

## **Separation Survival Tips**

The period of Separation is similar to a marathon if children are involved. Each day brings it's own worries, exhaustion and hope. During this time, it is crucial to take care of one's own needs and use the time to observe oneself as objectively as possible.

This is the time to marshal one's time and energy. Airlines caution parents to put their own oxygen masks on first, in case of a change in cabin pressure, then the masks of their children. By ensuring their oxygen supply, parents are better able to ensure that of their children. Periods of separation are similar to changes in cabin pressure. Parents must quickly learn where their oxygen supply is and how to shepherd their children through the crisis.

Below are some suggestions to keep in mind during the period of separation:

1. Remember that this is a remarkably stressful time. Be gentle with yourself and use stress-busting techniques such as exercise, recreation, baths, time management, "down-time", laughter, etc.
2. Remember that not all periods of separation end in divorce. Many people benefit from an "outside ear", someone who is not in their social community or family such as a clergyperson, therapist, etc.
3. Whether your separation ends in divorce or reconciliation, if you have children, your relationship with your partner will continue for the rest of your children's lives.
4. Use this time for growth opportunities. Listen as objectively as possible to feedback about you and decide whether or not you need to make personal changes in areas such as anger management issues, addictions/compulsions, maturity issues, and dependency {too much/little} on others.
5. Remember that this period is just that: a period in your life. This time will pass, tensions will ease, and your life will settle back into a predictable pattern.
6. Keep in mind that the words "Divorce" and "Separation" trigger everyone's greatest quality of life fears. You will hear frightful stories from many that may worsen your own fears. Know that you can end conversations as needed and choose carefully who is least likely to share such stories when you need to talk about your own concerns.