

Hollywood: Throw Some Tinsel to Kids of Divorce (and Their Parents)

November 1, 2016/by [Shari Bornstein](#)



I'm just as upset as everyone else: the era of Brangelina has come to the end. I, too, lauded their commitment to global causes and co-parenting six kids. Despite tabloid fodder, I have no idea what caused the breakdown of their marriage, but it can't be easy. It doesn't matter; it's over.

Brad Pitt and Angelina Jolie have joined the statistics that continue to suggest about fifty percent of marriages end in divorce. Hmmm. Just like average folks.

As a matrimonial lawyer/mediator, my curiosity is piqued to learn how they will approach this life transition as they separate their lives financially and parenting-ly. Maybe they had a prenuptial agreement to facilitate the division

of their finances. Doubtful they could envision separately co-parenting six kids, I'm guessing. How will they tackle that monster with the emotions that accompany separation? What words will/did they use to explain to their children what was happening? What services will/did they access for themselves or their children to heal emotional wounds?

Here's a great opportunity for divorce and separation to bust out into the open. Brad and Angelina, do us one last solid: let us in on how you'll handle this life transition on behalf of your kids. The oft used pleas for "privacy at this difficult time" let us know that you want to protect your kids because they are what really count. I want to know how you will work together to eliminate parental conflict that is so damaging to children? If you're choosing an alternative to a litigation battle a la Kramer vs. Kramer, let us know! Too many times, the briefcase battle is how people think they need to resolve these very personal differences.

See that's the problem. Divorce is still shadowy. Perhaps it's not the dirty word it used to be, but how people do it still is when it comes to securing help for themselves and their children during this time. People think of supportive services surrounding divorce and separation as something they need to keep quiet about. Oh, like the best kept secret. Why don't we hear more statements like, "I benefited from a parenting education class when I filed my case. Why didn't I know about this sooner?" Or, "we went to a professional who helped us work on our co-parenting communication because we were fighting in front of our kids." We do hear that in our work with parents going through the same challenges as Brad and Angelina.

I challenge Hollywood to play a role in this, too. There's a reason when you see a product prominently displayed in a movie. That brand paid good money for its placement in a scene. No blurry circle covering the product's identity. So, how about including a scene with a parent attending a parenting education class for divorcing or separating parents? A number of states across this country have already passed legislation requiring that separating and divorcing

parents attend these classes. Or, how about a mediation session if you can insert it into a scene with credibility. We can't deny the influence that Hollywood has on our culture. Just think Star Wars products, folks. Subliminal or overt. We'll take all the help we can get.

So, the next time a high powered Hollywood couple with children separates, please let us know how you're doing it. Can you be a beacon to help change the culture of divorce and separation in this country? And you, Hollywood, with your influence, help legitimize and normalize a movement. Put a positive spin on the way parents dissolve their relationships to one that's best for their children. Go ahead and drop some hints in movies. Sprinkle a little alternative dispute resolution scenery in some of these movies.

Consider it a Blockbuster.



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