

Second Saturday: Divorce Planning Seminars

Written by Cole Hornaday for [North Seattle College Blog](#)

Life is full of transitions, but few that we can manage and calculate. Cold as it sounds, divorce is one of those manageable transitions. We just need to know the systematic steps and how to follow them through to their inevitable conclusion. Frequently women, particularly dependent mothers, are those hit hardest by a divorce. Since 1988 the Women's Institute for Financial Education (WIFE) has offered their Second Saturday divorce planning workshops to help women navigate the divorce process. Their motto, "A man is not a financial plan."

"In many cases, settlements are made which seem equal but are not equitable resulting in a reduction of financial lifestyle," says Dick Harsin, Second Saturday: A Divorce Planning Seminar leader. "As mothers are significantly more emotional about the divorce and then to have to make financial decisions about the household finances this can result in wrong decisions. Sometimes emotional decisions are made (keeping the house when it will cause financial hardship) which will be detrimental in a long-term. Many times they are making the biggest financial decisions when they are most vulnerable. The purpose of the workshop is to educate women on how they can get an equitable settlement."

Tough as it is, Harsin says it is paramount that divorcing parties work to keep their emotions in check. "Marriage is about love," he says, "divorce is about money." The first step in doing this is to put paperwork in order like getting copies of one's banks statements, tax returns, and other records including peripheral assets like airline miles. "I recommend that copies of all investment accounts (including retirement accounts) be obtained. Also obtain copies of any mortgages, credit cards or any other credit obligations."

Harsin says it's wise to look to a future in which one must rely on a single income and plan finances accordingly. Mercenary as it sounds, he recommends one take advantage of goods and services covered under a joint income like dental visits and putting new tires on the car.

Securing a means of empowerment is a key aspect of the Second Saturday seminars. A crucial part of instilling a sense of empowerment when it comes to an event like divorce is having answers to difficult to ask questions like Do I have to pay alimony? Can I keep my house? What happens to my retirement and savings? Who gets custody of the children? Sometimes you simply need to know what questions to ask. Harsin says the first place to start with questions is your attorney. In fact he stresses one should talk to their attorney before they talk to their spouse.

Though we are feeling beings who base critical life choices like careers, marriage and divorce on our emotions and intuition, this does not a successful divorce make. "A

successful divorce would be completed without rancor," says Harsin, "a fair and equitable distribution of the assets, discussions and decisions on child custody and on the numerous other facets of divorce which must be solved. As important as the equitable distribution of assets is, [it is also important] to be on the same page when it comes to children— who has custody, who's going to pay for school and all the other decisions which will have major effects on the children. This is extremely hard to do as so much time has been invested in the marriage."

When comes right down to it, a substantial amount of time must be invested in divorce preparation as well. Divorce is an emotional decision but Harsin says one must approach it from a business mind-set. "While the emotions are a big part of divorce, the workshop is designed to address the numerous non emotional issues such as the dividing of assets in a fair and equitable way."

Learn more about [Second Saturday: A Divorce Planning Seminar](#)

Learn more about [Wife.org](#)

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