

When It First Happens

The early stage of separation is one of the most destabilising experiences a man can go through — not because everything is chaotic on the surface, but because everything that once felt certain suddenly isn't. Even if there were signs leading up to it, there is still a point where it becomes real. And when it does, it lands heavily. The structure of your life shifts, your role changes, and the future that once felt relatively predictable becomes unclear.

What makes this stage difficult is not just what is happening around you, but what is happening internally. Your nervous system is under pressure. You are trying to process a significant change while still functioning day to day, and those two things do not always sit comfortably together. You may feel a mix of emotions that do not follow any order — confusion, anger, sadness, disbelief, even moments of relief — and it can feel like you are moving between them without much control.

That is normal, even if it does not feel steady.

In this stage, there is often a strong pull to act quickly. To try to fix things, to regain control, to push for answers, or to respond in a way that reduces the uncertainty. That reaction makes sense, but it is not always helpful. Decisions made in a heightened emotional state tend to create more complications, because they are driven by how you feel in the moment rather than what will hold up over time.

What matters most in this stage is not solving everything.

It is stabilising yourself.

Stability allows you to think clearly. It allows you to respond instead of react. It allows you to make decisions that you will not need to undo later. Without that stability, even simple conversations can become difficult, and small issues can quickly become larger than they need to be.

This is where calm becomes important — not as something passive, but as something deliberate. Staying calm does not mean you are unaffected. It means you are choosing not to let the intensity of the moment dictate your behaviour. That choice creates space, and that space is what allows you to navigate this stage without making

it harder than it already is.

If you have children, this becomes even more important.

They may not fully understand what is happening, but they will feel it. They will notice changes in tone, in energy, in routine. What they need during this time is not perfection, but steadiness. They need to feel that even though things are changing, they are still safe, still supported, and still able to rely on you.

Putting your children first in this stage does not mean ignoring your own needs. It means recognising that your actions have a wider impact. It means avoiding unnecessary conflict in front of them, being careful with how you speak about their mother, and creating as much consistency as you can within a situation that feels uncertain.

Children do not need you to win anything.

They need you to be steady.

This is where looking after yourself becomes essential, not optional.

The easiest thing to do in this stage is to neglect your own wellbeing. Sleep becomes irregular, eating becomes inconsistent, and movement often drops away. But when that happens, everything becomes harder. Your thinking becomes less clear, your reactions become stronger, and your ability to handle stress is reduced.

The principle is simple, even if it is not always easy to follow.

If you are not okay, you cannot show up properly for anyone else.

Taking care of yourself does not require anything complicated. It means keeping things simple and consistent. Eating properly, even when you do not feel like it. Moving your body in some way each day. Getting enough rest where you can. Speaking to someone you trust rather than carrying everything on your own.

These things create stability.

And stability is what allows you to move through this stage without making it worse.

There is also something important in how you choose to treat your partner during this time. Even if there is frustration or resentment, acting with basic fairness and respect matters. Not because the situation is easy, but because how you handle yourself now will shape what comes next.

Escalation might feel justified.

But it rarely improves the outcome.

Keeping things as calm and fair as possible creates a better environment for decisions to be made, and reduces the damage that can come from reacting emotionally. This protects your children, your relationship with them, and your own integrity.

There will be moments where you feel like you are losing control, where you question what is happening, or where the future feels completely unclear. That is part of this stage. You are not expected to have everything figured out.

You just need to get through this period in a way that keeps you steady, keeps your children supported, and avoids creating additional problems that do not need to exist.

That is enough.

Clarity will come later.

Right now, the focus is simple.

Stay calm. Take care of yourself. Put your children first. Act in a way that you can look back on and respect.

That is what will carry you through this stage.