

INSPIRE

• Nature gives you the face you have at 20; it is up to you to merit the face you have at 50. •

COCO CHANEL

Here's EXACTLY how to 'divorce proof' your marriage

Wise words: Lawyer Sheela Mackintosh-Stewart



Picture: ED MILES/Hair and make-up: JULIE READ at CAROL HAYES

By a top lawyer who's worked on 400 break-ups... and survived a split herself

AS A seasoned divorce lawyer, I should have seen my own divorce coming, yet I was completely blindsided.

It was an ordinary Thursday morning in 2003. I'd been busy getting our daughters, then aged four and eight, ready for school and I popped my head round my ex-husband's study door to ask what he'd like for supper later. Instead of the reply I was expecting, he said: 'This isn't working.'

In an instant, his totally unexpected

by Sheela Mackintosh-Stewart

and devastating words changed the lives of me and my children.

After 13 years of marriage, despite all the usual struggles of balancing work, family and life, I had thought we were doing fine.

My initial reaction was utter disbelief and I asked: 'Is this some kind of joke?' But I'd seen that steely, hardened look on client's faces and I knew — with horror and deep sorrow

— that he had already mentally checked out of our relationship.

In fact, he had been planning that bombshell for some time and I was served with divorce papers soon after.

Sadly, mine is not an uncommon divorce scenario.

On reflection, I am still astonished

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