

Wife opposes no-fault divorce

Dear Dr. Friedman,

I know that a lot of people are delighted with the fact that many states are heading toward no-fault divorce. That is, that you don't need grounds in order to ask to have the marriage legally set aside. It seems to me that as we do everything else in society, we go from one extreme to the other.

As a woman who has just been thrown aside after 20 years of marriage with three young children and no job skills, I am totally against divorce on demand. Let me tell you what a horrible shock it is to have a man walk out and leave you financially and emotionally deprived.

Dear Reader:

I am personally very bothered by the fact that we even use a term like "no fault" in the area of divorce. I feel this is a total misnomer and actually the no-grounds

approach to divorce should have its title "shared responsibility" rather than "no fault".



By DR. SONYA FRIEDMAN

I only indicate this since I feel that we are tending in this society to put the responsibility for most of our life conditions outside of ourselves. When there is a divorce, while it is possible that one individual is the victim and another the persecutor, usually we both

share the responsibility of creating the marital discomfort.

There is no question that the single biggest problem becomes the fact that a woman such as yourself is qualified only as a domestic servant and the lack of job skills puts her in a devastating situation as far as supporting herself and her children are concerned.

FURTHER, SINCE there is a tendency away from alimony in "no-fault" states, she does indeed find herself in an extremely dependent situation. Both our expectations for marriage and the conditions under which marriage exists must change.

The immediate needs as I see them include (1) divorce insurance, which would be required at the time that people take out a license for marriage. This insurance would provide enough money for a woman to develop her skills to put her in a marketable position should a divorce occur.

(2) Additionally, I feel that divorce counseling should be offered by agencies or private practitioners to help individuals get through the harrowing emotional experience that the transition from the marriage to a divorced state produces.

(3) Further, I feel that the courts should appoint a child ombudsman. This would be an individual who hopefully would be a stable influence upon the children of divorce by giving them a warm and interested adult with whom they can relate over time and who would lessen the impact of the power play that often enters the life of these youngsters.

THERE IS no question that as long as divorce remains an adversary procedure, destructiveness instead of dignity will be the predicted end result. Therefore, the inception of a family court system is greatly needed.

Where you are directly concerned, a possibility of counseling appears indicated. Your bitterness, while understandable, will not permit you to make a healthy life for yourself. Each of us must be prepared to be self-sufficient for the possibility of death, di-

vorces, or desertion of a mate looms over all of our heads.

For the woman of today, her marriage and her children can only be part of her life unless she is willing to put herself in a high risk position emotionally and financially.

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