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## **FACING FACTS BEFORE DEALING WITH EMOTIONS IS THE KEY TO MARRIAGE**

Recent figures\* reporting that the divorce rate in England and Wales has fallen by eight per cent reflect a changing attitude to marriage, according to a family law expert.

Husband/wife duo, Mike Gordon, a forensic accountant with extensive business expertise, and Penny Raby, a family law solicitor with over 25 years' experience, have recently launched Marriage Makeover, a new service set up to revive and rescue marriages. They say the number of couples committed to giving their marriage a second chance has surprised them.

"I've worked with thousands of couples who've gone through the divorce process and it pains me because I really believe that many of those marriages could have been saved if they'd just done something as simple as communicate with each other," explained Penny Raby.

"It's amazing how many couples haven't had a proper conversation with each other for years. Of course, that means they struggle to build a true understanding of their relationship. Then they suddenly wake up one morning and wonder why it feels as though their marriage is over.

"There is a positive to come out of this – even though lots of couples are reaching that point, more of them want to do something constructive about it.

"They are starting to realise that divorce is expensive – not just financially, but emotionally as well, not to mention the impact it has if children are involved."

Mike Gordon says a no-nonsense approach is the most effective way to getting a relationship on an even footing before looking at emotions.

"Couples want a practical solution where there's an objective analysis of their relationship that helps them face the facts first, then consider their emotions once they're in full possession of what's what. Once they've reached that point, they're more likely to understand each other and be able to reconcile their relationship," he explained.

Apart from Penny and Mike's legal and financial expertise, Marriage Makeover also has a trusted network of professionals who work to achieve positive outcomes: independent financial advisors, accountants, property advisors, business and lifestyle coaches plus many others.

"Facing facts before trying to deal with the resulting emotions is what we're about," says Penny. "Our area of expertise is identifying and addressing the reality of a relationship, which we do through structured interviews, forensic accounting and lifestyle analysis.

"These clarify the practical aspects of a relationship. Then our network of trusted professionals looks after the specialist issues. Once we've flagged up their concerns, we all know what then needs to be addressed," she added.

Penny and Mike believe there are common themes within struggling marriages and have compiled their top ten tips for keeping a marriage on the right tracks:

Marriage Makeover's top tips for staying together:

1. **Accept that change happens.** Neither time nor people stand still. If you want something to change, then change something. If your relationship is flagging, you have to do something to renew it.
2. **Be honest.** Sometimes you have to be cruel to be kind. If you really have fallen out of love with someone, tell them. Don't prolong the agony or raise expectations falsely.
3. **Talk about the tough stuff.** Facing up to sensitive problems is half the challenge – you can then talk and deal with them.
4. **Play together, stay together.** Set aside some fun, quality time for yourselves together. Make sure your marriage is your most important project, not mundane tasks like DIY.
5. Only the **two of you really understand** your relationship. The support of other people can be helpful but try not to be consumed by their opinions, advice and suggestions.
6. **Continue the courtship.** Try to remember the reasons you were attracted to each other in the first place.
7. Have a **shared goal** to work towards. Focus on what you can achieve as a team rather than as individuals – it reminds you of the power of togetherness.
8. **Negotiate the money minefield.** If you're able to agree a reasonable approach to money, it can save a lot of underlying tension within the relationship.
9. **Let go of resentment.** It's easier said than done, but it's absolutely crucial to find a way of moving on from issues that have affected your past.
10. **Argue well.** Arguments are part of every relationship so turn them into a positive lesson in communication. Agree to disagree and realise there doesn't need to be a 'winner' at the end of every discussion.

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#### **Editors' notes:**

Marriage Makeover has offices in the Midlands, Cotswolds and London. It is aimed at high net-worth couples with complex financial and business affairs, wishing to revive/rescue their marriages. It is a practical solution based on sound business, financial and lifestyle thinking because the vast majority of problems in relationships are based on a misunderstanding of the facts.

\* National Office of Statistics reported that the provisional divorce rate in England and Wales fell by 8 per cent – visit [www.statistics.gov.uk](http://www.statistics.gov.uk) for further information

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