

## **Divorce with Dignity – Imagine That!**

Divorce is never easy, emotionally or otherwise.

Regardless of who wants the divorce, emotions run the gamut.

For example, one might experience sadness, grief, satisfaction, anger, happiness, depression, and anxiety all at the same time. If children are involved, the process can be even more painful.

Although the percentage of those seeking divorce continues to climb, to the chile of divorcing parents that percentage is 100 percent. If the parties participate in protracted litigation and fight with no apparent end in sight, the children suffer the most.

Even while acknowledging their feelings, one can still maintain one's dignity throughout the process and participate with their lawyer from beginning to end.

The Collaborative Law process allows divorcing parties to settle their differences in a less hostile environment with attorneys who advocate on their behalf. The couple agrees to work to reach an agreement that is interest-based as opposed to disagreeing apparently just to disagree, mostly because the parties think that is the way it is supposed to be.

Yet, the justice system is a good one, and we have professionals prepared to serve. The difficulty is that when a person places his or her problems in front of a stranger, that person, however sensitive and educated, never can be as close to the situation as the parties themselves.

The parties know their own lives and what they feel will suit each person best as they begin their lives as separate individuals. If parties can sit down and work out their differences so that they can decide how each person's needs will be met, each is likely to be happier in the long run and their needs are more likely to be served.

In any compromise, each party will say "ouch" on one or more issues. That is the nature of agreements. However, in Collaborative Law, the parties decide on what issues they will compromise and the factors on which they place more importance.

The process is different from mediation because an impartial observer is not overseeing the negotiations. Each party hires his or her own lawyers who advocate for them. The difference is that the lawyers advocate in the process of seeking to work out a settlement and not for the purpose of litigation.

Collaborative Law is a positive step toward divorce resolution and certainly is worth consideration.

© 2006, re-printed with permission of Alice Dansker Doyle, LLC