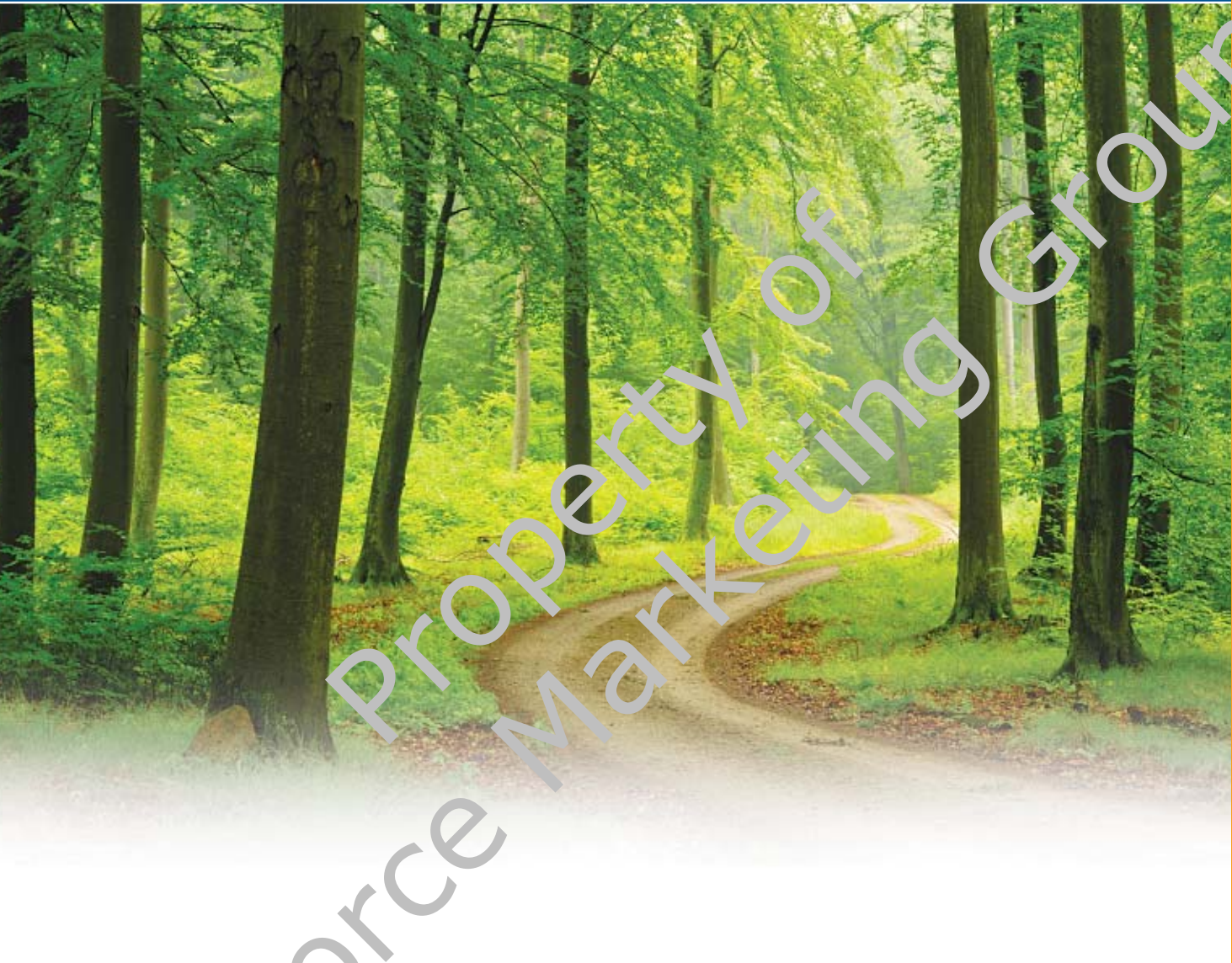


# DIVORCE

RECOVERY GUIDE



Divorce Property of Marketing Group

 Johnson & Smith, LLP

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# A Peaceful Divorce by Design



Neil James Dan Johnson Martha Smith Chris English

Your divorce settlement is important. And how you get there matters a lot.

## Our Collaborative Divorce service makes a difference

When Dan Johnson began practicing family law in the early 1990s, he knew there had to be a better way to help clients than taking their cases to court. "Divorce litigation cost a lot of money and dragged cases on for months," he recalls. But he soon learned about Collaborative Divorce — an alternative method of dispute resolution outside the adversarial system. Johnson and his partner, Martha Smith are both seasoned collaborative attorneys who are trained to resolve divorce cases using this process. With their Collaborative Divorce service, you can get through your divorce with less stress, expense, and conflict.

## A high rate of out-of-court settlement

Today, the law firm of Johnson & Smith has a stellar reputation in Los Angeles County for resolving the vast majority of its cases through collaborative family law. "In Collaborative Divorce, you and your spouse retain your own separate attorneys who will work together with settlement as the only goal," Smith explains. "The best part is: both attorneys sign an agreement stating that they will resign should the process break down and you want to litigate. So everyone is committed to finding a non-adversarial solution."

## Serving you with top-rated legal skills

Johnson and Smith are highly respected by not only clients but also other divorce lawyers and judges. Johnson is a Fellow of the American Academy of Matrimonial Lawyers and has an AV

rating in *Maximale-Hubbell*. Smith is a past-president of the California Bar Association, is listed in *Best Lawyers in America*, and has been profiled in *Newsweek* and *The Los Angeles Times*. Both have represented numerous celebrities in their divorces.

## Financial and child-custody expertise

"I also have training in asset valuation," Johnson adds, "which is extremely valuable if your divorce involves significant property issues. And if your case warrants it, we will bring in a financial advisor. Furthermore, Martha has experience as a child advocate, so we cover different aspects of your divorce."

"Come to us for peaceful divorce resolutions," says Smith. "We can help you design a divorce settlement agreement that is best for the future of you and your family."

**Contact us today to book a free initial consultation and start designing your peaceful divorce.**

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For most people, divorce is much more than a major legal process. It's also a challenging time of transition that can negatively impact virtually every area of life: emotional, psychological, domestic, parental, financial, physical health, social, vocational and more.

This special **Divorce Recovery Guide** contains hand-picked articles, book excerpts, advice and more to help you recover from the inevitable stresses and pressures of divorce. And just as importantly, the Guide empowers you to build the satisfying, strong and inspired new "life-after-divorce" that you desire, and deserve.



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# Divorce Recovery

Recovering from divorce is like climbing a mountain, one challenging step after another. For most of us, it's a difficult journey — but the rewards at the end of the climb are worth it!

By Dr. Bruce Fisher  
and Dr. Robert Alberti

**A**re you hurting? If you have recently ended a love relationship, you are. Those who appear not to hurt when their love relationships end have either already worked through a lot of hurt, or have yet to feel the pain. So go ahead, acknowledge that you're hurt. It's natural, expected, healthy, even okay to hurt. Pain is nature's way of telling us that something in us needs to be healed, so let's get on with the healing.

There's an adjustment process after a divorce — with a beginning, an end, and specific steps of learning along the way. While you're feeling some of the pain, you're more anxious to learn how to be healed. If you're like most of us, you probably have had some destructive patterns of behavior for years — maybe since your childhood. Change is hard work. While you were in a love relationship, you might have been comfortable enough that you felt no need to change. But now there is that pain. What do you do? Well, you can use the pain as motivation to learn and to grow.

The steps of the adjustment process are arranged into a pyramid of “Rebuilding Blocks” to symbolize a mountain. Rebuilding means climbing that mountain, and for most of us it's a difficult journey. Let us assure you that the climb is worth it! The rewards at the top make the tough climb worthwhile.

The rebuilding blocks are a guide and a map prepared by others who have already traveled the trail. As you climb, you'll discover that tremendous personal growth is possible, despite the emotional trauma you've experienced from the ending of your love relationship. Beginning at the bottom, we find denial and fear, two painful stumbling blocks that come early in the process of adjustment. They can be overwhelming feelings, and may make you reluctant to begin the climb.

## **Denial: “I Can't Believe This is Happening to Me”**

The good news is we humans have a wonderful mechanism that allows us to feel only as much pain as

we can handle without becoming overwhelmed. Pain that is too great is put into our “denial bag” and held until we are strong enough to experience and learn from it.

The bad news is some of us experience so much denial that we are reluctant to attempt recovery — to climb the mountain. There are many reasons for this. Some are unable to assess and identify what they are feeling and will have difficulty adjusting to change of any sort. They must learn that “what we can feel, we can heal.” Others have such a low self-concept that they don't believe they're capable of climbing the mountain. And some feel so much fear that they're afraid to climb the mountain.

## **Fear: “I Have Lots of It!”**

Have you ever been in a winter blizzard? The wind is blowing so hard that it howls. The snow is so thick you can see only a few feet ahead of you. Unless you have shelter, it feels — and it can be — life threatening.

The fears you feel when you first separate are like being in a blizzard. Where do you hide? How do you find your way? You choose not to climb this mountain because even here at the bottom you feel overwhelmed. How can you find your way up when you believe the trail will become more blinding, threatening, fearful? You want to hide, find a lap to curl up in, and get away from the fearful storm.

How do you handle your fears? What do you do when you discover your fears have paralyzed you? Can you find the courage to face them so you can get ready to climb the mountain? Each fear you overcome gives you strength and courage to continue your journey through life.

## **Adaptation: “But It Worked When I was a Kid!”**

Each of us has many healthy parts: inquisitive, creative, nurturing, feelings of self-worth, appropriate anger. During our growing-up years, our healthy parts