

# Kevin Costner and the shock over divorce after a long-term marriage

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USA TODAY

Published 12:30pm ET May 4, 2023

Kevin Costner stunned fans earlier this week after announcing he and his wife of nearly 19 years, Christine Baumgartner, are calling it quits.

Even for those who aren't diehard "Yellowstone" fans and don't follow Costner all that closely, it's a painful realization that even relationships that lasted decades don't guarantee a forever kind of love.

Fans have looked to Costner and his long-lasting marriage as a positive example of a Hollywood romance, says Carmelia Ray, a celebrity matchmaker and relationship expert. "The news of them splitting up is disappointing because people feel like they know celebrities, so when they break up it almost feels like a breakup they're experiencing themselves."



BEVERLY HILLS, CA - FEBRUARY 02: Actor Kevin Costner and wife Christine Baumgartner arrive at the AARP The Magazine's 14th Annual Movies For Grownups Awards Gala at the Beverly Wilshire Four Seasons Hotel on February 2, 2015 in Beverly Hills, California. (Photo by Valerie Macon/Getty Images) ORG XMIT: 532041041 ORIG FILE ID: 462685718 Valerie Macon, Getty Images

A representative for Costner said Tuesday that he and Baumgartner were divorcing: "It is with great sadness that circumstances beyond his control have transpired which have resulted in Mr. Costner having to participate in a dissolution of marriage," Costner's publicist Arnold Robinson said in a statement.

Costner and Baumgartner, a model and handbag designer, began dating in 1998 before getting married at his Colorado ranch in 2004. They have two sons, ages 14 and 15, and a 12-year-old daughter together. Costner also has four adult children from previous relationships.

### **Why high-profile, long-term divorces feel so shocking**

With the pandemic, "gray divorces," or marriages ending after 25 to 35 years, began rising, Michaela Boehm, a relationship and intimacy expert, previously told USA TODAY. The stresses of the pandemic – boredom, lack of escape from each other, conflicts over the kids, conflicts over chores, lack of exercise – forced many couples to reconsider how they feel about their partners.

Post-quarantine, many have continued to reevaluate what they want and don't want in life. Splits like Costner's remind us that nobody is immune to change or heartbreak.

Though some may be feeling downtrodden by these breakups, experts say it's important to remember that famous couples are only human.

"We project our goals on other people and assume (they can make a relationship work) because they're rich and we think they're better than us," Peter Walzer, a top family law attorney in Los Angeles, previously told USA TODAY. "But in reality, money doesn't buy happiness."

### **Does this mean your relationship is doomed, too?**

If those who seem to have all the resources to build a happy life can't make it together, what hope do the rest of us have?

Ray promises love still exists. But for those feeling rattled by a celebrity breakup, it can be an opportunity to check in with your partner, have challenging conversations and put the work in to maintain the partnership.

"The lesson here is that you should never take relationships for granted," Ray adds. "It's a good time to reconnect and take a look at what we can do better for ourselves and what we can do better for our relationships."

*Contributing: Jenna Ryu, USA TODAY; and Associated Press*