

# WHY EVERY WOMAN SHOULD HAVE HER OWN FINANCIAL ADVISOR DURING A DIVORCE

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The ending of a marriage may be the first time a woman comes face to face with the reality that financially she is not her husband's equal. She may have stayed home to raise children and run a household and might never have worked outside the home until a divorce. Perhaps she accepted work roles with less pay than her partner in exchange for the flexibility to relocate to a new city or to adjust to the kids' summer schedules. She might have juggled her career with the responsibilities of caring for her aging parents or in-laws.

Regardless of the reasons, women earn just 83% of what men earn. And the disparities don't end there. Research has found that after a divorce a woman's household income drops by 41% on average, while a man's income only drops by 23%.

Divorce can be catastrophic when it comes to a woman's bank account. If you are the primary breadwinner or earn enough money on your own to continue to afford your house, car, and bills after a divorce, you are the exception. You have the financial freedom many women do not. But if your partner earns significantly more than you do, the divorce settlement will have a lasting impact on your future financial options.

The loss of a marriage is heartbreaking enough. Then facing your financial world turning upside down can add stresses that few are adequately prepared for. Unfortunately, only 5% of women hire Financial Advisors to prepare and advise them through their divorce process. It's likely that many never take this step because so few women know the benefits of the advice of a Financial Advisor early on in the process.



that an agreement that splits everything 50/50 will provide enough for them to live on. But all the variables can make this a costly mistake, and the stress inherent in a divorce makes it likely that important elements will fall through the cracks. Just like in any negotiation, knowing what you are asking for and why will put you in a stronger position in mediation or in the courtroom.

An experienced Financial Advisor will help you avoid the financial pitfalls

that are next to impossible to fix once the decree has been signed. This may be a situation where "you don't know what you don't know." That's normal. No two divorces are the same. You're not expected to know how to navigate this on your own, or even with the advice of friends and family. Don't let your inexperience leave you vulnerable. **But knowledge is power. Planning is reassuring.**

A Financial Advisor who understands your goals, dreams, and challenges will also provide an insightful perspective when emotions are high and the future uncertain.

We all know we need to hire an attorney to get a divorce. Just as important to the divorce process, women need a Financial Advisor helping them gain clarity about the money that is soon to be divided with their spouse.

**The sooner a Financial Advisor is assisting you, the better.** Over 60% of divorced women wish they had known to use a Financial Advisor during the process. Why? Many women in this situation feel ill-prepared for the future because their spouse handled all the money, investments, and assets. And many go into a divorce believing



Here are some "must-haves" when hiring a Financial Advisor:

**A Confidante.** Your family may have already been using a financial professional to handle taxes, investments, decisions about retirement, etc. How much time have you personally spent with this person or team? Might there be an unspoken loyalty to your spouse, one that might not be apparent until there is a split? Just like you don't share an attorney, don't share a Financial Advisor. Now is the time to hire a team that will represent you and only you through and beyond this difficult time. They should have no ties to your partner.

**A Fiduciary.** Hire a Financial Advisor who is a fiduciary. A fiduciary is under a legal and moral obligation to act in your best interest above their own, with a duty to preserve good faith and trust. *You come first.*

**An Established Process.** Financial Advisors have an organized and efficient process to help women going through divorce. They will help you:

- Inventory your assets and potentially uncover missing ones
- Ask you a series of questions to help analyze your current situation
- Develop a financial plan to give to your attorney
- Clarify important details like how much money will you have to spend monthly based on what you might receive in the settlement
- Show you what your financial future might look like based on different potential outcomes

- Collaborate with your attorney to ask for what is in your and your family's best interest

**An Advocate.** Your financial future is at stake. You need someone to ask the questions you might not think to ask, to suggest options you might not be aware of, to speak on your behalf when emotions are high and you need reinforcements. Your Financial Advisor can:

- Go to mediation or court with you
- Help the attorneys write the language in the decree to make sure your financial institutions accept the division of accounts
- Assist you in contacting the various companies and consolidating your accounts so they are in your name and under your control as quickly as possible
- Create and implement an investment strategy to prepare you for your future
- Serve as your advocate through the divorce and after the divorce so you feel empowered and educated

Divorce is one of the most stressful events you will ever experience. It will no doubt be filled with mixed emotions that can easily cloud your ability to make good financial decisions in the midst of it all. Your Financial Advisor will help you work through the divorce so you can have an accurate – and hopeful – picture of what your life will look like financially on the other side.

**Every woman deserves this kind of peace of mind, not just the 5%. D**



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Lisa and Gina are co-owners of Makers Wealth Management, based in San Antonio and specializing in divorce finances. For our readers, they have uploaded a Divorce Checklist on their website under the tab, "Resources". [Makerswealthmanagement.com](http://Makerswealthmanagement.com) Securities offered through Kestra Investment Services, LLC, (Kestra IS), member FINRA/SIPC. Investment Advisory Services offered through Kestra Advisory Services, LLC, (Kestra AS) an affiliate of Kestra IS. "Makers Wealth Management" is not affiliated with Kestra IS or Kestra AS. [www.kestrafinancial.com/disclosures](http://www.kestrafinancial.com/disclosures)