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THE DIVORCE WARS INTERNAL WARS AND THE ENEMIES WITHIN

The "Way Too Much" and "Far Too Little" Wars Can Do You In

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The following is the first excerpt in a series of thirteen articles based on the book, *Divorce: It's All About Control--How to Win the Emotional, Psychological and Legal Wars*, by renowned family law specialist and managing partner of Phillips, Lerner, Lauzon & Jamra LLP in Los Angeles, Calif. While the Control Wars often center around the typical three--Emotional, Psychological and Legal--other wars can include the Internal Wars and the Enemies Within--wars that can be the most destructive of all; each that deal with self-abuse in one way or another.

While many of the wars you will fight during your marital demise are closely connected with the dealings between you and your ex, in the emotional, psychological and legal sense, you can become involved in many other types of wars. These wars are the ones in which you will be fighting with and against yourself!

These Internal Wars can wage just as viciously against you as the Three Typical Wars: that is, if you let them. In fact, the Enemies Within can be even more pervasive since they can sometimes start the divorce ball rolling or exacerbate any one of the Three Typical Wars already in progress. These Enemies Within can also outfit the other side with ammunition to use against you, and quite often these Enemies Within can serve as the catalyst for self-inflicted injury. In other words, as a result of declaring war upon yourself!

I have broken these "Internal" wars into two categories. I refer to them as the "Way Too Much" or "Far Too Little" Wars.

With either the "Way Too Much War" or the "Far Too Little War," keep in mind neither of them is any different in concept than the Three Typical Wars. What's in sharp contrast is that these Internal Wars attack from the inside, while the others usually strike from the outside.

The "Way Too Much" War can set up a dynamic whereby you are battling for Control against your impulses to overdo, while the "Far Too Little" War-genre presents struggles to "under do." The former may include too much alcohol while the latter may have to do with too little sleep.

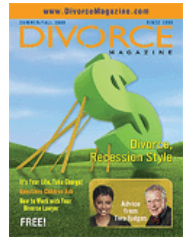
Often when a person is going through the many ups and downs only a marital break-up will produce, he or she can spin out of Control and begin a self-directed abuse process, one that is always the result of some type of internal struggle. It could be drugs, alcohol, compulsive shopping, gambling, over-eating, under-eating, over-working, under-working, too much sex, drastic weight gain or weight loss, minimal focus, sleep deprivation, driving too fast, mood swings, physical vanity, or abuse to others.

Ask yourself this: in addition to the Typical Three Wars or in lieu of any one of them, are you at war with yourself too, and if so, what type of war (or wars) are you fighting?

When one is not feeling mentally or emotionally well, he or she can lunge for a tonic of sorts, something to alter the state and medicate against emotional pain, much the same way one would take medicines to alleviate a physical pain. Alcohol and drugs are certainly the most popular and common elixirs in the "Way Too Much" War. Food is another remedy. In any case, those who begin to overdo with regard to the things they ingest, well, they are clearly at war with themselves. You may argue that this "Way Too Much" War problem--this issue you have identified--may have preceded the divorce.

For example, someone who may have been a heavy drinker may now add drugs to his or her cache of "substances" of choice. For those who have two credit cards, it may mean they now have six, and for those who micro-manage their office staff perhaps they now add someone else to that list of persons that could hold a powerful position in their lives--like their therapist or accountant.

Typically, those who have had a tendency toward some destructive behavior soon become even more destructive in that behavior, or again, compound the destruction by adding a new addiction to the pile of "just can't help myself!" behaviors.



Although there may be many on any person's list, the following single out the most common Enemy Within culprits. They include: Drinking/Drugs: Drinking socially at any time in your life is acceptable. Overdoing or having the need to rely on alcohol every day, of course, is not. If you are the type of person who has teetered on the brink of a drinking issue, know that your urge (the real Enemy Within) to up the ante and belly up to the bar more frequently (or to consume more quantity) is a War in which you will need to vigorously defend yourself. Over-indulgence in drugs and alcohol also diminishes your self-esteem to a level that can become a bottomless pit, one that is hard to pull out of. If you are going through a divorce or a relationship breakup, the last thing you need is low self-esteem. As hard as it may be, my advice is to forego both alcohol and drugs if it appears you cannot be in Control of them. To convince you further here is a partial list of reasons why alcohol and drug abuse can be detrimental to you. You might say:

- I will hurt my children, parents, friends and others close to me deeply by allowing them to suffer as they stand by and witness the effects of what such excesses can do to me.
- I may lose custody/visitation with my children.
- I will set a bad example for my children.
- I will not be able to function as productively in my profession.
- I may lose my job.
- I may get busted for drunk driving or arrested for possession of illegal drugs.
- My physical well-being could be at stake.
- I may embarrass myself in public.
- People will talk badly about me behind my back.
- I'll miss out on the better things in life.
- I will look foolish and disgusting to those whose opinions mean a great deal to me.
- Alcohol and drug abuse will age me.
- I will continuously live in a state of "Out of Control."

Stacy D. Phillips is a certified family law specialist and author of *Divorce: It's All About Control — How to Win the Emotional, Psychological and Legal Wars* (ExecuProv Press, 2005—now in its fifth printing). Phillips represents many celebrities in film, television, music, sports, and politics. She can be contacted at (310) 277-7117 or by email at sdpdissoqueen@plljlaw.com.