



7 Myths Regarding Divorce

There are many stereotypes about divorce that receive a lot of attention in the media but can be quite harmful to both women and men. Here are some of them, contrasted with what recent sociological and psychological studies tell us:

Myth 1: Most men cheat on their wives.

Actually, the best-designed study to date indicates that nearly 80% of men report that they have never cheated on their wives.

Myth 2: Most divorcing women are jilted by their husbands.

Many studies have corroborated that women initiate the great majority of divorces (two thirds to three-quarters, depending on the study). This makes sense because numerous studies indicate that men are generally happier being married than are women, they report less marital frustration and dissatisfaction, and are less likely to consider the option of divorce.

Myth 3: Women bitterly regret divorce.

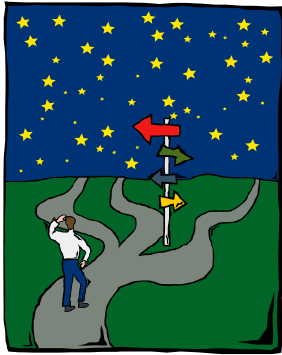
Most divorced women do not regret divorcing. Moreover, divorced women are generally happier than divorced men. And one large study suggests that many middle-aged women become happier after their divorce. These women showed an increase in positive self-image and self-esteem and were inspired by their divorce to gain more control of their lives. Many enjoyed sex more after their divorce.

Myth 4: Women emerge from divorce more emotionally scarred and psychologically damaged than do men.

This is generally not true. Not only are divorced women happier than divorced men, but they are better off emotionally too. In study after study they consistently outscore divorced men on psychological tests to assess emotional health and well-being.

Myth 5: Ex-spouses are highly antagonistic toward one another, even to the point of acting unethically.

Divorced couples, of course, vary widely in the civility of their interactions. But about half of divorced men and women even describe their relationship with their ex-spouse as friendly or cooperative.



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Myth 6: Most divorced men can remarry while most divorced women cannot.

It is true that divorced women are less than likely than divorced men to want to remarry (after all, they are happier than the men with being divorced). But both groups do remarry at very high rates – and soon. About 80% of divorced men and 75% of divorced women remarry whether or not they have children, and most do so within three years.

Myth 7: The economic consequences of divorce devastate women more than men.

Women are generally worse off financially in the years immediately following a divorce. This has less to do with divorce than with the fact that women generally make less money than men do. But, one important study indicates that, five years later, after most men and women have remarried, women's household incomes increased slightly more above pre-divorce levels than those of their ex-husbands. Furthermore, one very recent study indicates that women are generally more satisfied with their divorce settlements than men, and that this satisfaction is stable over time.

Myths such as these offer false lessons regarding both what men and women should expect from each other and how one should behave in divorce. The truth is richer and contains many positive possibilities for both women and men.