For good clear information on all matters to do with Separation and Divorce. This service is nationwide. Check their website www.citizensinformation.ie

Family Mediation Service: A free mediation service for all couples. Mediators will help you discuss and agree a separation agreement. This service is almost nationwide. Check the Golden Pages for one in your area. Or go to the Family Support Agency website www.fsa.ie

Legal Aid Board: It is important to legalise your separation. You may be entitled to free legal advice. This service is nationwide. www.legalaidboard.ie

Money Advice and Budgeting Service: If money is a worry then MABS can help you plan a good budget. Check their website www.mabs.ie

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