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Divorce & Living Well

By Tyler McCann

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Tyler McCann is a sophomore at Bowling Green State University where he plans on majoring in Individualized Business with a minor in Entrepreneurship. His research was sparked by a sudden family divorce which led to a curiosity in the divorce process and how it can affect a family. Throughout his research he was constantly comparing divorce to living well and how sometimes a divorce can be a benefit to loved ones. The goal for his research project was to provide his family with a reassuring feeling that sometimes divorce is needed in order for a family to sustain a positive life, lived well. Although time was a large factor in the range of research obtained, if he was given more time he would like to interview divorced individuals and ask about their opinion and what they think of when they hear divorce and living well in the same sentence.

Divorce & Living Well

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Introduction

- Happiness is the foundation to living well.
- Every day individuals make choices that impact their life either in a positive or negative way.
- Finding the things in life that make individuals happy can provide an individual a well lived life.
- Living well is developed and interpreted differently for all individuals.
- Aristotle implies that happiness provides meaning to life, and without happiness, Aristotle questions if it is considered living well.
- Divorce is typically associated with a negative connotation and can be seen as the easy way out.

Research Objective

Purpose: This research study sought to inform individuals how a divorce can have a positive and negative effect on individuals while still living well through family relations, regardless of the negative attributes normally presented with divorce.

Objective: Explore the types of divorce, the negative effects of divorce, and the individuals affected by the divorce process. Thus to better understand why it could limit one from living well.

Research Question: How can the negative features of divorce prevent an individual from living well?

Reasoning & Background

- Family member recently experienced a divorce and the process associated with divorce, thus giving me the determination and desire to research how divorce relates to living well.
- Wanted to give others an understanding on divorce and how a family can overcome all aspects no matter how negative it may be.
- Divorce is the legal dissolution of a marriage by a court or other competent body.
- In the eighteenth and early nineteenth century, it was possible to get a divorce granted by Act of Parliament, but such an option was only open to the rich. The Matrimonial Causes Act 1857 was the first divorce law of general application.

Types of Divorce

- **Contested Divorce:** considered to be the messiest of all divorces. It allows a judge to decide how property will get divided up between the spouses, and both individuals have to file for settlement negotiations in order to resolve all issues.
- **Collaborative Divorce:** involves individuals to work with a lawyer but never experience a courtroom setting. With this type of divorce both individuals have to be fair and cooperate in order for the divorce to be successful.
- **Default Divorce:** is granted to either spouse if the other spouse does not respond to the court or spouse. This type is needed if a spouse leaves without returning, leaves without a reason, and cannot be found.
- **Summary Divorce:** can be filed if both spouses have been married for less than five years and have little property, children, and other insignificant joint debts.
- **Uncontested Divorce:** allow the spouses to come to common ground on things and just be required to fill out paperwork.

Analysis & Synthesis

Individuals Effectuated

- "Divorce will affect all individuals regardless of their relationship status with the individuals involved" (Lachance-Grzela).
- Men:**
 - All men will experience a different outcome with divorce but their support and participation throughout the divorce process is essential to a smoother process.
 - On average, if a man were to find a new individual in their life the focus tends to shift towards children if any are present in the relationship.
- Women:**
 - All women will experience a different outcome with divorce but their support and participation throughout the divorce process is essential to a smoother process.
 - Women tend to dedicate and focus the majority of the divorce process and time to their children to help ensure the smoothest transition possible.
- Children:**
 - The majority of children do not have a say in the divorce, due to their age.
 - Children tend to become involved with a divorce involuntary and in some cases see divorce as a positive thing depending on the situation.

Negative Effects

- Men:**
 - "Men are initially more negative about divorce than women and devote more energy in attempting to salvage the marriage" (Corcoran 3).
 - Men obtain a more negative emotion from divorce because of a loss of intimacy, loss of social connection, reduced finances, and the common interruption of the parental role.
- Women:**
 - "Women experience less stress and [have a] better adjustment in general than men. The reasons for this are that [one] women are more likely to notice marital problems and to feel relief when such problems end, [two] women are more likely than men to rely on social support systems and help from others, and [three] women are more likely to experience an increase in self-esteem when they divorce and add new roles to their lives" (Corcoran 6).
 - Women can experience less stress in divorce because of their willingness to reach out to others and find help.
- Children/ Teens:**
 - "Most teenagers [...] eventually adjust to divorce and regard it as having been a constructive action, but one-third [of teenagers] do not" (Corcoran 5).

Discussion & Results

Discussion:

- "When conflict and violence dominate a family, divorce is a welcom[ing] relief" (Positive 2).
- Some see divorce as the easy way out, in some cases it is the best way to protect a family and the individuals directly associated within the environment.

Results:

- While obtaining a divorce due to a harmful atmosphere is valid, some spouses abuse divorce in retaliation or hopes of acquiring property or materials obtained during the marriage.
- "If [the] wife buys a car and puts it only in her name, that car belongs to only [the] wife. If [the] wife buys a car and puts it in her name and [the] husband's name, then the car belongs to both of them" (Findlaw 2).
- Acquiring property is the most common abuse of divorce, which can lead to emotional distress and in some cases the loss of half of all property acquired in the marriage.

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"Happiness is the meaning and the purpose of life" -Aristotle