

# Predicting Your Own Divorce: Why You Should Never Use the D-Word

**By Peggy L. Ferguson, Ph.D.**

If you're hoping to give your marriage a fighting chance to overcome any current issues, refrain from using the dreaded D-word. Refrain from shouting, "I want a divorce," during a heated argument. Don't wield it as a form of punishment, a threat, a low blow, or even a jest. When you do, you're inadvertently laying the groundwork for that outcome.

During marital conflicts, it's common for partners to resort to all sorts of underhanded tactics to sway their spouse's perspective. Although both parties seem to be striving for an effective resolution, one may seek to evade the confrontation entirely by withdrawing or using other dirty fight tactics. Uttering "I want a divorce!" undoubtedly grabs attention. However, if you or your partner repeatedly utter this phrase, its shock value diminishes. The repeated use of the words gradually normalizes the concept until it evolves from a fleeting thought into a plausible solution. Eventually, with continued use and dirty fight tactics becoming the default, divorce may seem like the only solution.

"I want a divorce" carries significant weight. Only use these words after sincere reflection, once careful consideration has genuinely led you to the decision to separate. If you blurt it out in the heat of the moment, what you likely mean is, "I'm furious and hurting, and I want to shake you up and stop feeling this way." If, after the dust settles, divorce isn't still on your mind, then it wasn't a genuine sentiment during the argument—so refrain from uttering it.

Often, only one partner resorts to this underhanded tactic, which may prove effective in grabbing the other's attention or cooperation for a while. However, after numerous instances of invoking the D-word during

arguments, the day may come when the other partner responds with a resigned "Okay," and they mean it.

If you're not absolutely certain about pursuing a divorce, do not mention it as a looming threat. For those facing communication challenges or struggling to work through marital conflicts, seeking resources and support to learn effective communication and problem-solving skills is essential. Consider seeking guidance from relationship counselors, therapists, or marriage enrichment programs to strengthen your relationship and cultivate healthier ways of resolving disputes. Prioritizing open, honest communication and seeking assistance when needed can contribute to the longevity and happiness of your marriage.

In summary, don't underestimate the gravity of uttering the phrase "I want a divorce" during marital conflicts. Using the phrase as a tool of manipulation or during heated arguments can normalize divorce as a solution. Many resources are available online and in your community to hone essential communication and problem-solving skills. **Note: This article has been revised and edited from its original version, which was previously published in 2011 on this site. The content has been updated for contemporary language, clarity and accuracy.**



Transitioning from exploring the complexities of marital discontent, it's evident that addressing relationship challenges requires effective communication and problem-solving skills. Utilizing a structured approach like **Fair Fight Tactics** can facilitate constructive dialogue and negotiation for positive change within your relationship. By implementing these strategies, couples can navigate disagreements and foster mutual understanding, regardless of the intensity of their conflicts.

**\$2.95**

Fair Fight Tactics: A Brief Lesson is a digital download, available immediately.