

How to Tell Your Friends and Family That You're Getting Divorced

So You Can Get the Support You
Need to Keep It Amicable

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Introduction

This kit is especially for you if you if you've decided you're going to get divorced and now you find yourself in one of these categories:

- * You're terrified to tell people
- * You're unsure what to say
- * You're worried sick about your children
- * You're afraid of people's reactions
- * You want support but you're worried your friends & family might make things worse

By setting the tone at the very beginning, you get to determine how positive or negative this experience is for you, and you can get the type of support you want and need to help you and your family maneuver this transition period with more ease and harmony.

Splitting up is such a difficult, emotional time, and often having to admit to others that your marriage has failed causes a lot of anxiety. You feel embarrassed, ashamed, guilty, like you're a bad person. You fear that you will be judged or blamed by others. You worry about how people will react and you may not be ready or willing to discuss any details of why your marriage is ending. This is a very personal experience, and yet it's as if the whole world gets to watch you go through it.

In this kit, I've provided sample emails/letters and conversations that explain the situation very simply and ask the friend or relative for the support that will be most helpful to you. Often, well-meaning friends and family members accidentally make things worse by trying too hard to cheer you up or by bad-mouthing your spouse or telling you divorce horror stories.

I share ideas on how to set boundaries, ask for what you need, and prepare for certain situations. I also provide helpful tips and guidelines on talking to your kids about the divorce. This can be a very difficult task for parents – you might feel guilty and worry how the kids will react, what you should say, when you should say it, how much you should share, etc. All of this is spelled out in this kit.

I know you're at a difficult point in your life right now – I've been there. And my sincere hope is that the information, examples and exercises in this kit will help you get through this initial phase with less stress and anxiety.

If I can answer any questions or be of further assistance, please don't hesitate to contact me at marlene@DivorcedHappilyEverAfter.com.

Choose to live happily!

Marlene

Part 1 - Mindset

First things first: I'd like you to shift your mindset a little bit so you can see what you're going through from a more neutral position. If you go into this process thinking how horrible it's going to be...well...you'll likely get what you expect. And I want something different for you. I want you to be excited about using the info in this kit. I want you to expect great success. I want you to gain confidence as you go through each page, so that by the end you're clear on what you want to share and who you want to share it with. So I want to invite you to shift a little. It's time to let go of all the negative ideas and feelings you have associated with "divorce".

Exercise 1

Go ahead and say the word out loud and see what comes up for you. Write down all the things you think of when you say the word "divorce".

Now look at your list and see how many of them are negative. A lot, right? But divorce itself is not bad. It's neutral. Just like marriage itself is not good. It's also neutral. We assign values and adjectives to things and experiences all the time based on our feelings about those things. So step back for a minute and let's look at the big picture for some perspective. If marriage were "good", then everyone would be and stay married, right? So we can agree that it's not marriage in general that's "good", it's how the people in a particular marriage feel about each other and how they view their marriage that determines in their minds (or our minds) whether it's considered "good" or "bad". The same is true for divorce.

Divorce itself is not inherently bad.

I'm not saying that you shouldn't feel sad or hurt or angry or guilty if you're going through a divorce. These are normal emotions to have when experiencing the end of a relationship. However, this still doesn't mean that it's a "bad" thing. It's a change, and it may not be what you expected or wanted to happen, but I really want you to refrain from labeling it as "bad".

You have so much more power over your situation than you realize. You can set the tone, now, for how this whole process is going to go. Yes, there will be challenges. Yes, there will be tough days. Yes, other people will do things you don't like, but you, and you alone, can make a choice right now to join me in showing the world that divorce can have positive outcomes and a happy family doesn't have to live together in one home. You can do your divorce your way – and I'm going to help you get started.

Part 2 - Whom to Tell

I know that coming to the decision to end a marriage is incredibly difficult and emotional. Even when you know in your gut it's the right decision, it's still terribly sad and can be very scary. Your whole life is about to change and there are so many unknowns ahead. Plus you're going to be grieving the loss of a relationship that at some point was very special to you. When someone's spouse dies there is an outpouring of love and support to the spouse left behind. People understand that they're grieving that loss and they expect them to be emotional. They really give them some space and time to work through it and slowly come "back to normal". With divorce it's different. You're typically still expected to carry on all of your previous every-day activities and responsibilities, in addition to the seemingly endless number of tasks you have to deal with related to the divorce process.

And what people don't seem to realize is that you're going through an enormous loss too. Whether you instigated the divorce or not, whether your spouse is a jerk or not, whether you've been unhappy for years or not, you are still experiencing a loss. For many people, it's not just the loss of that person in your life and the loss of your marriage, but it's also the loss of the dreams and expectations you had with that person and your children. It's the loss of your identity as a wife or husband, the loss of your idea of a family, possibly the loss of your relationship with your in-laws, and often the loss of friends or groups you were a part of. If you went to church together, one of you may now feel that you have to stop going there and try to find a new church, so you'll be losing that community. One or both of you will have to

move to a new home, so you'll lose your house or neighborhood. As you can see, the list can go on and on, and it sounds pretty depressing, doesn't it?

That's not my intention. I just wanted to show you how imperative it is to get the support you need and want during this process, and that people may not realize you need it. So I'm going to give you the tools and ability to tell people how they can help you in a way that's comfortable and meaningful for you, and will have them eager to help. Ready?

Exercise 2

Step 1 - Commitment

Make a commitment to focus on what you are gaining, rather than what you are losing. If you're having trouble seeing what you're gaining, try this. Make a list of what you see as losses, then figure out what the opposite is and write that down for a gain. Here are some examples:

Loss

Marriage

House

Money

Gain

Opportunity for self-growth and independence

New living space with less area to clean

Chance to focus on what's most important and learn creative ways to save

Make a commitment to focus on truth, not judgment. This is a crucial distinction to make. For example: It is true that your marriage is coming to an end. It is not true that your spouse is out to get you and your life is ruined. That is a perception and a judgment. It may feel true to you right now, but it is not, in fact, Truth.

Step 2 – People to tell

Make a list of everyone you want or feel the need to tell that you're getting divorced.

Here's an example list:

Parents

Children

Friends

Extended family

Boss

Co-workers

HR person at work

Kids' teachers

Childcare providers

Church

Groups you belong to

Attorney

Insurance agent

Accountant

Tax person

Step 3 – Categorize

Once you have your list, put them into three categories based on how much you care what they think.

Super important

Pretty important

Not so important

Step 4 – Sharing options

Choose the sharing option that feels right to you for each person on your list and put one of the abbreviations below next to each person on the list

Typed Letter (TL)

Hand Written Letter (HWL)

Email (E)

Phone Call (PC)

In Person (IP)

Step 5 – Messengers vs Gossipers

Since you can't tell everyone you know one at one time, and you know people are going to talk and spread the news, pick who you tell in each group, so you know it will at least start out in good hands.

Think about how word is going to spread and if there's anyone you want to be sure you talk to before they find out elsewhere.

Work with your spouse on the "rollout" plan if you can to minimize awkward or surprising situations.

Who can you trust in your family to pass on the news to other extended family, who will honor your requests and stay true to your message?

Who would you choose to tell at your church or other groups you belong to?

Questions & Answers

Q - What if people find out before I contact them?

A - It's okay – you can still follow your plan – just do it as soon as you possibly can.

Q - Should I contact my spouse's family?

A - If you have a good relationship with them and want to contact them, I think it's fine, but **ONLY AFTER** your spouse has let them know what's happening and if he/she is okay with it.

Q - Should we contact mutual friends together?

A - If you both want to remain friends with them and you are comfortable doing it together, then that's great. If not, then it's fine to contact them separately.

Part 3 - How to Tell

Let's craft a message that feels good to you.

It's important to let people know what's happening with you, how you feel about it and your intention, and then let them know what they can do to help. People like to help and they want to feel needed. They want to make a difference, and when they really care about you, then they want you to feel better.

But their ideas of what might help you could be very different from what you actually need right now. So you simply need to tell them what to do. The other key component here is to set some boundaries. This will benefit you tremendously. The last thing you want right now is to feel overwhelmed by other people telling you what you should and shouldn't do, all about their other friend's nightmare divorce, or how awful your spouse is and how you could make their life hell.

What you need are people who truly understand where you're coming from and the outcome you're seeking for your family - people who honor and respect your wishes and your commitment to keeping this experience harmonious and positive.

You want friends or family members you know you can call on when you just need to vent for a few minutes or you need a good cry, or you just need a companion to go on a walk or work out with. You want someone you trust

who can watch your kids for a couple hours while you get some time to yourself or take care of some divorce-related tasks.

You want someone who can provide reassurance and encouragement when you're feeling uncertain or scared. You want someone who can share your vision for the next stage of your life that you're in the process of creating – who can remind you why you're taking this higher path. You want to be surrounded by people who care about you and the well-being of your entire family, and can help you grow and learn throughout this process.

So how do you set up this fantastic support circle?

You reach out to them, with a genuine intention of sharing with them from the heart, asking for their respect and support, and thanking them with sincerity. And it's important to let go of any expectations because you may be surprised by who really steps up in a big way to support you and who lets you down.

In this kit are sample letters for various types of situations and people:

- * Dear Friend
- * Dear Relative Close to Spouse
- * Dear Relative Not Close to Spouse
- * Dear Teacher
- * Dear Boss or Co-worker
- * Dear Negative Person

Just remember – how they respond to you is not about you, it's about them. So if they don't respect the boundaries that you set and they continue to bring negativity into the situation, it is because of their own issues and does not represent their feelings for you.

This is when you will need to cut them loose. I know this is very difficult, especially when it's someone close to you, but you must hold fast to your vision, to what you know is right for you. It doesn't necessarily mean the end of your relationship, but it might mean less contact (or a different type of contact) for a while.

I've included a sample letter you can use in this situation.

* Dear Negative Person

*** Tip *** For all of the letters, they don't have to be mailed or sent. They can be used as a guide for having a conversation over the phone or in person.

Remember the following about human nature:

- People often try to bring those around them down to their level in order to feel better about themselves.
- People tend to do what they've seen others do, even when the results are not very good. Familiarity is compelling, it's more comfortable.
- People expect divorce to be ugly and nasty and for the two spouses to dislike each other for eternity
- People are afraid to stand out and do things differently, even when what they're doing is great or "better"

- People don't know how to help or support you, but they want to. They just need some guidance.

Remember these tidbits as well:

- You can be successful at a harmonious divorce
- You can create a new family dynamic that works for everyone involved
- By creating a harmonious environment and working with your ex through this process, you are teaching your children so many incredible life lessons
 - * How to resolve conflict
 - * How to stand in their power
 - * How to do what they believe in, no matter what
 - * How to have compassion and respect for others
 - * How to set healthy boundaries
 - * How to come together for the common good
 - * How to practice self-care
 - * How to ask for help when they need it
 - * How to give support to others
 - * And so on...

*** Tip *** Confide in someone sooner, rather than later.

Part 4 - Don't Wait to Tell

If there's someone you're afraid to tell about your marriage ending, step back and take a look at what you're afraid of. For me, I was afraid of judgment and criticism. I was afraid they would think differently of me. I was afraid they would treat me differently, tell me what I had done wrong, etc.

I was already beating myself up for the role I played in the marriage ending, so the thought of someone else beating me up felt like too much to handle. I really was terrified to tell the truth and certainly didn't even think of asking for support. Asking for mercy maybe, but not support. So I agonized over this for quite some time and created all these scenarios and conversations in my head that went very badly.

And finally I had to fess up and I learned a very powerful lesson.

The response I got was the opposite of what I anticipated. The love and understanding and support I received was so unexpected and so genuine. I was completely shocked and unbelievably grateful. It was such a relief to let go of that fear and anxiety that I'd been carrying around with me for weeks. It had been so stressful and there was no need for it.

So do yourself a huge favor and don't spend your valuable energy on worry and anxiety. That will sabotage everything you're trying to accomplish and it will affect you and everyone around you (especially your kids). I'm not saying that what you're afraid of will never happen, but 99% of the time our

imagination will dream up a much worse scenario than what actually takes place in reality.

So walking around with that in your head will drag you down – fearing the unknown will keep you stuck and small. Taking action and stepping into that situation makes it real and give you something to work with. Now you know the response so you don't have to worry about it anymore – you can deal with it and you may even be pleasantly surprised. No matter what, you will have relief and you will be moving forward.

Part 5 - Answering Questions

If you choose to talk to someone in person or over the phone, just take the info from the email/letter samples and use it as appropriate. You can't follow it exactly because the other person is going to talk too and ask you questions. So I've included some possible answers to questions you might get. Read over them and see which ones you like. You can use these answers or tweak them to fit your situation and style.

Q - Why are you getting divorced?

A - I DON'T REALLY FEEL COMFORTABLE SHARING/TALKING ABOUT THE DETAILS OF WHY WE'RE GETTING DIVORCED. AND I DON'T WANT TO FOCUS ON WHO'S TO BLAME OR WHO DID WHAT. WE'VE MADE THE DECISION TO END OUR MARRIAGE AND I WANT TO FOCUS ON WHAT TO DO NOW TO MOVE FORWARD.

Q - Did he/she (your spouse) cheat on you? (or some other bad thing)

If the answer is no and you want them to know that, then just say "no". And then you can either tell them what happened or go back to #1.

If the answer is yes and you're sure this is something you want to share, then you can, but I would think long and hard about whom to share this information with. Think about the impact it could have if it got back to your children. I realize you may be very angry and hurt, but having everyone

know what he/she did isn't actually going to make things better and could have consequences you're not thinking about right now.

If the answer is yes and you don't want to share that information, then just go to #1, and if they persist, you can ask them to please respect your wishes to keep the details private. The other option here, of course, is to just lie and say "no" if you don't want people to know your business.

Q - Are you sure you can't work it out and stay married? ~OR~ Have you tried counseling?

If this is someone you're close to and feel comfortable talking to about this, then share as much as you like.

If you don't want to share this personal information, you can say

WE'VE THOUGHT THIS OVER VERY CAREFULLY AND DECIDED THAT GETTING DIVORCED IS THE RIGHT DECISION FOR US. NOW WE ARE FOCUSING ON HOW TO MAKE IT AS HARMONIOUS AS POSSIBLE AND CREATE THE HEALTHIEST ENVIRONMENT FOR OUR KIDS.

Q - Do you have a lawyer?

If the answer is yes and you're happy with your choice, then let them know you've got it covered.

If the answer is no, I would recommend letting them know that you are interested in finding an attorney who does collaborative law because you and your spouse want to work together for the best outcome for the whole family. You can let them know that you're not interested in the most aggressive attorney they know of who will try to get you the most money no matter what. Explain that you want to avoid a court battle that drags on for months and months, pitting you against your spouse.

Q - What about your kids?

A - WE BOTH LOVE THEM VERY MUCH AND WE WANT TO MAKE THIS AS HARMONIOUS AS POSSIBLE FOR THEM. WE WILL BOTH STILL SPEND TIME WITH THEM AND DO WHAT WE CAN TO CREATE THE BEST SITUATION FOR THEM GOING FORWARD. THERE'S GOING TO BE A TRANSITION PERIOD AND WE'RE ALL GOING TO HAVE TO ADJUST TO A NEW SCHEDULE. I KNOW THAT THEY WILL ADAPT WELL AS LONG AS WE WORK TOGETHER AND REASSURE THEM THAT WE LOVE THEM.

If this is someone you know well, who lives in the same area and has watched your kids before, you might want to see if they would be willing to watch the kids a couple times if you need some help. You can let them know that you're going to have a lot on your plate as you go through the divorce process and ask if they might be able to help out.

Q - What about finances?

If this is someone you're close to and feel comfortable talking to about your finances, then go for it.

If you're not comfortable talking to them about your financial situation, then you can say

WE'RE STILL WORKING ON THAT ~OR~ WE HAVEN'T WORKED THAT OUT YET. WE'RE GOING TO NEED TO FIGURE OUT WHAT MAKES THE MOST SENSE FOR BOTH OF US.

I recommend that you contact a CDFA, a Certified Divorce Financial Analyst. They are trained specifically to deal with the financial issues of divorce. They can look at all of your assets and determine the short-term and long-term values and help you figure out how to divide them to meet your specific needs.

Attorneys can handle the legal documentation needed for dividing assets, but they are not trained specifically in financial matters, so it's important to make sure you consult with someone who is.

Q - Are you going to have custody? How often will the kids be with your spouse?

Q - Where are you going to live?

Q - What are you going to do about holidays?

For all of these questions, if this is someone you feel comfortable talking to about this, and you know the answer, then share as much as you want.

If you're not comfortable talking to them about this or you don't know the answer, then you can say

WE HAVEN'T WORKED OUT ALL THE DETAILS YET. WE'RE GOING TO NEED TO FIGURE OUT WHAT MAKES THE MOST SENSE FOR BOTH OF US.

*** Tip ***

Think about who you're talking with before you ask for their opinions or advice. In some cases, it might be best not to. Keep in mind that working together as co-parents and creating a harmonious divorce might be unfamiliar to others, and their suggestions might not align with your vision and goals for your family.

Part 6 - You Can Do It

Are you feeling like this task of keeping things amicable is insurmountable? Do you feel like you're only one? That nobody else gets it? That nobody else can make it work, so how can you? I get that. And if you don't know anyone else who's made it work, let me introduce myself: I'm Marlene Clay and I did it.

I'm a shining example of being committed to something I knew deep down was the right thing to do, even though I'd never seen anyone else do it. In fact, I'd watched my own parents fail miserably at it for over 25 years. And that turned out to be a big motivator for me. I knew all too well what the consequences of an ugly divorce were, and couldn't bear to do the same thing to my child. My ex husband and I stuck to our beliefs and our strong commitment to our daughter, and we worked together to create the life we knew was possible, full of love, openness, trust, respect, fun, sharing, flexibility, creativity, demonstration, communication, cooperation and compromising.

I know you can do it too. You have it within you. And I'll do anything I can to support you because I believe in your vision and I believe in you.

Take the letter/conversation examples and use them in a way that feels right for you. Change the wording so it sounds like you. Use phrases and language that you would use so that it feels authentic. Use as much of my language as you like, but change anything you want.

If you're an artist and drawing a picture to symbolize your words will help you, then by all means go for it. If music inspires you, listen to music to help you create something from the heart. Sing a song, dance around, go out in nature. Do whatever helps you to connect with your true spirit, with your heart and your inner voice that is always true – then write from that place. Or get in that place before calling a person you want to tell.

Set aside a time for this where there will be no other distractions, where you can be clear and focused, so you will be happy with the results. This may mean having someone watch the kids for an hour or two, or getting up earlier than usual, or waiting until everyone else is asleep – whatever works for you. Just feel into your intention and trust that you will know what to say.

*** Important ***

Be sure to give yourself acknowledgment for completing these letters and conversations. You are taking a big step toward creating the harmonious life and environment that you so desire. If there's someone you can share what you're doing with, then let them know when you complete a step so you can celebrate together. Or feel free to email me and tell me about your successes. I love to hear how this goes for people and I will do a big happy dance just for you. I'll respond to you and be your biggest fan because what you are doing is life-changing!!

P.S. Your kids will thank you for it one day.

*** Tip ***

Do not talk badly about the other parent to, or in front of, your children. This is a huge no-no. Simply do not do it! You may be angry or hurt, but it is not worth it, and it will likely backfire on you in the end. Bite your tongue when you have the urge, and remember that you are saving your relationship with your kids by keeping these negative thoughts to yourself.

One way to get these thoughts and feelings out is to write them down in a journal. Somehow the process of putting things in writing is very cathartic. It makes it real, it gets us focused on exactly what's going on in our heads, and it gets stuff out of us that needs to be released. Just be sure to keep this journal in a safe place, where curious little readers can't find it.

Conclusion

You are now prepared to share the news with your friends and family about your decision to get divorced. This is never easy or fun news to share, but being prepared to answer questions and explain it in a way that feels right to you makes an enormous difference in how you feel and how they receive your news. By making it clear what your intentions are and letting them know how they can best be of help to you, you make it easier for them to understand and know how to respond.

By going through all the steps in this kit and using the language and tone demonstrated in the sample letters, you will be able to start off the divorce process on the right foot. It is often friends and family who have the greatest influence over how people handle their divorces, even though they usually give advice that is detrimental to the process. You will be able to avoid much of this by setting your boundaries and making your simple requests before they ever get a chance to bombard you with what they think.

I commend you for taking this step to set the tone from the outset. You are giving your children and yourself a wonderful gift. It is through this love and commitment that you will find the strength and compassion to carry forward this positive attitude throughout the divorce process. And you will be so glad you did! When you look at your child's smiling face a year or two down the road, you will know it was all worth it.

Sample Letters

There are six different sample letters included here:

- Dear Friend
- Dear Relative Close to Your Spouse
- Dear Relative Not Close to Your Spouse
- Dear Teacher
- Dear Boss/Co-Worker
- Dear Negative Person (this one is for someone who continues to be very negative when communicating with you about your divorce or your spouse, making things more difficult for you)

Each letter contains words or phrases that are between brackets []. You need to change these words or phrases to fit your situation. For example, if your spouse's name is Joe, you will change [Spouse's name] to Joe (and get rid of the brackets!)

Please use these "letters" in any way that makes sense for you. You can take the ones you like and update them in any way you want. You can type them into an email or write them as a true letter. Or you can use them as a guide for having a conversation. You can have the letter in front of you when you make a phone call to help you remember what you want to say. The point is to have the language to use that is clear and concise and lets others know what you are doing and what support you need from them. These letters may give you inspiration to write your own letters.

~ Dear Friend Letter ~

Dear [Friend's name],

I have some news to share with you. [Spouse-name] and I have decided to get divorced. This is very hard for me to share with you because I care about you and how you react really matters to me. I already feel [sad/guilty/bad/embarrassed/sorry/hurt] and I'm afraid I will be disappointing people. But our decision has been made. It's going to take some time to work out all the details and actually go through the process, but I wanted to let you know what was happening. There are going to be a lot of changes and I'd like to make it go as smoothly as possible. I want what's best for all of us, and because of [the children / Children's names], it's very important to me that [Spouse-name] and I keep this amicable. We may have differences, but I don't want to fight this out, especially since we'll still be parenting together for many years. I want the kids to see us working together and to know that we both love them very much.

This is hard for me and I'm sure it's going to be an emotional roller-coaster. I really value our [friendship/relationship] and it would mean a lot to me to know that you are supporting me. [I don't feel comfortable right now talking about all the details of why we're getting divorced, but] I might need someone to talk to as I go through this process – someone to just listen and encourage me. Actually I have a favor to ask of you – because it's so important to me to keep things amicable, it would help me a lot if you wouldn't say anything negative about [Spouse-name], no matter what he/she says or does. I want to focus on doing this in a way that feels right to me and on making this transition so we can create the best environment for our kids.

Thank you so much for supporting me and being such a good friend.

[Love/Thanks/Sincerely/With Love/Take care],

[Your name]

~ Dear Relative Close to Spouse Letter ~

Dear [Relative's name],

I have some difficult news to share with you. [Spouse-name] and I have decided to get divorced. This is very hard for me to share with you because I care about you and how you react really matters to me. I already feel [sad/guilty/bad/embarrassed/sorry/hurt] and I'm afraid I will be disappointing people. But our decision has been made. It's going to take some time to work out all the details and actually go through the process, but I wanted to let you know what was happening. There are going to be a lot of changes and I'd like to make it go as smoothly as possible. I want what's best for all of us, and because of [the children / Children's names], it's very important to me that [Spouse-name] and I keep this amicable. We may have differences, but I don't want to fight this out, especially since we'll still be parenting together for many years. I want the kids to see us working together and to know that we both love them very much.

This is hard for me and I'm sure it's going to be an emotional roller-coaster. [I really value our relationship/I love you so much] and it would mean a lot to me to know that you are supporting me. [I don't feel comfortable right now talking about all the details of why we're getting divorced, but] I might need someone to talk to as I go through this process – someone to just listen and encourage me. I know how much you like [Spouse-name] and I think that's great, but I have a favor to ask of you. I'm okay with your relationship with [him/her] continuing, but please don't try to convince either of us that we should stay together. We've made our decision and now I want to focus on doing this in a way that feels right to me, and on making this transition so we can create the best environment for our kids.

Thank you so much for [supporting me/being there for me] and being such a good [parent/father/mother/sister/brother/aunt/uncle/cousin/grandmother/grandfather].

[Love/Thanks/With Love/Take care],

[Your name]

~ Dear Relative Not Close to Spouse Letter ~

Dear [Relative's name],

I have some difficult news to share with you. [Spouse-name] and I have decided to get divorced. This is very hard for me to share with you because I care about you and how you react really matters to me. It's going to take some time to work out all the details and actually go through the process, but I wanted to let you know what was happening. There are going to be a lot of changes and I'd like to make it go as smoothly as possible. I want what's best for all of us, and because of [the children / Children's names], it's very important to me that [Spouse-name] and I keep this amicable. We may have differences, but I don't want to fight this out, especially since we'll still be parenting together for many years. I want the kids to see us working together and to know that we both love them very much.

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Thank you so much for [supporting me/being there for me] and being such a good [parent/father/mother/sister/brother/aunt/uncle/cousin/grandmother/grandfather].

[Love/Thanks/With Love/Take care],

[Your name]

~ Dear Teacher Letter ~

Dear [Child's teacher's name],

I wanted to let you know that [child's name]'s [father/mother] and I have decided to get divorced. It's going to take some time to work out all the details and actually go through the process, but I wanted to let you know what was happening. Obviously there are going to be a lot of changes and we're going to try to make it go as smoothly as possible because we want it to be amicable.

I wanted you to be aware in case [child's name] says anything about it or you notice any changes in [his/her] behavior or schoolwork. I would really appreciate it if you would let me know if you do notice anything, because we really want to do our best to help [him/her] through this transition.

Thank you so much for your help with this.

Sincerely,
[your name]

~ Dear Boss/Co-Worker Letter ~

Dear [Boss or Co-worker's name],

I wanted to let you know that my [husband/wife] and I have decided to get divorced. It's going to take some time to work out all the details and actually go through the process, but I wanted to let you know what was happening. Obviously this is going to affect my personal life a lot, and I'd like to make it go as smoothly as possible.

[Please let me know who to contact about changing my insurance and beneficiary information.]

Thank you very much for your understanding.

Sincerely,

[Your name]

~ Dear Negative Person Letter ~

Dear [Friend's or Relative's name],

I want you to know that our [friendship/relationship] is very important to me. Right now I am going through so many changes in my life and I'm not sure how everything is going to turn out. But I truly want what's best for me, for my kids, and for [spouse's name], no matter what's happened in the past.

I'm tired of disagreeing, I'm tired of feeling sad and hurt, and I'm ready to move forward with my life. It's really important to me to make this as harmonious a process as possible, and to be a good role model for my children. I want them to feel like things are going to be okay, and not ever feel like they're caught in the middle.

I hope you can understand how much this means to me. And because it's not easy, I need everyone around me to be supportive and encouraging. I need understanding and compassion, without judgment or criticism. I've realized that it's very hard for me to stay focused and not get down on myself when others are negative or angry.

I would like to continue sharing with you [and spending time with you/talking regularly], but I can only do it if you can respect my needs and desires right now. I'm being totally open and honest with you because I care about you and our [friendship/relationship]. I'm not angry or upset with you. I appreciate you and your opinions. I just need to stay focused on my own thoughts right now. If I get to a situation where I could use another viewpoint, I'll definitely ask.

Thank you so much for understanding and for being [my friend/a great sister, cousin, etc].

[With much love/Sincerely],

[Your name]