



AUTHORITY MAGAZINE

Family Lawyer Aliette H. Carolan: “5 Things You Need To Know To Survive And Thrive After A Divorce”

An interview with Ilyssa Panitz

*By Ilyssa Panitz
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Florida based attorney Aliette H. Carolan says have your ducks lined up before you file for divorce so you know what your assets are and you are fully prepared with the necessary information your lawyer needs to know.

Divorce can be an opportunity for growth and transformation. It represents a fresh start. When I was getting divorced, I decided to pursue one of my passions and go to art school. I enrolled in an MFA program and completed one year. I learned so much! I loved every minute of it and one day I will go back to finish that degree.

Aliette H. Carolan, Esq., who has been practicing Family Law since 2004 and went through a divorce herself after nearly a decade marriage wants you to know, "You are going to get through this!" Aliette is the founder of thequickdivorce.com, the [Carolan Family Law firm](#) and author of the Amazon best-selling book, "[Just in Case! Lose Your Heart, Not Your Mind.](#)" In addition to sharing her personal story, Aliette wants to impart her professional wisdom and help you understand the complexity of divorce.

Ilyssa Panitz: Can you tell us a bit about your background?

Aliette H. Carolan: I am a first generation, Cuban/American. I grew up in Miami. My parents loved to travel, and they always took my brother and I with them. It had a profound effect on me.

Ilyssa Panitz: What brought you on this specific career path?

Aliette H. Carolan: I said I would be a lawyer when I was just seven-years-old. My grandmother told me I was an excellent writer and had the capacity to formulate effective arguments to support my positions in our debates. I believed her.

Ilyssa Panitz: Is there a particular moment or case that sticks out in your career?

Aliette H. Carolan: It is not really a story, but rather a commentary on how when I look back on the last 16-years. What I find most interesting is the way my thinking has evolved by virtue of the challenges that I have had to overcome in my life, personally and professionally.

Ilyssa Panitz: Aside from representing people going through a divorce, I assume you are referring to your own divorce. How long were you married?

Aliette H. Carolan: I was married for nearly 10-years.

Ilyssa Panitz: How did you meet your ex-husband?

Aliette H. Carolan: We met through mutual friends on South Beach at a local restaurant. It turned out that we both lived on the same street at the time.

Ilyssa Panitz: Small world! When did things start to unravel and you knew divorce was inevitable for your situation?

Aliette H. Carolan: February 2016. We grew apart and I think ultimately wanted different things.

Ilyssa Panitz: Can you tell me about your own experience going through a divorce and what you learned about yourself during and after the process?

Aliette H. Carolan: I have been helping people going through the divorce process since 2004. My parents divorced when I was 18, so when I separated from my husband in 2016, I knew what to expect. My priorities were avoiding conflict with him, and maintaining emotional and financial stability for my kids, even though I could not count on his material support. I learned that I am an introvert/extrovert and I needed to retreat in order to heal.

Ilyssa Panitz: What did you do?

Aliette H. Carolan: I gave myself about a year. I meditated daily, worked out often, ate well and slept a lot when my girls were with their dad. When summer came, I took my kids to Europe for three weeks. I disconnected from work and focused on bonding with them. In October 2017, on my 40th birthday, I decided it was time to have a social life again. During the process, I confirmed that I value peace of mind and stability for my children greatly.

Ilyssa Panitz: Do you have a favorite “Life Lesson Quote” that relates to what you do for a living or comforted you during your transition?

Aliette H. Carolan: “When I focus on what is good today, I have a good day. When I focus on what is bad, I have a bad day. If I focus on the problem, the problem increases. If I focus on the answer, the answer increases.” — anonymous

Ilyssa Panitz: Lets be honest, divorce is awful!

Aliette H. Carolan: As a family law attorney, my job is to help people get through one of the most difficult periods of their lives. Divorce affects every area of their lives — their children, their emotional state, their

finances, their self-esteem, etc. I believe that I have succeeded in my field because I take a solution-oriented approach to every problem and apply the principles of a cost-benefit analysis to the advice I give my clients.

Ilyssa Panitz: Are you working on any exciting projects that will help people going through a divorce?

Aliette H. Carolan: I am! Thequickdivorce.com. It is an online platform to provide a new solution to separations and divorces. People will be able to solve their issues in a quick, professional, inexpensive and efficient manner that aims at preserving their finances and their mental health.

Ilyssa Panitz: Given your legal background, do you feel you knew how to properly prepare to go through a divorce and can you please share with our readers, what they need to know to protect themselves?

Aliette H. Carolan: Yes, due to my legal background and experience, the most important thing that I learned is that conflict is a choice in a divorce setting, under most circumstances. I knew to pick my battles wisely. I chose to shield our children from the legal proceedings and to prioritize a healthy co-parenting relationship even if that meant that I took a bigger hit financially than I should have. I also accepted and was desensitized to the time sharing issues that so many moms struggle with, ie: overnight weekday time sharing, alternating weekends, extended time in the summer, etc. I knew they had to go with their dad and that was that. To be honest, I cherish the few hours to myself that time sharing provides.

Ilyssa Panitz: The biggest complaint I hear over and over are how long and expensive divorces can be. What do you say to your clients to educate them for the road ahead?

Aliette H. Carolan: The length and expense of a divorce is a choice made by the parties starting with who they choose to represent them. If they choose a litigious lawyer who will make a mountain out of every molehill, then they should prepare themselves for years and thousands of dollars to be spent. If they choose someone who subscribes to the positive divorce movement, then the result will likely be less onerous. The other key matter is financial organization. Parties need to know what they have, what they earn and what they need to live on post dissolution. Enlisting a financial professional early on is an expense upfront, but depending on the details of the case, may result in significant savings in the long run. I caution that the financial professional selected will also have a significant impact. You have to stay informed so that no one can trick you.

Ilyssa Panitz: You mentioned you had children. That adds another layer of stress because the word “custody” comes into play if the kids are minors. What do people need to know if they are fighting over the children?

Aliette H. Carolan: Children are not to be fought over! Regardless of what they may say, children want to feel safe and have a healthy relationship with both of their parents regardless of what transpired between them. Children deserve to be shielded from the litigation and should never be made to choose one parent over the other.

Ilyssa Panitz: Does a woman have any rights if she has custody of the kids and her ex-husband does not send monthly child support/alimony? And if she does, where can she turn for help to get the money she is owed?

Aliette H. Carolan: The answer to that depends on the terms of their settlement agreement and the order of the court. In Florida, support obligations are not dis-chargeable in bankruptcy and the relief most

often sought is contempt of court. In extreme cases, the payor can go to jail for failure to pay alimony or child support.

Ilyssa Panitz: I am sure you have heard the feedback, why is the system broken and how can we fix it? Now, let's say I gave you a magic wand and told you to change one thing to make it better. What would it be and why?

Aliette H. Carolan: It would take an enormous overhaul of the principles and values of the entire system, the judiciary and the practitioners. The best way advice I can give to anyone in a family or matrimonial law case is to stay out of the legal system all together, as much as possible. Keep control over your life. Resolve your matter thoughtfully, not emotionally. I want to change more than one thing with my magic wand, but if I can only pick one, then the quickest and most direct change would be to create a better judicial case management system so that clients don't have to wait months to get a hearing or the return of signed orders/judgments. Another obstacle I hear from women, trying to collect child support and alimony from a difficult or deadbeat ex-husband. What advice do you have for our readers to help them cut through the red tape and avoid the heartache of getting what rightfully owed to them and their kids? Most jurisdictions have a child support enforcement branch. The state offers free assistance in recuperating child support, and has better tools such as suspending driver's licenses, revoking passports, etc. For alimony, I would say try to get the payments upfront in a lump sum, even if you have to take a discount for the present value of money. It is better to do this so that you can avoid waiting for your check each month. I realize that this will not be a possibility for some but also being self-sufficient and not needing alimony is the best way avoid the heartache.

Ilyssa Panitz: In your opinion, what are the most common mistakes people make when/after they go through a divorce and what can be done to avoid them?

Aliette H. Carolan: People hold on to the pain and fail to let go. I suggest finding a new interest, getting involved in your community, working out and going out with your friends. Engage in a spiritual practice of the kind that works for you. I find that maintaining an attitude of gratitude goes a long way toward restoring happiness.

Ilyssa Panitz: People generally label “divorce” as being “negative” and yes, while there are downsides, there can also be a lot of positive that comes out of it as well. What would you say that they are?

Aliette H. Carolan: Divorce can be an opportunity for growth and transformation. It represents a fresh start. When I was getting divorced, I decided to pursue one of my passions and go to art school. I enrolled in an MFA program and completed one year. I learned so much! I loved every minute of it and one day I will go back to finish that degree.

Ilyssa Panitz: When you look in the mirror — what are you most proud of having gone through a divorce and made a full recovery?

Aliette H. Carolan: I am most proud of the fact that I am raising strong, well-rounded, independent, self-sufficient women. I have always prioritized their mental health over whatever my feelings may be toward their father in order to maintain a healthy co-parenting relationship with him despite the fact that I financially support our children 100% on my own without any assistance from him. I’m also proud of the fact that due to my hard work, and personal sacrifices, their standard of living did not change one bit after my separation, and I am super involved in every aspect of their lives I’m always available to them, I never miss an important date, a performance or a parent-teacher conference.

Ilyssa Panitz: Starting a new beginning may sound scary at first but it can actually be your fabulous new chapter. Why should people be excited for the future even if it is unknown?

Aliette H. Carolan: That is a fear construct and I refuse to make decision from a position of fear. I encourage everyone to face their fears head on. Dating can be daunting and being vulnerable, again, the hardest part, but so necessary! Listen to Brené Brown talk about vulnerability, and take time to get to know yourself again, post-divorce and then get back out there.

Ilyssa Panitz: What is the one thing people going through a divorce should be open to changing?

Aliette H. Carolan: Everything!

Ilyssa Panitz: The stress of a divorce can, take a toll on one's mental and emotional health. In your opinion, what are a few things people going through a divorce can do to alleviate this pain and anguish?

Aliette H. Carolan: The first step is to accept that the divorce is happening. Then focus on what is most important to you. Seek mental health counseling in parallel, if necessary. Strategically engage in the legal process with an eye toward amicably resolution, whenever possible. Seek the advice of only those who have been through the process with dignity. Meditate.

Ilyssa Panitz: Do you have any favorite books, podcasts, or resources related to this topic that you would recommend to our readers?

Aliette H. Carolan: Tao de Ching — Laozi, Stephen Mitchell (editor)

[A New Earth](#) — Eckhart Tolle

[The Four Agreements](#) — Don Miguel Ruiz

Ilyssa Panitz: I want to revert back to the title of this section, “5 Things You Need To Know to Survive And Thrive After A Divorce.” What would you say they are?

Aliette H. Carolan:

1. Get your finances in order: You should have created a budget during your divorce proceedings. Try to stick to it!
2. Act your way into feeling better. Meditate. Eat healthy and go to the gym. Your emotions will be all over the place for some time. Focusing on a healthy lifestyle will keep your endorphins in high gear which will help you feel better.
3. Enjoy your time alone!! If you are a parent, you know that alone time is a premium. Time sharing schedules pad your month with hours of time to focus on self-care. Take advantage of it.
4. Find a hobby or a passion project to focus on. For me, going to art school for that year was one of the best decisions I have ever made. It provided me with a healthy outlet for my thoughts.

5. Keep an open mind and have fun out there!