## **Divorce and Family Law: Lessons Learned From Danica Patrick**

Danica Patrick announced that she was divorcing from her husband in November of 2012. Danica Patrick is best known as NASCAR and IndyCar racing driver, model and for her commercials for companies such as GoDaddy. Patrick separated from her husband after seven years of marriage. There are several lessons that can be learned from the divorce of Danica Patrick.

There are several differences between Danica Patrick and her husband, Paul Edward Hospenthal, that may have made their marriage and resulting divorce more difficult. The first difference is the age difference between the two at the time of their marriage. Danica is seventeen years younger than her husband. Age differences between two spouses are usually not an obstacle when the marriage begins, but can become a major factor as the goes on. While it is common to see a marriage with an older man and younger woman, a gap of seventeen years may be too much to overcome over an extended period of time with other contributing factors.

Another lesson is the difference in the two spouses in the amount of spotlight and time apart. Patrick has been in the public eye for most of her adult life while her husband was a physical therapist and is not a celebrity. This type of relationship can be stressful on the non-celebrity spouse and lead to disagreements. Patrick's sport also required weeks of intense focus and travel that led to further distance in the marriage. Hospenthal was reported to not have traveled to all of Danica's races like many other racing spouses who are present at most races that can be weeklong events leading up to the actual race. This time apart may have added to the stress of the relationship.

The method of communication of news of the divorce can also be a lesson. Danica let the public and media know of the separation from her husband by way of social media and her Facebook account. This was a way for her to control the timing and the frame for the way the news was released instead of it being leaked by other sources before she was able to tell others such as family and friends. It is important to be able to communicate messages and be able to speak for yourself when delivering difficult news. Social media can be a way to tell everyone a message at one time instead of having to tell everybody separately.

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