

Ep #1: Ease Your Divorce Anxiety with These Simple Tips



Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

Lauren Fair

Ep #1: Ease Your Divorce Anxiety with These Simple Tips

You're listening to *The Sensible Split* podcast, Episode 1. Today, we're talking about divorce anxiety and what you can do right now to start reducing it.

The Sensible Split is a podcast for smart but overwhelmed women in search of a roadmap to a successful separation and divorce. If you are looking for guidance in navigating the practical, legal, and emotional aspects of divorce with confidence, this is the show for you. Here's your host, Master Certified Life and Divorce Coach, Divorce Attorney and Mediator, Lauren Fair.

Well, hello, welcome to *The Sensible Split* podcast. I imagine you're here because you might be considering getting a divorce. Or maybe you've decided you want a divorce, but are having trouble moving forward with it. Or you might already be in the divorce process and experiencing some challenges with it.

If you're like most of my clients, you want to be sure you're making the right decision, and you want to handle your divorce confidently and in the right way, but you're probably not quite sure how to do that. No matter what exactly brings you here, I hope I'm able to help you through a difficult time in your life, in some way or another.

I'm going to kick off this podcast today with a topic that I find people thinking about or going through divorce struggle with a lot, and how you can ease the burden of it on yourself.

But first, I want to tell you a little bit about why I started this podcast. I started working in family law all the way back when I was in law school. Since I became an attorney, I've only practiced family law. After about 15 years of litigating in family court, it became clear to me that a traditional litigation approach was not ideal for families going through this transition, for many reasons.

I also began to notice that there was this big gap between what an attorney did and what a therapist did, for people going through a divorce, that needed filling. And so, I shifted my focus away from litigation and toward mediation, consulting, and coaching.

Now, I help clients save time, money, and energy through alternative dispute resolution methods and strategies, so that they can successfully engage in their

Ep #1: Ease Your Divorce Anxiety with These Simple Tips

divorce process, reduce the impact of the transition on their children, and rebuild a life they love.

I created this podcast for two primary reasons. The first one is, I just enjoy utilizing my experience as a divorce lawyer, mediator, and coach to help educate others and empower them to approach their divorce with confidence. The second reason is, because I wish I had this kind of support when I was going through my own divorce.

I suffered in some ways that perhaps could have been lessened, or in some cases, avoided altogether. And so, I strive to create that kind of support for others now, amplified by the fact that I've also helped countless clients through this transition in a professional capacity.

So welcome, and thank you so much for being here. I hope I help you even in some small way through this podcast. Of course, as you already know, I'm sure by listening to this show, you are not my client, I'm not your lawyer, and nothing on this show is or should be taken as legal advice. I'm a lawyer; I've got to say that.

My goal is to provide you valuable education, guidance, and support. If you need or want legal advice though, you're going to want to consult a lawyer in your local state or province, okay? All right. So, now you got that out of the way.

I'm here today, to help you ease the anxiety you're feeling about your divorce and your post-divorce life. Chances are if you're considering getting divorced, or you're already going through divorce, you felt anxiety about moving forward with it.

The reason you're feeling anxious is because of uncertainty. There are so many aspects of the legal process and the life transition that you are probably unsure of how to approach or unsure how they will ultimately turn out.

You don't know how much money you're going to have to live on each month, where you're going to live, when your kids are going to be with you, whether you will have approached the legal process in the right way, whether you're going to

Ep #1: Ease Your Divorce Anxiety with These Simple Tips

have enough for retirement, how long the process is going to take, or maybe whether you will have made the right decision to leave.

I suspect that you've experienced anxiety, or you've worried about least one of these examples at some point. At the root of this divorce-related anxiety and worry is all of the uncertainty about the many core aspects of your life and future, as well as the divorce process itself.

And when your anxiety during the divorce process is high, this can translate into you being unable to sleep well, either you eating more than you want to or maybe not eating enough, engaging in conflict with your soon-to-be former spouse, maybe feeling like you're all over the place, maybe you're not focusing at work, possibly being short with your kids, being unable to make decisions efficiently, or maybe you're even shutting down at times.

How we as individuals react to our divorce anxiety may look different, but regardless of how we react to it uncertainty is at the root of it. Our human minds crave certainty. And when we don't have it, we often don't feel safe. And when we don't feel safe, we can't operate optimally on a cognitive level. Divorce is replete with uncertainty.

What may feel like a cruel joke is the fact that it's during this time, when you may be experiencing some of what seems like the greatest uncertainty in your life, which interferes with your normal ability to make sound decisions, you are asked to make some of what may be the most impactful decisions of your life.

So, today, I want to address what to do about the uncertainty that you're experiencing so you can start dialing down the anxiety and worry even just one notch. Because lowering your anxiety in this process can translate into being able to live a less stressful existence during the process, and also to better decision making for your future.

Now, there are absolutely plans that can be made, and action steps you can take, to reduce some of the uncertainty in divorce. We're going to talk about that later on. But there is still uncertainty inherent in divorce that cannot be totally

Ep #1: Ease Your Divorce Anxiety with These Simple Tips

eliminated. And how you relate to that uncertainty may be ratcheting your anxiety level up to what some days may seem like an intolerable level.

Although uncertainty is center stage in divorce, uncertainty is actually just part of our human condition. It's part of our normal human existence. We're not supposed to have complete certainty in life.

The most meaningful example of this for me is death. Part of living as a human is that we typically just don't know when or how we're going to die. We only know that one day that's going to happen, but that's about where the certainty ends. If I think about death and resist the unknown of it, for me, personally, I start to feel anxious and even a little panicky.

If I focused on that, every single day needing to know when and how that would happen, that would be an exceedingly stressful and maddening exercise. But we typically don't do that, though, right? We may think about it now and then, but we generally accept that the end of our life is an unknown.

But we tend not to treat other uncertainty in our lives in the same way. We create anxiety in ourselves when we think we should know how the entire divorce process will turn out. And since we don't know, we think we're doing something wrong, and we need to find a way to know and to control it.

The fact is, we can't be certain about that or about anything else other than the here and now of what we can perceive around us in this very moment. I want you to think about when you were married and divorce wasn't visibly on the horizon, even back then the fact of the matter was that your future was always uncertain. Even then, we just thought it was certain.

I did the same thing. Things were predictable enough then that they created the illusion of certainty. And we lived in that state, thinking we had certainty, when in fact we didn't. We mistakenly believe we should be able to control everything. We never knew what was going to happen. We only thought we did.

Subconsciously we know uncertainty is a fact of our human existence, but at the same time, we give ourselves this job of creating certainty, control, and predictability in contexts that they can't completely be had. So, it's no wonder

Ep #1: Ease Your Divorce Anxiety with These Simple Tips

that when we give ourselves the job of needing to know how everything is going to turn out in our divorce, that this creates additional anxiety for us.

Here's what I want you to take away today: You get to decide how you respond to uncertainty in your divorce. Eckhart Tolle said, "If uncertainty is unacceptable to you, it turns into fear. If it is perfectly acceptable, it turns into increased aliveness, alertness, and creativity."

So, the next time you are feeling anxious, I want you to ask yourself this question: Is it possible that this anxiety I'm feeling is because I have given myself a task I am not, as a human being, capable of carrying out? What if instead I accepted I'm not supposed to know or control it?

If you release the idea that you should be able to control it, you can live with the uncertainty that is a given in the divorce process, without that added layer of anxiety. Rather than trying to create certainty where it is not possible to create it, move toward acceptance of the unknown, and building confidence around your ability to handle whatever the outcome is.

You do this by how you think about the unknown. Not knowing how certain aspects of the divorce will shake out is a fact of this process. Arguing with that reality just creates more anxiety and emotional distress on top of what is already there.

Instead, consider this: Who or what can I be today, even if I don't know how long this process is going to take? If I don't know how much money I'm going to have? If I don't know where I'm going to live? Etc. What do I know about myself that I can be certain of?

You can be certain that you are capable of handling whatever comes your way in your divorce, and in your post-divorce life. Look for the evidence that this is true about yourself; that is within your control today. You can embrace uncertainty when you believe in yourself and your ability to take care of business. Choose one thought that you can remind yourself of in this process, when something uncertain feels overwhelming.

Ep #1: Ease Your Divorce Anxiety with These Simple Tips

Here are some examples that you can borrow from, or you can think about as brainstorming material, for you to figure out what's true for you:

I will not only survive this process, but I will rebuild a better life. I am learning to navigate this process with confidence, resilience, and class. I know I can handle difficult times and be okay. I am a strong and resourceful woman who figures things out. I will be prepared to handle whatever comes my way. I am a woman who knows how to get difficult things done.

Find the thought that makes *you* feel confident in your ability to handle uncertainty. And think about where you may have evidence that this is true, from where you have encountered uncertainty and persevered in the past. Once you've found it, write it down, and commit it to memory. If you can't find an example from your past, walk yourself through how you will be preparing yourself to navigate uncertainty in the future.

Whenever you're feeling yourself become anxious about all the unknowns in your divorce, remind yourself of that thought, that creates a feeling of confidence in you and your ability to handle uncertainty successfully. Accepting uncertainty is important, however this is only one piece of the strategy for dealing with uncertainty.

The second piece, and this is critical, is through your active and successful participation in the divorce process. Okay, we're not talking about sitting back on your laurels and letting someone else control the entire process. No, you have the power to influence the trajectory and the outcome of your divorce.

Through education, skill building, and having an expert guide in the divorce process, you can get prepared to successfully engage in the divorce process and increase the likelihood of achieving your desired outcome. This is the work I do with clients.

Tune into future episodes of *The Sensible Split*, when I will share more tips, strategies, and education to help you not walk the divorce path alone. Thanks so much for listening, and I'll talk to you next time.

Ep #1: Ease Your Divorce Anxiety with These Simple Tips

To celebrate the launch of the show, I'm going to be giving away a \$100 Amazon gift card to each of 3 lucky listeners who follow, rate, and review the show. I would love your honest feedback so I can create an awesome podcast that is helpful to you. Visit www.TheSensibleSplit.com/podcastlaunch to learn more about the contest and how to enter. Do it soon because I'm going to be announcing the winners on the show in an upcoming episode!

Thank you so much for tuning in to this episode of *The Sensible Split*, if you're looking for more information and guidance to help you successfully navigate a divorce, please visit www.TheSensibleSplit.com.

Please remember, the information provided in this podcast is for general informational purposes only and is not intended to be and should not be taken as legal advice on any particular matter. The content of this podcast is not tailored to your specific, unique circumstances, and its transmission does not create or constitute an attorney-client relationship. Listeners are strongly advised to seek the advice of qualified legal professionals regarding their individual situation.