

# SHOULD WE STAY TOGETHER FOR THE SAKE OF OUR CHILDREN?

*How do you decide whether it's time to call it quits or try to make the relationship work for the sake of the family? VEERASH SRIKISON offers this advice.*

**T**here may come a point in your relationship where you both cannot make a decision or a suggestion about anything without an argument on the boil, and you both have reached the end of your wits trying to keep a happy home. Consider the following questions:

## Q What are your children learning about relationships?

Some experts argue that chaotic and unhappy marriages cause children to develop unhealthy relationship models and an increase in anxiety. Happiness, harmony, cooperation, respect and joy are all absent when parents are emotionally divorced while still living together. Children feel it, are confused by it and too often blame themselves for their parents' unhappiness. Consequently, they grow up anxious and guilt-ridden, experiencing little peace in childhood.

## Q What impact would parents living apart have on their children?

Every situation is truly unique and factors need to be weighed such as timing, the age of your children, the safety for you and your children, your financial ability to split up, as well as other resources on hand such as a support system. Parenting experts agree that children should not be kept in a family where there is abuse of any kind. If you or your children are experiencing abuse of any nature, you need to develop the courage to leave.

## Q As the one contemplating divorce, picture yourself still married in five years. How does that make you feel?

Couples should talk and be realistic about their expectations, as relationships change over time. Ask yourself questions about your partner: Is he or she a good parent? Can you find a way to stay together and parent amicably?

## Q Try committing yourself fully to the marriage for 6 months. What new information do you get as a result about whether or not to stay?

Many couples benefit from counselling and can discover new ways to appreciate one another.

## Q Are you staying in an unhealthy marriage for the sake of the kids? Take some steps to separate temporarily.

Choose a more phasing-in approach to determine whether or not a divorce is the final way to go before you interrupt schedules permanently. Perhaps you both just needed a time-out to determine how your responsibilities can be shared to make for a happier home. Make your children your top priority by limiting their exposure to their parents' fighting. Remember to seek a professional to help both of you to mediate a temporary plan that you can eventually use to develop a new and respectful co-parenting relationship as a family. MBP



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