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# Amy Edwards

FAMILY LAW

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## Family Matters

E-newsletter

August  
2013

Welcome to our very first issue of  
*Family Matters*  
e-Newsletter.

This Divorce e-newsletter is brought to you by Divorce Magazine and Amy A. Edwards, with the law firm of [Mattox, Davis, Edwards & Alexander, P.A.](#) We anticipate sending e-newsletters on a monthly basis. We hope you will find the information and articles useful. If you wish to be removed from our mailing list, please reply with the subject "Remove".

### In This Issue

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[Latest Edition of Divorce Magazine \(Free PDF\)](#)

### [New Option for Divorcing Couples and Others in Eastern North Carolina](#)

We are excited to announce the formation of the [Collaborative Divorce Association of Eastern Carolina](#). The CDAEC has recently formed to promote Collaborative

### About Us



[Amy A. Edwards](#) is a Board Certified Specialist in Family Law.

She is a principal at the Greenville law firm of [Mattox, Davis, Edwards & Alexander, P.A.](#) in North Carolina.

### Quick Links

[My Law Firm web site](#)

[Research Family Law](#)

[Collaborative Divorce Assn of Eastern Carolina](#)

[Pitt County Courthouse](#)

## Web site of the month

This month, we are featuring  
the

### **NC Kids Adoption and Foster Care Network**

Site includes:

Foster Care Child FAQs

How to Adopt

Meet the Children

Post Adoption Support and  
Resources

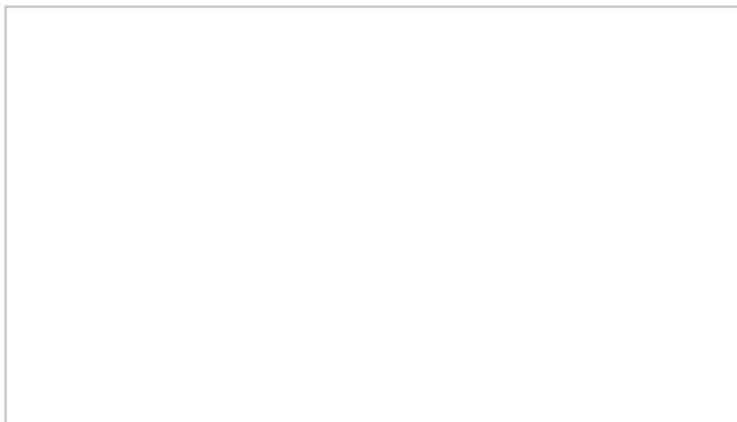
Family Law (CFL), an alternative to the traditional court process for those with family law disputes. The adversarial nature of the traditional court system can be destructive to families, and especially to children who may feel caught in the middle of divorcing parents and for whom parental discord can have damaging long-term effects. The [CFL process](#) is non-adversarial and constructive, focusing on working together to find practical solutions to family legal disputes, and refraining from focusing on blame and fault during the negotiations. Dignity and respect among all participants, attorneys and clients alike, are key elements of the CFL process.

CFL is a national trend in family law, in part because of a primary focus on avoiding the emotional and financial turmoil of the adversarial court process, often associated with "custody battles" and financial disputes. The process frequently gives families closure in a matter of months, not years, and is suitable for marital property division, alimony, child custody and child support. Each party retains an attorney to protect his or her interests, and if the case is settled, the parties sign an agreement that is legally binding and enforceable. Because the participants are not using the court system, they are not restricted to court districts and they may choose the city or county most convenient for them.

More families are choosing the CFL process for privacy reasons. The traditional court process is a public forum that involves testifying in court and filing documents on the public record, which documents often include allegations of marital fault and personal information, such as the employment, incomes, assets and debts of the parties.

CDAEC member attorneys are exclusively experienced trial attorneys who will work with prospective clients to determine if collaborative family law meets the client's needs, or whether another process, including mediation, arbitration or litigation, is more appropriate for their circumstances.

Read more about CFL, alternative dispute resolution, and the Collaborative Divorce Association of Eastern Carolina on the CDAEC web site at [www.collabdivorceofenc.com](http://www.collabdivorceofenc.com) or contact Amy Edwards at 252.758.3430.



## Your Divorce Story: Experimenting with Happiness

Note to reader: The opinions expressed in the article that follows are not necessarily those of Divorce Magazine and we acknowledge that some readers may not agree with the opinions expressed here but we are committed to letting all voices be heard.

### Experiment with Happiness

By Bethany J. Royer

Twice-married, twice-divorced Buddhist nun Pema Chodron says to treat life as an experiment.

That was a tough pill to swallow for me, a thirty-six year old single mother with not one but two failed marriages under her belt. If ever there was someone who has given themselves an enormous albatross, or scarlet letter, in terms of failed marriages it has

#### More stories of other divorcees:

[Marriage on Tap Now Serving: Fences](#)

[Divorce Taught Me about Being a Man](#)

certainly been me. So

[It's complicated](#)

how does someone like

[but it is family](#)

me treat life like an

experiment when surrounded by so much failure?

Well, you start all over again from square-one, whether that's as simple as needing a new beaker or as [economically challenging](#) as a whole new laboratory. You just start all over again. What other choice do you have?

Sure, you could choose to be angry, bitter, and sulky about your failed marriage, or marriages, by what's the point? Life is too short to let failure impede us from starting over, moving on, and being happy. If we let all the tangibles that come with failure stop us what's the point of living? Think about all that weighs down an individual in conjunction with a failed marriage.

Fear

Bitterness

Anger

Why?

Why do we allow fear, anger, and bitterness to overtake us after a divorce, especially bitterness? If a person spends every waking moment of every day lost in their bitter feelings towards an ex-spouse and die tomorrow what will they have accomplished? Zilch.

Are they bitter because an ex-spouse is happy without them, possibly happy with someone else, the very person behind the end of the marriage? Why?

Being bitter over someone else's happiness will not bring you happiness and isn't that what you really want, happiness in your own life? Then what's stopping you?

I've had two marriages end for the exact same reason. My former spouses both had an [affair](#). The first walked out without looking back, the second was indecisive on which person he wanted more, so I made the decision for him. If

anyone has a right to be bitter it is certainly me. Yet, I've never looked back, I've no regrets, not a single one, and while I went through all the [pain and grievances](#) that comes with a divorce I knew one thing for certain, I would not be bitter, because I will not allow a single day, not a single minute, to be wasted on bitterness.

I've made the choice to be blissful.

I treat every day like an experiment, it's hard, believe me. I may have a moment or two of sadness but that's where experimentation comes in handy. I take time with my kids to talk about something new, something different. I take long walks alone through the park and think about what stories I'd like to write or places I'd love to visit that I've never been or even imagined visiting. I set time aside to chat with a friend over things we've never discussed before, such as world religions. Or we go to a restaurant and try amazing, new food I never would have thought to try before.

I try something new and completely outside my comfort zone every day.

I experiment until I find what will positively draw me out of the sadness.

I refuse to be bitter.

Life is too short; too precious to be spent wrapped up miserably with my failed marriages and to feel bitterness towards two former significant others who've failed me.

If you die tomorrow will you do so knowing you spent the time wisely? Or will you squander it with bitterness?

It's really up to you. No one can make you happy anymore than someone can force you to spend every day being bitter.

Why not make the decision to be happy?

I've no desire to waste a single moment. Not just for my sake but for my kids, too.

What about you?

Experiment with happiness -- you may be surprised at the results.

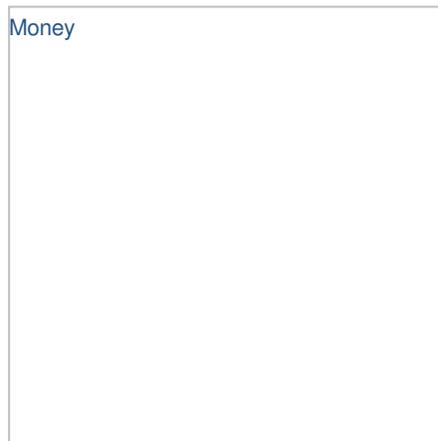
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Bethany J. Royer is an independent contractor and writer currently studying psychology with Florida Institute of Technology, she is actively seeking a publisher for her first completed novel while working on a memoir about her personal trials and tribulations with divorce. She blogs prolifically at [motherofthemunchkins.blogspot.com](http://motherofthemunchkins.blogspot.com) and can be reached at [themotherofthemunchkins@yahoo.com](mailto:themotherofthemunchkins@yahoo.com).

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For more articles on marriage, relationships, and divorce, visit <http://divorcemag.com/articles/yourspace>

## 5 Most Common Money Mistakes



### 5 Most Common Money Mistakes

By Sandy Arons

**1. Underestimating your monthly expenses.** A complete monthly budget should have about 120 items. If yours does not have as many, you are probably forgetting something. Did you include your health insurance deductible, painting the exterior of your home (recommended every 5 years) and money to remove a fallen tree from your yard? Your request for alimony is based on your budget. If your budget is underestimated by \$300 per month, it will be off by \$4,000 in a year. Where will you get the extra \$4,000? If you are the bread winner, you need to have detailed monthly expenses, or you could agree to pay an amount of alimony that you ultimately can't afford.

## **2. Believing that your attorney will handle everything.**

Divorce is essentially a business transaction -- a settlement -- in which assets and expenses are divided between two parties. You wouldn't ask your dentist to perform heart surgery, so why would you ask your attorney about your finances? Attorneys are trained to handle the legal issues. Even the best divorce attorneys are not certified financial consultants or have formal training to perform financial analysis of assets or provide tax information. Find a financial professional who has been trained in the specific financial and tax issues of divorce. She/he will work closely with your attorney or mediator to provide the analysis to support your alimony request or support why your spouse's alimony request is not acceptable. Then have your attorney do what she/he has been trained to do: argue for the best result.

**3 .Not taking tax deductions.** Did you know that attorney's fees for obtaining alimony and retirement funds may be tax deductible, if you qualify? Did you know that alimony is taxable to the recipient and is a tax deduction for the person paying? Did you know that most fathers do not qualify as head of household and are not able to take a child as a deduction? Be aware of other potential deductions and take them.

## **4. Failing to communicate directly with your spouse.**

Attorneys are best utilized for legal matters. It is not cost-effective for your attorney and your spouse's attorney to communicate concerning your preference to have the kids on even years for Christmas or your desire to keep the treadmill and the sofa. Two attorney's fees combined can easily be \$600 per hour. Save the extra cash for your IRA or a much-needed vacation and discuss (or email) minor issues directly with your spouse. Our services include helping you control legal expenses and ensuring that you get the most value from your legal fees.

**5. Accepting an offer just to get it over with.** Yes, you are an emotional wreck and you just want it over. However, during a divorce you will be making the most important

financial decisions of your life. Take the time to do it right. Divorce is the fourth most frequent cause of bankruptcy. Don't become a statistic. Speak to a financial professional to understand the short- and long-term financial impacts of your potential settlement package. Don't assume that a 50 -- 50 division of property is the same thing as a "fair" division of property.

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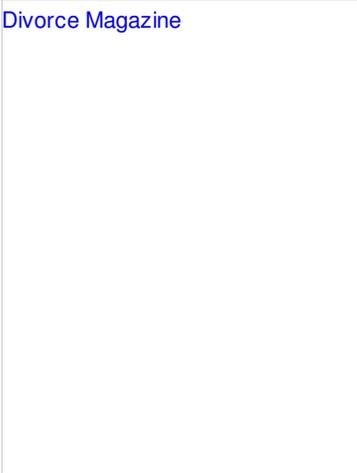
Sandy Arons, MBA, CDFA™, CFDP, CDFS is the founder of Arons & Associates Divorce Planning, where they specialize in the financial and tax issues of divorce. They encourage you to take the time to understand the numbers before you sign the final divorce paperwork, educate you so you can make informed choices, and secure your future and your children's future. Don't just get a divorce. Get a smart divorce. They can be reached at (615) 376-8204.

This article has been edited and excerpted from the book *It's No Big Deal Really*, permission by Anne Cantelo. Copyright © 2007. *It's No Big Deal Really* is a parent's guide to making divorce easy for children, and is recommended by the NSPCC.

For more articles on your financial planning during your divorce process, visit [www.divorcemag.com/articles/Financial\\_Planning/](http://www.divorcemag.com/articles/Financial_Planning/).

## Divorce Magazine

Divorce Magazine



**Check out the most recent edition  
(free PDF)**

This edition includes:  
Rules for Divorcing with Children

Coping with an Emotional Divorce  
Tax Tips and Traps  
Befriending You Ex  
How to Work with Your Divorce Lawyer  
Quality Virtual Visitation with Your Children  
and many more

Thank you for reading our newsletter.

**Sincerely,**

Amy Edwards

Mattox, Davis, Edwards & Alexander, P.A.

\* This e-newsletter is not meant to be legal advice. Amy A. Edwards is licensed to practice law in North Carolina. No attorney-client relationship is formed by viewing this e-mail.