**Top 3 Financial Strategies to Plan for Your Divorce**

Divorce does screwy things to a person's head. Believe me, I’ve seen it. The once intelligent together woman that you were turns into an emotional, brain-fogged, unorganized basket case. You try really, really hard to keep it together but you know this will not go down as ‘the best of times.’ You want to sit down and get it together and plan your future but feel paralyzed and surrounded by a pea-soup fog of indecision.

What's a person to do?

Well, first, get real.

**ADMIT WHAT YOU DON'T KNOW**

When it comes to the family finances, what's your role? Do you handle the bill paying? Are you "in the loop" on all your investment accounts, retirement plans, bank accounts, etc. or are you in the dark? If you're in the dark, you need someone to help you turn the lights on - and fast! If you and your spouse are cooperative, ask for statements on all your asset accounts and your most recent tax returns so you can find a CDFA to help you out and bring you up to speed. A CDFA is specially trained in the financial aspects of divorce and will be your best friend in this process! He/she'll clear out that brain-fog like a Santa Ana wind!

**THINK ABOUT YOUR FUTURE**

This is hard at first, but start thinking about what the next phase of your life looks like. Unfortunately, this has to happen at the same time that you are grieving what you thought the next phase was going to look like. But if you allow yourself some space, it can actually be fun. You now have the chance to start from scratch. What did you used to dream of doing that got lost while you were married? Is it time to go back to school? Maybe a cool downtown loft condo should replace that huge family home that you had to keep clean. Whatever you dream of, you have to have your budget and financial picture top of mind. So the step above has to come first so your dreams don't outsize your wallet!

**BUILD A SINGLE IDENTITY**

Often through marriage all the credit cards, mortgages, loans, etc. are in the names of both spouses. All of those accounts will have to be closed or converted. After the marriage is over, your credit picture may not be nearly as strong, so you want to be sure to put some things in place while you're still married. Immediately open a checking and savings account in your own name to begin the process of establishing your own financial identity. Next, find a good rewards credit card to apply for in your name alone so that you will be assured of having access to credit post divorce and maybe even during if legal fees are necessary.

These steps seem small but are valuable first steps to get you thinking financially and looking out for your future. You can get through this but a little help from a CDFA friend is a great place to start.