

DIVORCE

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help for generation "ex"

May 14, 2007

Relationship Article

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Who's In Control - You or Them?

By Stacy D. Phillips, certified family law specialist

Your Family and Friends

In the final excerpt of author **Stacy D. Phillips' book, *Divorce: It's All About Control—How to Win the Emotional, Psychological and Legal Wars***, she describes those individuals in a divorcee's close circle (other than the spouse or the children) who tend to interfere or who provide great support and encouragement through such a tough time. Ms. Phillips suggests in this chapter, that you carefully assess who, other than yourself, might be in control of your divorce.

See if you can identify any of the following "types" in your circle of influence:

Those going through divorce should learn to lean on trusted confidantes—and yes, among them there might be a mother or father, your assistant, your best friend, etc. My suggestion is to listen to those you respect, but never let them control you!

The "Meddlers"

They mean well, but they often cause more grief than good. It could be the mother-in-law who wants to meet for lunch to discuss what she thinks will be best for the children, or the business partner who tries to persuade you to meet with him or her to talk over giving up your interest in your spouse's business. Perhaps it is even an uncle who has been through divorce and thinks he knows the ropes. He would like to sit you down for a good old-fashioned, "here's what you should do chat." Listen to these people, but keep the steering wheel for control in your hands.

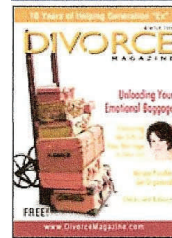
The "Troublemakers"

These people seem to pounce on you when you least expect it, trying to wreak more havoc than already exists. This could be your mother, who decides she will go after your ex herself and let him know the children do not like him very much or your secretary, the one you thought you could trust, who is suddenly into a "he said, she said" dynamic to act as the go between for you and your ex when you are too busy or angry to speak to one another. Troublemakers love control, but remember, this divorce is your drama, not theirs!

The "Pot-Stirrers"

These folks can take Troublemaking to a whole new level. Not only do they start out creating a problem, they keep stirring it up! The Pot-Stirrer might be a brother or sister who makes harassing phone calls to your ex, or it could be your ex's sister who lunges at any opportunity to verbally tear you down in front of your children. These people seem to thrive on upping the ante in a good Divorce War. The Pot-Stirrer can be more dangerous than the Troublemaker because while the latter is often in the game for a one-hit Control Attack, the former typically likes to keep the strife going. Steer clear of the Pot-Stirrer, or humor

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them. Never fall into a Pot-Stirrer's Control Trap. The climb out will feel like a trek up Mt. Everest! Children, by the way, make great Pot-Stirrers.

The "Neutrals"

Also known as the "Hands Off-ers" can be more helpful than you may think. They include the parents who let you know they are in your corner but refuse to get involved in any of your squabbles. The friends who let you know they do not wish to take sides, or the business associates who direct you to handle your own affairs, yet let you know they are behind you all the way, are considered Neutrals. There is a fine line between those who take a position and those who do not.

The "Supporters"

This group makes up your staunchest allies, but ones who never meddle. You know who they are, for they never judge you, only gently point you in the appropriate direction. They listen intently, they comfort you when you have an "I cannot cope day," and they keep their personal opinions to themselves. If they do provide advice, it is sage advice. They never bad-mouth the other side, instead they keep you positively focused or redirect you down the right path. Take comfort in knowing that everyone usually has at least one Supporter in his or her circle and quite possibly more. Be cautious, since sometimes Meddlers, Pot-Stirrers and Troublemakers will attempt to pass themselves off as Supporters. While the line may be fine, there is a very definitive demarcation between these types.

Stacy D. Phillips' book may be purchased through Amazon.com, Barnes & Noble.com and in all major bookstores throughout the country. Visit her website: www.controlyourdivorce.com for more information.

