

## **Divorce causes and consequences**

We are privileged to be joined by Isabel who has been looking into the causes and consequences of divorce. Apparently today's statistics are very high and still rising. Government Bureaus predict that very soon one in two marriages will end in separation or divorce. The facts are easy to state but the causes may be more difficult to trace.

**H** Isabel, is this a modern phenomenon or should we trace it back what one thousand years?

**I** Odd as it may sound, divorce is not a purely modern phenomenon. According to Edward Gibbson's well-known set of books, *The Decline and fall of the Roman Empire*, he asserts that one of the causes of the decline and fall of the Roman Empire was the dissolution of the family.

**H** Isabel, you have put together a list of concrete specific causes and consequences of divorce. Is that right?

**I** You are right Javier. You know, not all marriages fail for the same reason. Nor is there usually one reason for the breakdown of a particular marriage. Nevertheless, I hear some reasons more often than others. They are: infidelity, poor communication, financial problems, a lack of commitment to the marriage, a dramatic change in priorities ...

**H** the so-called me generation ....

**I** that's right, and failed expectations or unmet needs, and domestic violence.

**H** You said poor communication. Does that mean that we don't seem to get the right words to talk with our partner?

**I** It's a difficult question but I'll try to answer it. Taking for granted that the couple communication is essential for the survival of a relationship "poor communication" can lead to a divorce in those cases in which the couple hardly share private moments such as sharing working experiences, hobbies, feelings ...

**H** How about this culture that I have heard of ... of glorifying divorce or at least the behaviour that leads to divorce ... because many movies and TV programmes feature men and women who change partners almost as often as they change clothes. Do they set a bad example?

**I** I am fully aware that the stories we seen on TV an in the movies are just that – movies -but anyone who thinks these programmes have no bearing on people's conduct, especially on young people's conduct is ignorant of what controls people's thinking. As we know, thinking determines behaviour.

**H** Isabel, one of the features or causes that the list that you made features is what you called and rightly so, the "me" generation, which involves .. I think that it involves a dramatic change of priorities. Do you mean that people tend to be now focused on their careers and that they are not prepared or willing to make sacrifices, that their rights, their time their careers comes first. Actually that reminds me of that fellow,

a friend of mine who is 37 and a father of three who happened to be dismissed just because he dared to ask for a paternity leave. That really makes my blood boil. Anyway, you mentioned domestic violence too. Didn't you?

**I** Alongside the causes listed, I would like to point out the domestic violence as one of the most dramatic causes of divorce due to addictions and substances abuse as well as physical and sexual abuse. Unfortunately, domestic violence has blown out of proportion. More than 60 battered women have been killed by their husbands, ex-husbands, partners, and boyfriends along this year in Spain. An unbelievable horrifying number which makes my blood run cold.

**H** Onto the consequences Isabel. The consequences of divorce might be long-term, I suppose, but equally crushing.

**I** The consequences of divorce have adversely affected all segments of society, the family, the home, the school. We can not deny the fact that our society has been weakened because of the break-up of so many families. Psychiatrists, psychologists, social workers, family counsellors and others who work with children and young people are almost universally agreed that children of divorce are more likely to engage in sexual promiscuity, in violence, in bullying behaviour, in crimes against property, such as vandalism and theft.

**H** That's really frightening.

**I** It is Javier.

**H** I wonder if that society like ours can withstand the strain of family breakdown on such a scale ...

**I** Surely not. I think we should reconsider the value of stable relationships.

**H** Ok, Isabel. Tank you very much. It has been very uplifting indeed.