

DARING DIVORCE

NAVIGATING THE STORM

STACEY DUCKETT

Tips that will Make Navigating the Storm Easier

Come here, listen closely. You are jumping off of the ferry into the deep Pacific Ocean. In your ear, I will whisper the secret tips that you should employ to navigate your swim through the storm.



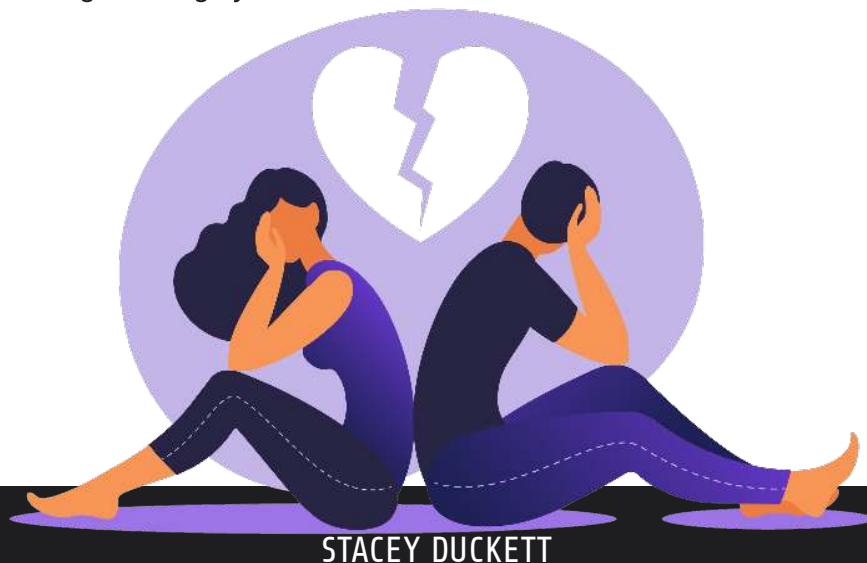
"You will need a thermal cap to protect your head, plus another neon color cap that goes on top-- in case you go missing, goggles to keep the saltwater out of your eyes, earplugs, and your wet suit."

The head caps keep your mind collected. The goggles are like having a great therapist to help keep your vision clear on future goals. The earplugs are like having a great family attorney who will tell you not to listen to what your spouse is about to say so you don't speak something you shouldn't say. People will say negative things and you could say things you might regret. You will most likely want a therapist and an attorney for at least a consultation and see if it is a good tailor for your wetsuit, your choices you make to protect yourself during the journey through the storm are a good fit. All of these components I consider the tools needed to help you navigate the storm. The B.E.S.T. tips on making your divorce easier that works for both parties:

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- **B**e Busy
- **E**xpect Nothing
- **S**ustain Your Real Friends
- **T**unnel Vision for the Time Tunnel

Unlike signing yourself up for an Alcatraz swim to San Francisco, where you can take the time to train for it, in a divorce you typically won't have a lot of room to prepare before you take the plunge. You will need to be able to get yourself together and get your items. You will need to make it to the end of the swim through the storm on to land. Those who can gather the necessary resources faster will get through this easier and most likely quicker too. Maybe you are reading this and wondering how you are going to do this financially? Luckily, by preparing your equipment you don't have to weather the storm alone. It is important that you seek counsel from a family attorney and therapist because they can provide experience you lack and provide you with support. If money is not an issue, then get the ones highly recommend in your area. If money is an issue, there are resources in most communities. Contact your local bar association referral service and ask for an attorney specializing in family law that can help at a reduced fee. If you and your soon-to-be-ex can agree, you might be able to use an arbitrator at the courthouse. Many counselors are available at a reduced rate online, like the app Talkspace Therapy and Counseling. Unthinkable, but in the United States, 1 in 4 women and 1 in 7 men have been victims of severe physical violence by their partner in their lifetime. 1 in 15 children are exposed to intimate partner violence each year, and 90% of these children are eyewitnesses to this violence. If you are worried about your safety, you can call The National Hotline for Domestic Violence at 1-800-799 SAFE or visit [hotline.org](https://www.hotline.org) for help with domestic violence. As you read this you can see how important it is to gather your resources so you can get through your divorce.



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The process of divorce can be daunting. But you can use the following tips to transform it into a daring one that positively shapes who you will become:

Be Busy by being productive. When I was going through my divorce, I was getting ready to run a marathon. I was involved in getting ready to be the president in a community club, running my own business, founder and race director for a local initial 5K event, and taking my kids to all of their school activities and extracurricular activities. I didn't just have one thing to focus on, the daring divorce. I had many things to place my focus on. Shortly after I met my therapist, I asked her if she thought it was terrible to have all of this on my plate while going through a divorce.



She advised that the more you can balance on your plate, the better off you will be. She noted that those who have the most going on during this time can cope better. They take the divorce in bits and pieces. If you only have the divorce going on, then that occupies our mind in everything you do, think, and feel. Her comment sealed my resolve, and I added training for a triathlon, the Half Iron Man. While these particular activities might not be the most appealing or suitable in your case, best practice indicates that you should consider what are meaningful and enriching activities you can add to your plate. You see, divorce is like an onion. You will have to eat the entire thing. You can have it ALL by itself, and you will be a crying, sobbing mess. OR you can have it in bits and pieces like with a bowl of chili with a lot of ingredients. Adding that onion builds character in your chili, and you can build character in you too.



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Expect nothing. This tip I got from my Mom. Expect nothing that way if you should happen to get anything, you will be pleasantly surprised. The fact is, if you could not get along when you were married, how in the hell do you expect to get along when you are divorced? There are no more bargaining tools. When you are married, you can get your spouse to do things simply because they don't want to hear the bitchin' or the prospect of withholding sex or whatever because one wants something for something. These transactional relationships can be as simple as "Hey, I will make your favorite dinner if you can just clean the garage."



We have all done some bargaining after living together long enough. Some people get upset when the ex doesn't follow through with helping out with the kids. All of a sudden you hear, "I can't do this," or "I can't do that." It is as if they purposely want to make your life hellish because you are the one asking for the divorce. Maybe they are. Who cares? You could easily be bothered by this and rant about what this person didn't do and should have done. Hearing my Mom say the words "**EXPECT NOTHING**" loud and clear has stuck with me. It is much better to be pleasantly surprised when they do something to help you out versus being upset all the time because they did not do what you wanted them to do. Unless the other party is unsafe to have as a parent, having shared custody is most likely the best scenario. Once again, however, don't be surprised if you are the one asking for the divorce if the kids are more often with you or eventually with you all the time. Trust me when I say it is the other parent's loss. When I say expect nothing, this also means finances too. Do not confuse this with don't ask. Ask for all you want. I am just saying be prepared or start getting the skills to be ready that push comes to shove, you can sustain your household financially all by yourself. Yes, it is difficult. It is easier said than done, but you will figure it out. If your kids are still in elementary school or younger and you have no family support nearby, you will wonder how you did it, especially if your kids are still in elementary school or younger and have no family support because they don't live near you. I am telling you, that if you gather the gear needed for the storm, you too can do it. We will talk more about this in a later chapter.

Sustain Your Real Friends. You will find that the friends you made before your marriage are gold.

The friends you made while married when they find out you are getting a divorce may not be there like they use to be there for either of you. Maybe it is because they are worried it is contagious, wondering if they are next, or perhaps they just do not know who to invite over. If you have a lot going on for yourself and are attractive too, they may be insecure and worried about you getting involved with their partner. You may never know what the reason is for them abandoning your friendship. Who knows, and who cares what their reasoning is? Let them do what they feel they need to do to keep themselves in their perfect – and, for some, their pretend “ideal” – marriage. Some may stick or reach out to you later if they end up getting a divorce themselves. Take this time to reach out to your friends, make some new ones, and keep yourself busy with being productive, so you have something more to talk about than the damn divorce.



Tunnel Vision for the Time Tunnel.

Going through a daring divorce is like going through a time tunnel. At first, you are going about your normal, daily routine. Then, life starts spinning out of control. To not get dizzy, you should look at the end of the tunnel. Instead, some people go through the tunnel looking too much to the same side. They start to spin and end on the other side like a corkscrew. They finally make it out dizzy and shattered but are done with the event. Like swimming from Alcatraz to San Francisco, a swimmer who does not swim efficiently will get tossed and turned and will have to travel longer distance to get back on course to swim to land. Others, unfortunately, look to one side of the tunnel and spin like a rat in a rat wheel. They keep turning but never get anywhere. Suppose you see this happening to a friend, share this book with them.



What do you need to do? Stop for a moment. Fix those goggles by taking time to review your goals. Put the earplugs in so you can stay focused on your course, put the caps on so you can stay calm. Is your wet suit zipper up entirely, are you busy with your own hobbies? Are you living in the past or living in the future? Are you having a hard time accepting what is? If you do not accept what is, you will go into a spin cycle. You will deny it, think it is only temporary, worry about it, replay it, act like a victim, blame others, be moody and depressed. You do not need to be like this. Accepting what is allows you to be open to new possibilities. Accepting what is will give you peace and help you get through the challenges of your divorce. Accepting opens your eyes to what you can do to live presently and start your future instead of wasting your time, your friends' time, and counselor's time on bickering and resisting what is happening.

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To help you accept what is happening, take a good look at your role in this and the other's role—no need to condemn yourself or the other person. Just simply acknowledge why this is happening. How would you like things to be different? Acknowledge the potential disconnect between what you would like and what the other wants. Yes, it sucks if one wants to stay married and the other one does not want it. But, acknowledge that this is what it is, and you cannot change the other person. You've gotten to this point and accept this isn't going to work out, so what can you do now? You can make this a daring divorce by starting your discovery into what you would like to do and to create, and how you want your life to be in the future.

Look at the **B.E.S.T.** tips, your secret to navigating the storm that will make your divorce easier.

Ready or not, it's time to **jump in**.



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