

By Suzanne Blake

## Quiet Quitting Jobs Leads to Quiet Quitting Marriages

November 28, 2023

You might have heard of quiet quitting in jobs, but the behavior is sinking its teeth into marriages as well. Many check out of their marriages but want to avoid the conflict that is associated with fighting to make it work and end up in what some experts are calling 'quiet divorces.'

Some experts believe the phenomenon of quiet quitting in the workplace is leading to quiet quitting in marriages due to a trend of avoiding confrontation.

"The trend of divorces that are kept quiet has similarities with the phenomenon of 'quiet quitting' in the workplace, which reflects a broader societal shift towards less confrontational approaches to significant life changes," Sophie Cress, a licensed marriage and family therapist told *Newsweek*.

In both cases, individuals are choosing more "subdued exits" and avoiding overt conflicts in the meantime.

"In the workplace, quiet quitting refers to employees disengaging from their roles without overtly expressing dissatisfaction, often due to burnout, lack of motivation, or feeling undervalued," Cress said.

In marriages, quiet quitting is similar: it happens when partners disengage emotionally or mentally without overtly expressing their discontent, leading to a gradual end of the relationship.

"Just as employees may disengage without formally resigning, partners in a marriage may emotionally withdraw long before the legal process of divorce

begins," Kim Homan, a licensed marriage and family therapist and clinical director of Tennessee Behavioral Health, told *Newsweek*.

## A Peaceful End

Annie Macleod, 40, divorced her husband of 13 years this year. Instead of the angry fights and aggressive legal battles many expect to see in a divorce between two people with multiple properties, they separated peacefully, accepting that their time together had come to a conclusion.

"We were quite happy together for most of our marriage, but I felt I'd grown into a caretaking role for our family while he worked," Macleod told *Newsweek*. "It didn't fit who I was."

In a typical divorce, the couple might fight tooth and nail over their money, property, who gets the kids, and it becomes a vicious process that often leaves both parties exhausted and broke, with significant court and lawyer fees.

But quiet divorces, or divorces in which two parties separate calmly and resolve issues quickly and affordably, leaving no battle scars from lengthy court proceedings, are becoming more popular than ever, therapists said.



A trend of quiet quitting jobs is also being seen in marriages. People are quiet quitting their marriages as well.  
**NAZARIYKARKHUT/GETTY IMAGES**

It's often related to this quiet quitting in marriages, which happens when one party checked out of the marriage long before it reaches its actual conclusion.

For Macleod, the end of her marriage was not sudden, but it was peaceful.

"My former husband and I had a very sad middle of the night separation conversation acknowledging that we were likely not helping each other grow in the ways that were best for us," Macleod said. "After a few weeks of separation, we were both ready to disentangle."

They hired a mediation team of a lawyer and tax accountant and worked with their marriage counselor to create a transition and communication plan for their kids. Since the couple owned several properties, they took some time to come up with something that felt equitable, but there were no slinging swords or curse words flying.

"In the end, we left the marriage peacefully," Macleod said. "I realized we'd been naive when we made a 'forever promise' that our more mature future selves couldn't fulfill."

If you find yourself in this situation, the allures of a quiet divorce are substantial. Both parties can keep their divorce private and alert the kids only when it is all finalized. They also can keep their legal costs down by using attorneys as their advisors instead of as active combatants against their spouses.

Custody will be agreed upon jointly, preventing further strain on the family. And typically both parties can be civil moving forward, especially when kids are involved.

## Quiet Quitting in Marriages Reach New Highs

While 'quiet quitting' might be traditionally thought about in a jobs sense, the trend is becoming prevalent in marriages as well, as both employees and spouses look to avoid conflict within these areas of their lives.

As [studies show](#) women initiate roughly 70 percent of divorces, psychologists say these numbers are emblematic of a growing trend that comes down to consistently unmet needs within a relationship.

"Women, traditionally seen as the primary nurturers in relationships, may reach a point where they feel their efforts are unreciprocated or undervalued," Jennifer Worley, a licensed marriage and family therapist and the clinical director of California-based First Light Recovery, told *Newsweek*. "This leads to a gradual withdrawal, emotionally and sometimes physically, as a form of self-preservation."

As women become more financially independent from their spouses, they are deciding to leave the relationships that have not nourished them emotionally for years.

"Regardless of gender and sexuality, or whether it's the husband or the wife doing most of the work, the theme I notice is that one partner is willing to do anything and everything to stay, but eventually burns out, because the other person struggles to meet them halfway," another licensed therapist Tracy Vadakumchery told *Newsweek*. "Their partner was caught by surprise because they made a lot of assumptions about what their spouse was willing to put up with."

Whether it's due to years of bad communication, loss of emotional intimacy or appreciation, the writing was hidden in plain sight.

"It's crucial to understand that this 'quiet quitting' isn't an impulsive decision," Worley said. "It usually follows a prolonged period of dissatisfaction and unaddressed issues within the marriage."

**Martha Cohen Stine**, a New York divorce attorney at **Cohen Stine Kapoor**, said the quiet quitting phase of a marriage can go on for some time, but eventually something is bound to break the couple out of it.

"Time goes on and the couple is essentially separated but neither spouse is willing to face that the marriage is broken," **Cohen Stine** told *Newsweek*. "It's just easier to maintain the status quo. Then something changes."

Maybe a dear relative or friend dies and one of the spouses decides that life is too short, and he or she wants a change, she said. Or maybe one of the spouses reconnects with an old flame or has feelings for someone else.

One way or another, some outside event leads to one of the parties making a decision.

Peacefully, the two come to a resolution of what's best: divorce. But many Americans, who have watched the difficulties their family members have gone through, want to avoid the battle scars of the drawn-out court fight.

"Many people want out of a bad marriage but don't want the war that they have seen their parents, siblings or other relatives and friends have gone through," divorce attorney Ken Jewell at Jewell Law told *Newsweek*.

"There is also the cost factor in that it is cheaper emotionally and financially for the couple to negotiate between themselves as opposed to have lawyers do the negotiations for them where clients are concerned as to whether the lawyers are clearly articulating their desires."

## Gen Z Quiet Quits Jobs

There's an age component that could be at play in the quiet quitting at jobs and relationships as well. Millennials and Gen Z might be able to exit a marriage more swiftly than their elders because of their generation's unique perspective on marriage and how short-lived many of these marriages are.

There's also a growing acceptance of divorce as an unfortunate but often necessary aspect of life among younger generations.

This also applies to how millennials and Gen Z view their jobs as well. Job jumping might be frowned upon by older generations, but it's seen as a valid way to increase their salary and gain more experience quickly.

"The trend seems to suggest that millennials and Gen Z have a more blasé or lackadaisical attitude toward marriage than did previous generations," Sarah Intelligator, a divorce Attorney and author of [Live, Laugh, Find True Love](#) told *Newsweek*. "Notions of marriage have ostensibly shifted from 'til death do us part' to 'well, I always have an out if I need it.'"

For Macleod, a quiet divorce was a natural resolution to a love that she and her husband had outgrown over time, but that didn't mean the end had to be full of cruelty or malice.

"I think a lot of people in my generation thought they were supposed to find one forever love," Macleod said. "But in my opinion, it's more common to have several great loves, each a complement to our current phase of life."

*About the writer*

*Suzanne Blake is a Newsweek reporter based in New York. Her focus is reporting on consumer and social trends.*