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Getty Images If there's a serious chance of your marriage heading into a big D, it's time to have heart to heart - with yourself. Divorce advisers Nicole Baras-Feuer and Francine Baras recommend asking yourself a series of questions. What we found was that people didn't have the information they needed. They faced divorce without their knowledge. Baras-Feuer told TODAY about her and Baras' decision to write the book 37 Things I Wish I'd Known Before My Divorce. They recommend starting with the question: Am I doing all I can to save my marriage? This includes measures such as seeing a couples therapist. And if you pursue therapy, are you and your partner both willing participants? To see the rest of the questions on The Baras-Feuer and Baras checklist —or to read about the things Baras-Feuer asked her to know before going through her own divorce —visit today.com. This content is created and managed by third parties, and is imported into this page to help users provide their email addresses. You may be able to find more information about this and similar content on piano.io

THE DIVORCE ITSELF IS NOT WHAT bothers Duane Meulners – he has been through the experience twice before. Nor is it money. The Silicon Valley entrepreneur had already offered to pay his estranged wife \$4,000 a month in support. What really rocked him was the possibility of losing control of Dymek Corp., his \$10-million manufacturing company. Meulners paid too much attention to a friend, a founder of a company in Los Angeles, whose ex-wife had received a portion of the business through California community property law. The woman then used her new powers to work with the vice president and select her ex-husband from the job. What if Kathleen Meulners was awarded enough shares in Dymek to expel Duane? Divorce is not an ongoing risk. He had a problem with his wife, he told the hitman, a problem that needed to be eliminated. But, in the fall of 1984, before the deed could be done, the Meulners were arrested by a supposed contract killer, who was actually an undercover cop in San Jose. Under interrogation, Meulners denied intending to kill his wife, and pleaded for le le penalty. There are, after all, 50 of its employees and Dymek customers around the world to consider. I'm a 90% shareholder in that company. If I go down the tube, that whole company, the whole business, a whole lot of work, a lot of people holding stocks, hoping that it's going to be worth something one day -- [that is] all going down that fucking tube. Meulners eventually pleaded guilty to a charge of solicitation of murder. His sentence was a year on furlough work, five years of probation, and a \$5,000 fine. Things not so good for Hawaiian dairyman Robert V. Toledo, who was shot and killed by the woman he was trying to divorce, a former island beauty queen named Gertrude Kapiolani Miller Toledo. The jury found that Mrs Toledo acted in self-defence when, during arguments over their millions of dollars in marital property, her husband came to her with a knife. As in meulners' case, money is not the problem that drives Toledo to violence: here, too, there is a settlement on the table. But, while Kathleen Meulners made no demands on her husband's business interests, Mrs Toledo has stated she will receive no less than half of the dairy operations her husband has inherited and built into Oahu's largest. Toledo was angry. A friend, testifying at a mid-1984 trial, recalled hearing the man threaten his wife with a knife two months before the shooting, saying, I'm going to see you die before I give you a square inch of milk. Even a decade ago, such fears that divorce might pry companies out of the grasp of entrepreneurs would be considered both legally and socially preposterous. Why would a housewife want, let alone decent, equity in her husband's company? Gradually, gender and job descriptions have been removed from the criteria of who gets what in divorce. Today, the law generally assumes that both parties to marriage contribute - financially or otherwise - to any and all marital assets. And that includes the company. A recent study of divorce in Los Angeles County found that the number of divorce settlements in which a business was involved doubled, from 5% to 11%, in the decade from 1968 to 1978. Lawyers across the country reported similar increases to the spread of divorce reform that is generally west to east. Currently, if a person or both spouses have an interest in a business that starts, acquires, or gets value during marriage, it can be expected to be part of the distribution of divorced properties – along with homes, boats, and so on. The only question from state to state is how each part of this marital property will be divided - whether it will approach a 50-50 separation of marital assets, such as in nine community-owned states, or, as is the case across the nation, a fair distribution of the entire asset list. Many business owners, such as Meulners and Toledo, hear corporate and marital property in the same sentence and jump to the conclusion that courts are out to put their expletives into executive offices. Not even. While each state case book shows a decision in which a woman wins control of a business interest that has been financed or managed by an ex-husband (she provides capital for a hair salon, but she has a hairdresser's license, for example) most legal observers consider them coincidental. In fact, it's rare to see stocks change hands at all - and when that happens, neither the judge nor the couple are much happier with the arrangements that entrepreneurs make. For couples, this is a practical matter: no one with a more attractive alternative wants to be a helpless, helpless minority shareholder. The court, meanwhile, views the purpose of divorce as severing ties, not keeping couples bound by joint investment. That's why the settlement seeks to pay non-operating spouses a share of the company's equity not in shares, but in cash or other nonbusiness assets. But what if the cash settlement is so large that entrepreneurs can't afford it? Many company owners fear that the judge will force them to sell, to take partners, to go public - perhaps even declare bankruptcy or liquidation - only to come up with the funds. Again, such results have been reported in nearly every state, but lawyers say the measures often prove less a court-ordered remedy than strategic decisions made more timely by pending divorce settlements. Where cash solutions represent difficulty, good judges, dealing with friendly entrepreneurs, are usually more than willing to work on payment schedules that avoid draconian measures. No divorce court is interested in harming the goose that lays the golden egg. However, entrepreneurs die right in being wary of divorce, especially if they are between an estimated 3% to 5% of all filings that escalate to litigation levels. The huge cost of the ordeal, both emotional and financial, could cripple the company and its chief executive. Entrepreneurial decision-making is disrupted, and strategic planning is hamstrung during the proceedings. The partnership was strained by subpoena pressure and document production depositions. And that's not the worst of it. If this case becomes such a pitched battle that the word divorce leaks to the grapes of the industry or newspapers, the company may begin to seem unstable to customers, lenders, and investors. More than a few divorce spats have been known to spawn spin-off lawsuits and even criminal prosecutions. But the saddest stories are the entrepreneurs who sabotage everything they've worked on by letting their egos - and their deeply ingrained need to control not only their company, but the divorce itself - prevent them from doing what's best for the business. In Chicago, for example, there are pending divorce cases that might kill not one, but two companies, and possibly send some people to prison before the final decree is issued. Norman Karef's printing company worth \$8.5 million accounted for more than 80% of Joan Karef's million-dollar courier business - that is, until their divorce heated up and she took her delivery elsewhere. He has begun calling his company's customers, in a move that he says is hurting him most of his business. Throughout this case, there have been allegations and counterlocation of spies. There has been violence, both real and threatened. Finally, the commotion caught the attention of the FBI, which stepped in-- with a secret informant wearing a hidden microphone - to investigate allegations that Norman Karef's company paid kickbacks on several large printing contracts. His company, Earl Lee Co., was sold last fall; his, Evergreen Air Express Express (Which is a lot of whipping) or often happens things that have and former customers and business associates read all about it at Crain's Chicago Business. Three years after the first petition was filed, both sides seem inclined to settle. Entrepreneurial divorce statistics are hard to come by, but only half of the jest that some company founders say they build longer and stronger relationships with their accountants - or with their divorce lawyers - than with their partners. For many, marital strife is just another occupation danger. If the physical and financial drain of getting a new company into the black doesn't cause problems at home, the strain of keeping it there will. Everyone has been through it at least once, a sign the Californian producer has granted his divorce, but has been haggling for two years over a property settlement that would make it all final. I had lunch recently with four people, and we counted 11 weddings around the table. At one time, conversations in such groups would be fraternity jokes, one trying to top the other with tales of private spying and benefit demands. Now the talks are technical, and very serious - all about business valuations, limited stock agreements, and vague references to damage control, a euphemism for hiding money from one's partner. For entrepreneurs, divorce has become just plain for business, explained the founder of an investment banking firm who has been through the ordeal. Worse than seeing your market dry up, worse than having your bank call in your loan, even worse than losing most of your main employees. On some level, typical business owners live to the challenges of periodic business trauma. But this one is different. In divorce, entrepreneurs are forced to stand up, frustrated, as a series of paid gladiators fight for the company's fate. Divorce lawyers (who call themselves marriage lawyers with the same logic that allowed President Reagan to call MX Peacekeepers missiles) demanded many documents and days of negotiations or deposition time. Business valuations - one for each side - claw through closely guarded business records, investments, and amenities with as much glee as if they were throwing underwear drawers on the sidewalk. To some extent, the entrepreneur's greatest fear has already manifested: the business is no longer completely under his control. Then some judges, whose business knowledge might stop at how to balance the checkbook, will tell me how much my company is worth? The Californian manufacturer's voice is angled with a combination of anger and anxiety. By placing value on his company, which may differ from itself, the court substitution about how to do business for him. If that person saw the offer I got in 1984, when I was thinking of selling the company, he would see someone willing to pay \$1 million. But that includes noncompete for me, and I don't intend to retire. I say business is \$600,000 today. If the judge went with the multimillion-dollar figure, though, I'd owe my wife \$500,000, not \$300,000. For him, there is more than principle at stake. Not only did I not have that amount of money, I couldn't sell for that amount, and the company couldn't carry that amount of debt. You see why I'm a little worried? It is the subjective nature of the assessment process that makes it so frightening for entrepreneurs facing divorce. Unlike larger, publicly traded companies, which can be rewarded with little more than calculators and stock tables from local newspapers, there are no useful benchmarks for assessing small and individual businesses. Those who have thought ahead rely on pre- and postnuptial agreements, or estate planning devices as restrictive stock transfer agreements. But entrepreneurs who have knelt to such a level of planning are an anomaly - and in some people's opinion, it may be too conscientious to have a partner to divorce. Let's face it: even the loudest CEOs, the people who get everything in writing, become a believing soul when approaching the altar. It's just not very romantic to affirm a prenuptial agreement with a marriage proposal. So unless there is inherited wealth, any discussion of who owns what, and who gets what in the event of a split, is usually avoided. Similarly, postnuptial covenants are shunned because of their potential to become self-fulfilling prophecies. Who, being a healthy mind and relative marital happiness, goes to a partner and says, honey, let's talk about what would happen if we got divorced? From this estate planning device, the most common is a buy and sell agreement, which helps the appraiser by setting the price of how many shares the company can buy. However, such a document could be worse than useless for employers facing divorce if it contains vague formulas or outdated numbers. That's why many lawyers and accountants recommend the inclusion of sunset clauses on such agreements, arguing that it is better not to have a trade than to be governed by an expired one. Some experts also recommend that the trade, designed to deal with contentious issues, be pronounced to address divorce directly. One variation will leave the entrepreneur (or other shareholders) facing divorce selling all shares to his partner immediately, at a set price. It seems that such a technique, while not defeating a spouse's claim to the economic value of equity, would keep the company from becoming the battlefield on which divorce is fought. Then again, such a technique would require employers to exactly what they don't want to do: sell. There are no strategic or financial benchmarks to guide the process, it is up to the assessors to determine exactly how the company should be valued. While appraisers will make you believe their profession is more of the right science than the art of arcane, even subjective terminology. Weighted averages and and sometimes it turns out that the results of assessor conversations with experts in the field are not specified. Such keywords as the value of that concern will be (the value inherent in the business when all tangible assets and those required to operate the company are in place) and goodwill (usually defined as recognition of the company's name, along with its perception in communication as an entity capable of delivering quality goods or services) is a catchall title that can be made to cover anything desired by assessors and divorce lawyers. However, it may be better to try to exploit all these inaccuracies than to rely too heavily on overly rigid methods. There are horror stories of entrepreneurs whose businesses have assessed only by balance sheet and earnings reports as guidance. Others have seen supposedly knowledgeable appraisers police out and reward their companies according to Internal Revenue Service criteria, which require tightly held companies to be compared to publicly traded entities in the same industry - methods that make guesswork look scientific. Perhaps most remarkable of all, appraisers don't see the company through the eyes of its founders. They value the business as a buyer, maximize potential profits, minimize management costs, and pay no attention to the tax rates that encourage entrepreneurs to do the opposite. If I see a CEO taking \$500,000 worth of compensation a year, I can add an allowance and some salary back to the company and, based on market rates for managers in that industry, show compensation worth only \$150,000, explained Neal Fisher, CPA Chicago at Miller, Cooper & Co., which specializes in valuations. That's good news for a CEO who is interested in withholding alimony payments by showing less revenue. For those whose main concern is the company's disposition and the size of the cash settlement, the news can be very bad. That's \$350,000 more to add to the company's operating income, which, when viewed by an appraiser, Fisher said, could result in an increase in the company's value that could be several million dollars. \$10,000 a month to support? Just a little cash for you, huh, man? Joe DuCanto, a Chicago divorce lawyer and tax expert, teases one of his train trading clients on the phone. His company, Schiller DuCanto & Fleck Ltd., represents many business owners, and the planning advice he gives to his clients is very difficult, traditional, and proentrepreneur: stay away from shared rentals, where wedding partners are also legal business partners. Shared rentals automatically make the company a divided marital property. And if the divorce is in the offing, do your best in law to protect the seed and protect your interests from possible fragmentation. But don't ask dear DuCanto for poor entrepreneurs. I represent both sides, and it is the wife, in the operating couple, who really takes it in the flesh. He [the businessman] has been the selection of drugs that he does not. Partner Donald C. Schiller, chairman of the Family Law Section of the American Bar Association, agrees. He has the resources. He knows what it is -- and isn't -- in the books. She also knows that, no matter how much she brags about skimming or unreported income in pillow talk, she won't pursue it or won't find it. It won't go after her, Schiller says, because she doesn't want to go to jail: she may have participated in her husband's fraud, or by signing a joint tax return, can be shown to have real knowledge of her hijinks. Won't find it, DuCanto adds, because only the most vindictive - and wealthy independent - wives will dig deep enough to prove their suspicions. Schiller DuCanto & Fleck ready to track every last 50¢ Piece. Their appraiser has been known to confirm unreported income from pizza salons and falsified sales records from a bar by counting rounds of cardboard and swizzle sticks. But such financial shovels are expensive and may still not dig into what entrepreneurs have buried. Many of these people have been gearing up for divorce for years, says DuCanto. Just as CEOs are inflating the value of companies to attract buyers by accelerating revenue and suspending spending, it's an accepted fact among lawyers that an entrepreneur facing divorce will deflate the value of the company's presettlement by doing the opposite. One business consultant on the outskirts of Chicago, anticipating the breakup of his marriage, considered tactics such as breaking into separate bank accounts, building new trusts, investing in side businesses, paying his taxes upfront, and indulging himself in larger but less obvious perk - all of which are divorce shelters that valuers can't possibly trace. In the end, he decided it wasn't worth the future energy. His strategy, rather, was to convince his wife that the business was more stagnant than prosperous. It was pretty simple, the consultant recalled. First of all, shut the. You say nothing at home - nothing positive, anyway. Even if you land a big contract, you say things that are just OK at work, because you don't want things thrown back in your face in court. Then, at the end of each quarter, you put everything in the worst light possible, and you tell your accountant you expect him to do the same. It was exhausting, and I didn't know that I would do it again, but it worked. Consider, too, a California manufacturer that is still awaiting completion of its properties. His company, which, by law, the piece, not to be appreciated until his property distribution case goes to court this spring, has suffered a sudden fall in business since he and his wife separated. Traditionally performing better than its average competitor, the company's revenue this year fell by the same 28% as reported by the rest of the industry. Earnings also fell. This is partly industrial conditions, and partly I had to reinvest - spending a lot of money on executive compensation packages for my top people, stock plans, and things like that. You have to address the company's long-term problems periodically. But in describing his bad luck, he sounds suspicious. Divorce court judges will tolerate a little shade of financial correctness and some coincidental business setbacks. They would even ignore a bit of tax fraud - in fact, more than a few have glanced at bank loan applications and other telltale documents produced by opposing lawyers, and reported from the bench that they don't want to hear about it, according to Los Angeles divorce attorney Jan C. Gabrielson. They don't want to know how much cash has come home, he said, because it puts them in a difficult position. As one of the judges who participated in the seminar with Gabrielson told the audience, Do I expose one or both sides to allegations of criminal tax fraud, or do I settle divorce litigation based on reported income? Judges, however, don't like swallowing overt cookbooks, the kind that are clearly meant to boil down marriage-property rights or spouse benefits. Sudden changes in business conditions or status are almost always scrutinized. The court also pays more attention to defensive tactics such as shifting income or predivora stock to sympathetic observers, including partners or family members. One Miami-based clothier, for example, cut his salary from \$120,000 a year to \$70,000 when his wife filed for divorce. Interestingly enough, his brother, who is a partner in the business, got a \$50,000 raise at about the same time. If there's a plan for the CEO to get that money back, it never comes out in court. The judge in this particular case chose not to explore a clear revenue shift, because he did not want to spend time, said opposing attorney Melvyn B. Frumkes of Frumkes & Greene. However, there are similar but less successful ruses in other states. In some of them, the obligatory partner is known to have paid tax on additional income before returning his wind down the table to an entrepreneur who is about to divorce. A more elegant touch to this kind of predivora planning involves the Chicago businessman and his partner's father, who signed a stock exchange agreement about 18 months before the businessman filed for divorce. As soon as the planning documents were inked, the company began redeeming dad's stock at a greatly increasing price, draining most of its profits. At the same time, the entrepreneur slashed his salary from \$100,000 to \$25,000. Under Illinois law, he may have used business to protect his company income from the divorce decree. But he chose not to take any chances, and settled down with his wife outside court. A New York state legislator, seeking to muffle such violations, has introduced a bill that would instruct judges to see any transferred property transferred three years of commendable divorce proceedings to determine whether it has been carried out in accordance with the act of marriage. Some entrepreneurs don't stop by just juggling dollars and cents. Founder of J&P, an Illinois gas and oil distributor with stations in about 100 locations across the United States, simply dissolved the lease with the company by signing his wife's name on the necessary paperwork. The court upheld Lester Wright's right to transfer the company's shares to a trust owned by him. But on appeal, Josie Wright won - interest was still hers, and she was allowed to sell her shares. The most insistent and desperate damage control tactic, of course, is to pull the plug on the business and shift assets to some new - and possibly, nonmarital - property. Look at the case of a California meatpacker who stood in the middle of his divorce trial in 1984 to introduce his bankruptcy lawyer. In Pennsylvania, a woman who had started a company with her husband locked her up when the marriage failed, liquidated assets, and transferred the proceeds to a second company. The court-appointed receiver stepped in only as the second liquidation would begin. Even after the settlement of the property is negotiated or established, judicial action can proceed. There is a case of an Ohio waterreatment company, for example, being valued by an entrepreneur appraiser at about \$1.7 million, by his wife for about \$5.5 million. The judge left a few months with a lower estimate. But after the final edict, it was revealed that the businessman had sold the business for \$5.5 million. After the wife's motion, the Ohio Supreme Court sent the case back for some new arithmetic. ALL THIS TALK about financial maneuvering and their legal consequences shouldn't obscure the obvious: divorce is, first and foremost, a very emotional experience. Entrepreneurs who hide money, devalue their companies, and instead pull out all the usual ethical stops when the enemy is a divorced couple, may seem a contemplative human being. Psychologists, however, say it is more likely that these people responded, however inappropriately, to what they considered to be an almost life-threatening blow to them. Is the blow worse than the nonentrepreneur feels in the same circumstances? Firmly, yes. There's a reason a man calls his company 'my baby,' explains Chicago business psychologist Bernard Liebowitz. The threat of losing is like losing a big child custody battle, or maybe worse. In one of them, at least you can still visit the boy when it's all over. Losing companies is different. Such a loss, or the threat of one, is often referred to by psychologists as a narcissistic injury. The people who make companies invest from time and money, explained Carol Munschauer, a Buffalo clinical psychologist who has treated patients in entrepreneurial and nonentrepreneurial divorces. They're really really in the hope of achieving some kind of profound personal meaning. Maybe it's the self-esteem they give, or security, or power, or maybe even parental consent. Whatever business means to them, that's what looks in danger in divorce. Even if there is no chance that a partner will actually take on the business, the entrepreneur often feels that he or she will be diminished somehow – that he will not be considered by the world in the same way. There is a loss of perspective, and, often, a very excessive reaction. When these narcissistic injuries are combined with other character traits common to entrepreneurs, the result can be a long and messy divorce, Liebowitz said. Some of these people, especially men, are often what I call bad controllers. While most good controllers understand that control is a give-and-take situation, these people basically don't share what they think of as them. They get used to their way - with employees, but especially with a wife. By fighting for what belongs to her in divorce, these people often see her breaking the basic rules between the sexes. They want to punish him. And because they see most situations in terms of win or lose, they will continue to fight to win - even if that means losing. Unlike bad business deals, they won't give up. There are others, however, whose reaction is not to fight at all. One New England builder's divorce, a decade ago, deteriorated so badly that he let the business in on him, recalled attorney Paul D. Pearson, of Boston's Hill & Barlow. He eventually went through forced liquidation, away from his family, and some time later, he was found dead from exposure on the Florida coast. Indeed, the man may have other problems. But the divorce was the beginning of a tailspin. With that case behind her, Pearson now flatly advises her entrepreneurial clients to consider themselves emotionally disabled during their divorce proceedings, and she almost always suggests psychological therapy. Rare is the business, he counsels, that is unaffected by the founder's broken marriage. I warn them that no matter how competent they are, divorce almost always will, making them less so. They should expect disruption and reduced capacity to concentrate. Having to close the door once a day and cry should not be considered rare. Ellen V.B. Lapham, a Silicon Valley entrepreneur, tracks her company's failure to deal with a series of difficulties stemming from her psychological stress of parting ways with her husband and co-founder. Syntauri Corp., whose main products are software and components for computerized music synthesizers, is liquidated 1984, at the age of four. It is not divorce itself that is to blame; Lapham and her husband, software developer Scott Gibbs, reached a friendly divorce settlement - one that called for them to go their separate ways of business. Developed problems developed transition phase. It's a terrible feeling to have to admit that you're not the superperson you think you are, said Lapham, who is president and CEO of Syntauri and is now part of an all-woman team that tried the attack on Mount Everest. But I found from the beginning that it was very difficult to devote the attention that business needs. In addition, there is a communication problem. Whatever he says to employees or customers, I'll say something different, and vice versa. Since we both don't talk, there's a lot of distortion and side-taking. That confusion, combined with the exodus of two-thirds of Syntauri employees, contributed to the supported product ion line. We just don't perform, and our dealers are being affected. Finally, I went to my board of directors and said, 'Guys, I just don't have a stomach for this,' and asked them to bring in a manager. The help Lapham requested arrived at the man Allan Fedor, a California turnaround specialist who said Syntauri's last chance to remain a viable company was almost shot by divorce. The company died of a lack of reinvestment money. I needed a new infusion of capital to build a new and better management team, explained Fedor, but I was completely thwarted in raising money. Everbody I spoke to was interested in the company, positive about the product and its potential in the market, but as soon as I revealed that 60% of the company's shares were tied up in a divorce settlement, the bankers and venture capitalists retreated. They just don't need things like that. For them, it deals with predictable irrationality. Bankers, syntauri lenders included, deny that a pending divorce, by itself, ever stood between them and a good loan. As the suburban Boston commercial lender says, if it goes down there, a couple who don't operate will always be second to pay, just behind the bank. Not so with venture capitalists, many of them say the lack of equal legal protections is only part of the reason they avoid companies in the throes of divorce. What we want to see is a cohesive group of shareholders, and divorce creates friction within such a group, explained a prominent Venture Capitalist in San Francisco who was at close range when the marriage shooting began at several companies. At Vector Graphic Inc., where founder and CEO Lore Harp divorced her employee husband, Bob, there was such a divide between those for her and those for her - it created a stalemate that took two years to resolve. Based on that experience and others, whether she is concerned enough about divorce and its effect on the company to require a pre-or postnuptial agreement in I never had, but you gave me an idea. Chicago attorney Charles Fleck, who left the judge in the Cook County Domestic Relations Court to join Schiller and DuCanto's divorce practices, said the real loser in a messy divorce will always be the innocent. -- employees, partners, and other family members. He admires how unconscious entrepreneurs are for the need to protect these people as much as possible. I have a case now, a management company in the East, that has been rendered completely ineffective by divorce, the former judge said. The person in charge is worthless -- too emotionally upset to make a decision. Her partner left, obviously because she was tired of her life being dragged into divorce for years. Thanks to all the talk in the hallways, what constitutes a 300-employee operation is now down to 50. And it's still protracted. Sometimes, strikes aggrieved back. From Beverly Hills, attorney Daniel Jaffe tells the story of the founder of an electronic parts business who is suing his recently divorced business partner, alleging that the partner ran the 19-year-old company to the ground. According to the court complaint, it took only five months, after the divorce application was filed, to siphon off all of the company's working capital and close the place. The company is now, in the words of Jaffe's lawyer, in a cassette at the bank. The company's founders and wives are trying to recover their losses from the personal assets of a man they both wanted they never met. Advice? SOME ENTREPRENEURS who have lived through a divorce will dispute the recommendation of a business consultant on the outskirts of Chicago - the man who spent four years before the divorce trying to make his wife think the company was stagnant: Settled - aggressive, but settled. Get over it. Then get on with it - business, life, whatever. It all became very anti-entrepreneurial, he continued, sounding tired of just thinking of the effort that went underground. You work and work to build something that you and everyone around you are proud of, and then, because personal relationships have failed, you find yourself in this really negative situation, doing things that are sneaky, ridiculous, negative. And doing negative things is not something you - or the company - recover from overnight. It's completely at odds with your gains. But, somehow, you're stuck in it, you know? Duane Meulners knows. When she told the court that convicting her of trying to end her divorce with the help of a hitman, her plan to kill Kathleen was fantasy - one she said she would never do. Oh yes, he planned and he planned -- but no one sounded more confused by his actions than the Meulners themselves. Somehow I can't stop the process that I seem to have started. Meulners, however, was able to end the divorce - and with it, his fear of losing control of Dymek Corp. After the trial, he and his wife left the courtroom hand in hand. As he they are now back in conciliatory terms. conciliatory.

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