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Can I Date While I'm Separated?

By Mary S. Pence

Whether you are the “rejected” spouse or the one who wants to move on from a failed marriage, you may be asking yourself questions like these about dating after you separate:

What are the legal implications of dating during a separation?

The decision to start dating after you've separated from your spouse has important legal implications, and there are different concerns in different cases. Before you decide to date ask your lawyer! My own general rule of thumb is: “If you drive yourself there and drive yourself home and you are with a group of people, you're fine.”

How will dating impact my children?

Many children whose parents are separated are still trying to come to terms with the fact that Daddy and Mommy are not living in the same house. Weigh carefully on how much change your children can cope with at a time when so much is changing in their lives.

Am I emotionally ready to date?

Our mental health colleagues tell us there is important emotional “work” to be done when a marriage falls apart. This is the time to examine significant questions such as:

- What was my part in the failure of my marriage?
- What would I like to do differently the next time?

Honestly exploring these questions can be painful and time consuming, but the best time to learn and grow (generally working with a therapist) is while the dynamics of the relationship are recent and fresh. Carefully consider the legal aspects, the impact on your children, and your own psychological well-being in making your choice about dating after you separate from your spouse.



Mary S. Pence, a partner of Feldesman Tucker, helps clients to develop and achieve a vision for their future after divorce. Mary has been repeatedly recognized as a top divorce lawyer in the D.C. metro area by Super Lawyers, *Washingtonian Magazine*, and Best Lawyers, and is a Fellow of the American Academy of Matrimonial Lawyers.

The family law team at Feldesman Tucker is dedicated to helping clients make sound decisions for their future.

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