

About 2 years ago, I began to recognize my marriage was in serious trouble. I was distressed about the level of consistent tension in the house, the lack of communication-but even then there were several red flags present I didn't recognize.

Here were a few of the biggest:

1. I felt unsafe around my ex.
2. My ex refused to go to any kind of marriage or family therapy.
3. No matter what I did, there was almost always something wrong with it. This kept me feeling perpetually off balance.
4. My contacts with my friends and family had slowly dwindled to almost non-existent. The only relationships outside the family that weren't business related were with her support system.
5. My daughter was almost always "in trouble" over something.

I decided to leave, but was worried as to the response I would get so I had friends help me move out one day while she was at work. Shortly before I moved out there was a very bad argument and where she physically attacked me.

I was very naive at that point.

The biggest errors of judgement I made were:

1. Thinking my moving out might finally get her attention and that time separated might motivate her to finally talk with a 3rd party.
2. Leaving my daughter there would provide stability for her while she transitioned into 2 households- 1/2 time with me and half time with her mother. The day I left she was calm and rational and I knew there were many of her friends "watching" so thought it was OK.
3. Assuming my ex and her support system would consider our daughter's needs for both parents first and that everyone would be in agreement that no matter what was going on between my ex and me that our daughter would come first.

If anyone is in a similar situation and considering leaving, I **urge you** to speak to competent professionals before doing so if you can. If your spouse or partner is not demonstrating decent behavior while you are there, don't assume that just because you might see the need to put your child or children first, that they will.