

Several weeks ago, a process that had been ongoing privately for some time became public. Ending a relationship after almost 13 years of friendship, teammate-ship, marriage, and co-parenting (many of them good years) is a decision that was not made lightly. We agreed to center our children, continue therapy, separate, and to move forward with our lives. Two happy families are always better than one unhappy one. This process is never easy, but we were making our way through.

At the advice of our agents, representation and friends, we planned to keep this information private until after her final season. A leak (a betrayal of our deepest confidence) made that impossible. The online hate that has happened since has been one of the most personally devastating experiences of my life. Now, I know that it is best practice in the world of online gossip "not to feed the beast. Don't respond. Don't let them see you sweat." Just hide away until the tabloids and internet trolls decide to feast on someone else. For weeks, I have tried to take this advice. I have tried to let the fire burn out and what I've experienced has devastated my mental health. This has been brutal.

Words matter. The cheering on abuse, the people clamoring to encourage me to commit suicide, and the cruel words spoken about my children and who I am as a mother? Those words matter. Someday my kids are going to be able to read the hate that strangers on the internet wrote, all because those strangers had an unsolicited opinion on my health and happiness? What are we doing here?



People have run with a narrative that's unbearably painful. Not all marriages last forever. Ours did not. For many reasons. And while I understand that the false narratives about why might feel juicier or make a better headline, they are simply not true. Let me be clear: I did not step out on my marriage. I was always faithful in my marriage, if not always totally happy. Like in many partnerships, there was work and therapy and processing done. None of this happened on a whim. We spent the entire summer working to tackle the separation and divorce steps outlined for us by our therapists, lawyers, and our shared agency.

By finally choosing my own health and happiness, I know I've chosen a better future for my kids. What's made this complex and difficult experience harder than I could have imagined is to have had an entire community turn on me while I've been moving through this. I've spent my whole career trying to build an inclusive space where people can show up as themselves and where they know they will be safe. That legacy has mattered to me more than anything I ever did on the pitch. Right now, it feels like the entire community has poured gasoline on me and lit the matches. So many of you, including people who stand publicly as anti-bullying advocates, have cheered this on like bloodsport. As though a family in transition is on opposing teams. Like a divorce is a battle one person stands to win. I want to be clear that pushing someone to the edge? That isn't a win. No one "wins" here.



My priority is, as it always has been, my kids. My priority is being a good co-parent to them with Ali. Despite this current darkness, there have been years of love between us. And our kids are the best part of it all. They deserve two healthy and happy parents, and that's what matters most. We are all in pain. I share all of this to remind people that bullying anyone about a personal decision, especially when that bullying is rooted in lies, really hurts. I'm hoping that instead of continuing this cruelty you can remember the simple truth that I'm a human being, a mom, and a good person just trying my best. I'd appreciate if you could take a breath and treat me and my family with some humanity.

— Ashlyn