

## The "Kit." Your Checklist of Things to Do Pre-Divorce

For full discussion of these, see Chapter 12, "Preparing for Divorce."

- **Pick your means and time of disclosure.** If you are the Leaver, let's get the ducks in a row first. If you have discovered your spouse is cheating or otherwise likely to leave the relationship, *think* before you let him/her know that you know. Strategize--preferably with the help of a lawyer.
- **Gather your information.** Copy things, take documents--anything you think would give your attorney a useful head start. Gather incriminating evidence. If your spouse is cheating, forward texts you find, print photos, etc. Keep it all in a safe place preferably at work, scanned and on the cloud securely, or at your lawyer's office.
- **Have a plan post-separation and a budget.** Know where you are going to live and how much it is likely to cost.
- **Establish a secure email address.**
- **Be certain of your computer's security.**
- **Consider establishing an alternate mailing address** and begin to have your mail switched to it.
- **Consider establishing a credit card** in your sole name if you don't already have one. You want a credit source that is secure from your spouse freezing your use of it.
- **Get a recent credit report.**
- **Gather your financial resources**--create your secret "stash" of money to tide you over the initial months of the divorce proceeding.
- **Pay down debts in your name**, especially credit accounts which will give you financial resources in the initial separation.
- **Keep a Journal.**
- **Go get your medical and dental check ups** so that you will know what health issues you will face. Mammograms, pap smears, everything needs to be up-to-date.
- **Get your car checked by a mechanic.** Check the tires and, if possible, replace them if they are worn. See to any mechanical difficulties that are found.
- **Be aware of any repairs your home needs**, especially big ones, like air conditioners or heating units.
- **Be wary of signing any paperwork** your spouse requests at this stage of the game, including refinancing, deeds, contracts concerning your family business, etc. If you are presented with any, re-read the "[Reality Litany](#)" from "**Preparing for Divorce.**" Seek the advice of a lawyer who can tell you how this might affect your upcoming divorce.
- **Be aware of the "guilt window."** If your spouse is currently in the mood to give you everything, this moment will pass. Get to a lawyer immediately and strike while the iron is hot. On the other hand,, if you feel guilty enough to give everything away, you need a lawyer's advice.