

# Legal Matters

## with Courtyard Solicitors LLP



Vandana Chitroda is a solicitor passionate about women's issues and struggles. She practices in Wimbledon next to the landmark St. Mark's Square and talks to Darling readers about our universal problem areas.

### INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

International Women's Day took place on 9th March 2009 this year. This day is an annual global celebration of the economic, political and social achievements of women past, present and future.

In the new millennium, we have witnessed a shift in attitude towards the role that women play in society. The younger generation live in a society where women's equality and liberation is not necessarily the everyday struggle as it was for many women over the centuries who have had to fight to make their own choices and have their voices heard. However, there are still many women who can remember the days when women had to fight for equal rights. Nowadays, there are women in the board room, female prime ministers and women running their own businesses and there is much greater equality of women's legal rights. This doesn't necessarily mean that there is an equal balance between men and women in all aspects of life, as can be seen by the ratio of men to women in politics and business. However there is certainly a shift in the balance.

Many women still have the same age-old dreams and aspirations such as to marry, have children and become homeowners and the beauty is, we can do all these things as we are able to make real choices in order to balance the challenges we face with having a family and a career. International Women's Day is a celebration of all these things; things that women are now able to do which were not always possible. It is also a recognition of the struggles and inequalities that women are still facing globally. So ladies, I ask you to take a minute and pause for

*'Women are becoming increasingly nervous about losing precious possessions and valued assets in divorce cases due to the serious economic climate.'*

thought about the struggles that women have had to go through for centuries to enable us to live a life where most of us can walk down the street with our heads held high; whether we are mothers, business women, housewives, career women, students, gay, straight or anything else we are or want to be. For all of this we can thank the Suffragettes, Margaret Thatcher, Benazir Bhutto, Elizabeth Garrett Anderson, Glenda Jackson, Golda Meir and Germaine Greer to name but a few.

I also ask you to pause for a second and think about those women who are not able to make the same choices about their lives as we do. We must not forget that there are so many women in the UK and in the world who strive for freedom and equality at home and in the work place.

Forced prostitution, domestic violence, female circumcision, genocide, poverty and famine are powerful words yet many women's reality. There may not be much we can do as individuals to diminish these harsh realities but the least we can do is appreciate how lucky we are to be able to make choices and have our voices heard.

## THE REDUNDANT MARRIAGE

Women are becoming increasingly nervous about losing precious possessions and valued assets in divorce cases due to the serious economic climate.

A growing number of divorce lawyers have been describing how they have been inundated with men seeking divorces. Many of these men have been made redundant or are worried about redundancy. Divorcing when a person has been made redundant could potentially be beneficial to the party who has been made redundant. It could mean that they are ordered to pay less in a financial settlement if they have not secured a new job as the courts will consider their income to be a significant factor. However, it would still be open for the spouse to make a claim for a share of the redundancy payment.

Women are also instructing divorce lawyers to quickly issue divorce proceedings before debt collectors begin knocking at their doors to try and secure the best financial deal as early as possible.

Another significant factor is the downturn in the property market. Couples are being forced to stay together as they are worried that they won't be able to sell their homes or afford to buy new homes.

**If you are going through marital problems and are worried about the impact the recession may have on marital finances, pick up the phone and make a call, whether it be to a financial adviser, accountant or lawyer. Take advice so you know where you stand in relation to planning your future. The recession does not mean that people have to stand still. There is still every possibility of being able to move on.**

This is a period of rapid social change and whilst it is frightening, the fear will not subside until people take the initial step to seek the appropriate advice from relevant advisors in order to take control of their lives again.

Redundancies are on the increase and many employers are not following the correct procedures leading to a rise in claims being made at the Employment Tribunal. You could be entitled to a larger severance payment if it is proven that your employer has not followed the correct redundancy procedures and it is therefore essential that you receive specialised employment advice in this situation.



*If you would like any advice on the contents of this article or any other legal matter, please email me at [vchitroda@courtyardsolicitors.co.uk](mailto:vchitroda@courtyardsolicitors.co.uk).*

***Vandana Chitroda is a Solicitor at Courtyard Solicitors LLP practicing Family Law. Courtyard Solicitors LLP is able to advise on Conveyancing, Family, Wills and Probate and Immigration and other areas.***

*If you would like advice on any of these areas, please telephone us on 020 8946 9466.*

The logo for Courtyard Solicitors LLP. It features the word "COURTYARD" in a large, bold, black sans-serif font. Below it, "Solicitors LLP" is written in a smaller, black sans-serif font. To the left of the main text is a circular emblem containing the words "old problems" at the top and "new solutions" at the bottom, with a stylized path or bridge connecting them.