

Divorce Mailbag

Margot Swann, the Founder & CEO of Visions Anew, The Divorce Resource for Women, answers your divorce questions.

Photo: Dan Carmody, Studio 7



Margot Swann

Dear Margot,
My husband has found a long lost love. Apparently they've been involved for the last year and now he says he wants a divorce. I'm terrified and confused about so many things but the issue that has got me in the most knots is my kids. He says he wants custody! I hear there are a number of ways to divide up custody that might actually be good for them. Please help me to understand what I should do.

- Unloved

Dear (Un)Loved,

This is how the roller coaster often begins: you both love the kids and each wants the ability to make major decisions. Focusing on the fact that you do both love the kids, must be the starting point to your resolution. Often understanding the different kinds of custody can help solve deadlocks. Rebecca Hoelting, a family law attorney with McCurdy & Candler, LLC, has some information that might be helpful to you:

Dear Unloved,

One of the things that makes the process of determining the best custodial arrangement for your children is the number of unfamiliar terms. Here are some of the terms that you will hear:

- **Legal Custody:** Legal custody is the process for making major decisions for your children in each of 4 major areas: medical, religion, extracurricular activities, and education. It is very common for parents in Georgia to share joint legal custody and then designate one parent as the final decision maker in all of the areas or to divide up the final decision making authority with one parent having it in two areas and the other having it in the other two areas.
- **Physical Custody:** The parent having physical custody generally has the children living with him/her most of the time.
- **Joint Physical Custody:** Joint physical custody is an arrangement where the parents are sharing approximately equally time with the kids.
- **Parenting Time/Visitation:** These are terms that refer to when the children will spend time with each parent.

- **Parenting Plan:** This is a form that is now required by the state of Georgia where the details of legal custody, physical custody, transportation arrangements and many other details of how the parents and the child will navigate life post-divorce.

There are almost as many custody arrangements as there are families. Attorneys and child psychologists who have experience in advising parents going through divorces can be very helpful in formulating the best solution for your family.

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Rebecca Hoelting, thank you for clarifying the choices that must be made about custody. Hopefully Unloved realizes that she and her soon-to-be-former husband must separate the emotions inherent in making these determinations from the business decisions before them.

Loved, please also consider joining us at some of our free Divorce Support Groups. They are located all over Metro Atlanta. **There is also Visions Anew's next Divorce Survival Weekend, Oct. 21-23 and February 10-12 - lots of information and support. We also have a Post-Divorce Seminar on November 12.**

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Send your divorce questions to: margot@visionsanew.org

Remember though you never expected to divorce, if it is unavoidable, do it with good information, with integrity, and with a team of experts. You don't have to divorce alone.

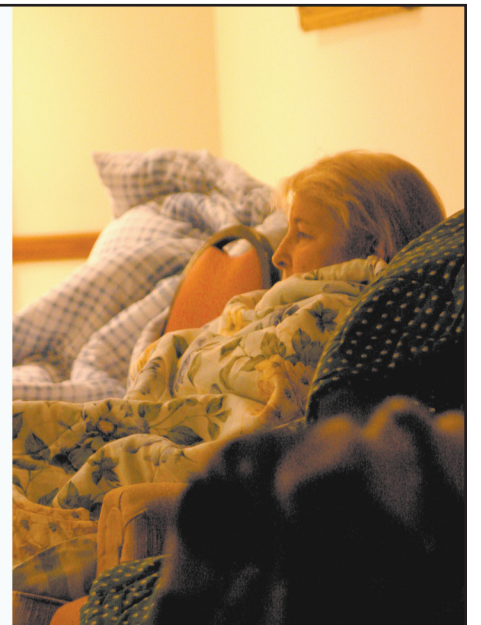


The divorce process is at best like juggling dozens of balls in a circus act. At its worst, it is like fighting for your life against a multi-headed dragon often while trying to shield your children from its flames.

Our mission is to empower divorcing women to successfully create and achieve a new vision for their lives.

Wise, professional women offer the tools to help you recapture your dignity and self respect.

Our programs educate, support, and connect divorcing women with professionals, resources and each other.



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