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## Breaking up needn't be hard to do

**You've reached your decision and you want to break up. So, how are you going to do it? This idea takes you through the practicalities and helps you to leave without breaking the wedding crystal, or your heart.**



For some of us the marital break-up comes with all the force of a hurricane. It sweeps through, leaving a trail of devastation and an eerie silence in its wake. This is particularly true if your partner has left out of the blue, but if this hasn't happened yet, a break-up can be handled without causing complete devastation.

### **FORECAST AND FOREARM**

Hurricanes, although they begin seemingly out of nowhere, can usually be predicted. Meteorologists track barometric pressure, plot patterns of weather

Here's an  
idea for  
you...

**If you know divorce is inevitable, have a break-up rehearsal. A friend of mine wanted to divorce her husband but always let him talk her out of it whenever she tried to tell him. She spent three extra years in an unhappy marriage until she realised she had to *plan and rehearse* her break-up in advance. First of all, she booked a hotel to go to directly after telling her husband. That way she had somewhere to stay even if he wouldn't leave the house himself. She then rehearsed exactly what she was going to say and wrote down prompts to use if she got nervous. She actively prepared herself for her husband's reactions so they didn't come as a surprise and throw her off balance. Finally she used deep breathing exercises to cope with her nervousness and to help her not to cry. Breaking up really is hard to do but if you follow my friend's advice it will most certainly be easier.**

behaviour, record dips or sudden rises in temperature and forecast when and where the next one will strike. Nine times out of ten, they get it right. Prediction of marital break-ups can be much the same. If you know what to look for, then you too can forecast the future. So, be your own relationship forecaster and track the pressure increases between you, plot patterns of behaviour and record the frequency of sudden dips in temperature in your marriage.

Of course, you will need to take a step outside the situation and look at things with a dispassionate perspective, but if you can take this view, you may well be able to predict if and when the break-up will come.

Forewarned and forecasted, as they say, is forearmed. A weather forecast gives residents in a hurricane zone the chance to batten down the hatches, make survival plans and bolster up stores or defences. You can do this too. If you have some idea in advance that your spouse may be planning a split with you, then you can make some plans and get yourself

emotionally and practically ready. And if you know it's coming anyway, why not jump in there first and break up on your terms?

### **A CLEAN BREAK**

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So, you know the break-up's coming; what next? The first thing to do is keep the sense of panic to a minimum and to prepare yourself. Do this by making positive choices about how you will deal with the situation. If it's you that wants the divorce, plan when and how you're going to tell your spouse. Avoid doing it spontaneously in the middle of an argument, or the middle of Sainsbury's. Instead make a time when you know you will have some space, and make sure the children are out of earshot. If you think your spouse plans to break up with you, mentally rehearse how you will deal with it and brace yourself for the inevitable emotional impact.

Also, have an idea of what you'll do immediately after the event. Perhaps you could tell a friend what you're planning to do, or what you think might happen and have them on standby for emotional or practical support. Prepare a number of options so you can fit them around how you're feeling. You may just want to go for a walk on your own, or you may just want to phone your mum.

Think about the practicalities involved well in advance. For example, you've both been living in the same house, so if you're the one asking for the divorce, does that mean you'll be the

**Now you've managed a clean break, check out IDEA 28, *Dividing the spoils*, to make sure you split your possessions without breaking them too.**

Try another idea...

**'Nowadays love is a matter of chance, matrimony a matter of money and divorce a matter of course.'**

HELEN ROWLAND, Journalist

Defining idea...

one to leave? If so, arrange somewhere to stay while you sort things out. Work out how this will affect your children. You need to keep the practical disruption for them to a minimum, so ensure that some of their normal routines remain in place. Going to school and regular contact with their friends is essential.

*How did  
it go?*

**Q How do I tell my wife I want a divorce when we've just celebrated our tenth wedding anniversary?**

*A If you really want a divorce then you cannot afford to be sentimental. If the marriage is over then your wife has a right to know. Be clear and calm. Mentally rehearse what you have to say and how you will deal with her reaction.*

**Q How can I ask my husband to leave the marital home when he pays the mortgage and I stay at home to look after the children?**

*A Before you say anything to your husband, get some legal advice. Check out where you stand and exactly what your rights are. Don't threaten him with anything that won't stand up in a court of law.*

