

I don't believe that anyone comes through a divorce as quite the same person they were beforehand. That's not to say you don't have the same moral fibre and general character but it's such a momentous event, it will change you. Work hard to embrace the inevitable changes. With time, a positive attitude, and considerable work I'm confident you can, and will, come back to being the whole you. Not the same perhaps, but whole and happy again. There's even a chance you could end up as an improved version of yourself.

There are bound to be times as you adjust to your new life, when you might not be in your finest form. Many people say they lose their mojo. *Broken* is a word that men in particular use a lot regarding the impact of their divorce. A man recently described to me the first few years after he separated from his wife of over fifteen years as *the dark years*. He felt exhausted, his career stagnated and he suffered mild depression. Nothing in his life seemed to move forward despite going through the motions of making plans for the future and even dabbling in a new relationship. This is a common reflection. The length of time people take to heal and move to a more positive phase varies greatly, and there is no right or wrong way of doing it.

For those of you who moved on quickly into a new relationship, particularly if you were already romantically involved before your previous relationship ended, life probably seems quite rosy and splendid at the moment. It may just be that you've postponed the inevitable. Chances are, in time, you will also follow the familiar patterns of emotional upheaval, pain, and eventual healing.

If you are worried about how long it will take you to feel better than you do now, be assured that the uneasiness and hurt,



*will* pass. This process will be assisted if you are able to gain some control over your personal circumstances. Do what you can to organise the practical side of life. Be kind to yourself and allow yourself time to absorb the changes.

If you are worried that it is taking you too long to *get over* it, stop to think about the length of time it took for the relationship to erode to the extent you could no longer live together. While the ending may have been sudden, the erosion probably didn't happen quickly. Know that it will take time to recover. You can't realistically expect to *get over* in a few short weeks or months such a significant portion of your life. You can however, expect to start working *through* it from day one.

As you navigate your new circumstances, your ex-partner won't be in their best form either. Despite how people present, as the process becomes reality your ex will be battling his or her own demons. Be kind to yourself and to your ex where you can. I promise you, in time it will not be as raw, and life will get easier. I don't expect you to believe this right now. I know I didn't.

One of the first steps to solving any complex problem and making good decisions, is to gather all of the relevant information and learn all you can about your options. The best decisions are invariably made based on good information. An important aspect of that information is gaining an understanding of the core principles of family law. When it comes to interpreting family law, *relevant* is a word you'll hear lawyers use often. Many of us struggle to accept that events which brought our marriage to an end, or some things which happened in the separation period are deemed irrelevant. For now, just be aware that what *feels* relevant, may not be, in law.

The way the legal system works and the few relevant points for consideration in family matters are discussed in detail later



in this book. Endeavour to keep your emotions out of any of the business type negotiations you will need to have to finalise a settlement and arrangements for your children. It is one of the most difficult aspects of separating but, if you insist on pursuing things which are technically irrelevant, it will cost you dearly both emotionally and financially.

In the initial stages of separation, you will have many questions. Most people say they just want to know the truth about why they're splitting up. The problem is, that your truth may not be your ex's truth. Some questions don't have a black or white answer. Many of your questions will be of an emotional and personal nature, and only you or your ex-partner will have the answers. But, there will be many practical questions, and they are the ones this book can help you with. Questions like:

- What are the first steps you should take?
- What are your rights and responsibilities?
- How does the family law system work?
- What is considered relevant in the eyes of the law, and what is not?
- How can you expect to feel?
- How can you protect yourself and your family physically, financially, and emotionally?
- What are the likely outcomes?
- Where can you go for assistance?
- How can you keep costs to a minimum?



It's my ultimate aim that through the following pages, men and women who are contemplating divorce will:

- Find useful information that resonates with their own personal feelings and circumstances, which they can put into action straight away.
- Gain insights to help calm some of their immediate concerns and fears.
- Develop an awareness of what to expect in the coming weeks, months and years.
- Become part of an anonymous, supportive community.
- Utilise practical resources that offer a positive direction in the hours of wondering.

I believe it's entirely possible once you have manoeuvred through the initial shock, anger, and the quagmire of legalities, to learn not only to survive, but to thrive through a separation and divorce.

This is my express wish for you!

