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HUFF POST DIVORCE

MARRIAGES COME AND GO, BUT DIVORCE IS FOREVER



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Divorce Confidential: Holiday Preparations

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Holiday preparations are in full swing. The shopping malls are packed like a can of sardines and if you're like me, you're probably a little overwhelmed and stressed about getting the perfect gift for your loved ones. When you're going through a divorce, the holidays can be extra stressful. If you have kids, there are split holidays to manage. From a financial and tax perspective, you may think the most opportune time to divorce is before the end of the year. Regardless, the holidays can be bittersweet but fortunately, there are ways to ease the stress so you can enter 2015 both refreshed and renewed, and ready to tackle any obstacles that come your way. Here are some things to consider as you prepare for the holidays and close out the year:

1. Solidify Holiday Plans: The holidays are fast approaching and now is a good time to solidify your holiday plans. If you have children, review the custody and visitation orders in place and understand them. Discuss any discrepancies with your ex-spouse. When it's vacation time, the last thing you want to do is fight over holiday plans and child timeshare. To avoid any arguments with your ex-spouse over holiday parenting time, communicate and clear up any misunderstandings. If you plan to travel with your children, exchange emergency telephone numbers and provide your ex-spouse with a detailed itinerary of your travel plans with the children. If you want to travel across the state or across the world with your children without any issues, you may also consider asking your attorney to draw up a travel authorization/permission form, to be signed by your ex-spouse. If you and your spouse are splitting the holidays with your children, make fun plans and surround yourself with other family and friends so that the time away from your children is not too difficult. If you're a pet owner and you share custody with your ex-spouse, discuss holiday timeshare with each other in advance so you are both on the same page about the holiday pet custody plan.

2. Talk To Your Attorney: At the close of the year, it may be a good idea to set up a review meeting with your attorney. Talk to your attorney about the things accomplished and the tasks that must be completed in the new year to finalize your divorce. Has there been or do you anticipate a change in circumstances in the new year to warrant changes to other areas related to your divorce including custody and visitation, child support and spousal support? If you want to be divorced by year-end or absolutely need to be divorced by the end of the year for tax

purposes, talk to your attorney about what you can do to make that happen. In San Diego, the courts set up judgment days at the end of the year. On judgment day, the court will process your divorce so you can be divorced by December 31, 2014. Your local court may also have judgment days, so talk to your attorney and see what options you have to wrap up your divorce.

3. *Forget the Past, Focus On The Future:* You may look back at 2014 and remember it as the year of your divorce or perhaps your divorce has been dragging on for years. Regardless of where you are at in your divorce, use the end of the year as a time of reflection of your achievements, obstacles overcome and lessons learned. Perhaps you want to take up a new hobby in the new year, or embark on a career that you never had the opportunity to explore when you were married. Or, you may also want to establish new routines and traditions for you and your family. The new year can be the start of many new adventures. Look towards 2015 with fresh eyes full of new possibilities. Remember that good things are in store for you!

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