



# Should I Stay or Should I Go



Helping Women Create the  
Relationship They Desire.



“ A large part of my therapy practice involves people (primarily women but sometimes men) who are questioning whether they should leave their marriage or try to find ways to cope with the difficulties inherent to being married. ”



*Sometimes they just want to be told what to do. The decision is an incredibly difficult one. Many times the people I work with are hoping something big happens (my partner hits me) so they'll have an excuse to leave. Unfortunately, no one can tell you what you should do. Every situation is different and every person is different, and you have to decide for yourself what you should do.*

**We're definitely from a new generation.** Fifty years ago, couples married and typically stayed married. Although many couples experienced both good and bad times (sometimes very bad times), they didn't spend their time pondering divorce. Roles were very defined, and they weren't questioned. For the most part, men worked for the money and women worked in the home.

**Well, things have changed - a lot.** Women have forged forward into the workforce, completely changing the dynamic of marriage, and roles are no longer clearly defined. As women, most of us were raised to believe that if we had a career, the work at home would be split 50/50. Unfortunately, through no fault of their own, men weren't necessarily raised to see it the same way. Roles are now confusing -- women resent men for not making the majority of the income but also for not doing more in the home. The men aren't to blame. The situation is. But it's causing stress in many marriages.

**Due to these changing and undefined roles**, many people spend a fair amount of time pondering divorce. After every fight, we wonder "Should we get divorced?" If sex has lessened, we wonder "Should we get divorced?" If one person is pulling more of the burden, they're wondering "Should we get divorced?" Torturing yourself with this constant question is stressful and it takes a toll on your relationship.

**Unfortunately, there's no clear-cut answer** to the "Should I stay or should I go?" question. Everyone's definition of a good marriage is different -- what one couple can tolerate, another would use as an impetus for divorce. Some will stay for the children, and some will do what they feel is best for themselves.

And while there's no one single formula to making the right decision, here are some questions to ask yourself that can help you decide what's best for you...

**What is my definition of a marriage?** Everyone's definition of a marriage is different. For some, it's about feeling a certain way about someone. For others, it's about working together toward common goals. For still others, it's about getting their personal needs met. Get a free copy of Leanne's *'Relationship Appraisal'* and take note of what's important to you. Pick the attributes that are important to you, and create your definition of a good marriage.

**Does my marriage measure up to my own definition of marriage?** Once you've created your definition of a good marriage, take time to evaluate whether your marriage is living up to your defined expectations. If it is, maybe that will help you make your decision. If it's not, you may have choices to make: You can either work on improving the relationship, or you can decide it's time to go.

**Should I make my decision today?** Absolutely not!!! As soon as they begin to feel unhappy with their marriage, many people feel pressured to make a decision about whether to stay or go as soon as possible. If that's you, please stop! Taking time to evaluate your marriage and the pros and cons of divorce is stressful enough. Pushing yourself to make a decision today can make it even worse. When you're ready to make a decision, you will. It can take weeks, months or even years to decide. Take the pressure off deciding, and understand that it's a process and processes take time.

**Do I have to have a reason to leave?** So many women think there has to be a profound reason as to why they want to divorce. They don't know what they'll tell people if he hasn't hit them, had an affair or done something significant that justifies a divorce. Some women stay simply because they can't come up with any traumatic reason to leave. But there's no written justification for divorce -- any decision you make is yours and yours alone, and you don't have to justify your decision to anyone. The fact is, sometimes it's hard to put your finger on why exactly you want to go, but that's okay because it's all up to you. No specific reason is necessary. Life is about your choices, whether you can justify them or not.

**Have I done everything I can to make it work?** The last thing anyone wants is to second guess a major decision they've made in their life. Most women need to know that they've tried all they can to make it work. Many try reading self-help books, while others try individual or couples therapy. It's important to know you've done all you can. If you have, and you're still unhappy, then maybe it's time to make a tough choice one way or another. Some choose to stay and learn coping skills. Other will make the choice to divorce.

**Are there circumstances under which I should go?** Unfortunately there are some very good reasons why you should leave a marriage. For instance, if you're being physically abused, it's time to leave. Unfortunately, many women stay in abusive situations because they believe their husbands truly love them and don't mean to hurt them. While that may be true, just because you understand why your husband does what he does is no reason to sacrifice yourself (and possibly your children) to an abusive husband. Being hurt by anyone is not OK! It can be difficult and scary to leave, especially with dangerous men, but there are ways to do it in which you can keep yourself and your children safe.

**I wish I could give you and all my clients the answer** to "Should I stay or should I go?" but I can't. And while I can't tell you what's best for you and your family, I can help walk you through the process it takes to make a decision one way or another. I've helped hundreds of women and men put to rest their constant questions about their marriage and the decisions that need to be made. I can help you, too!

**Leanne Hart is a professional therapist, speaker and educator with over 20 years of experience** helping women create the fulfilling relationship they desire. She has helped move hundreds of women from relationship confusion and frustration to clarity and understanding. Leanne works actively with her clients, using her expertise in relationship behavior and dynamics, to help women get what they are looking for in all their relationships. Leanne spends much of her time helping women work towards their goals of feeling connected, supported, understood and loved. Through her personal and professional experience, Leanne has developed a true passion for helping women understand their relationship needs and develop strategies to achieve them.

Get a free copy of Leanne's '*Relationship Appraisal*' and explore your relationship's potential.

Use Leanne's Free '*9 Key Strategies to Creating a Great Relationship*' to get that loving feeling back in your life.



**Leanne Hart, MA, LMFT**

Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist  
Huntington Beach, CA

(714) 514-3779

[leanne@leanehartmft.com](mailto:leanne@leanehartmft.com)

[www.LeanneHart.com](http://www.LeanneHart.com)