

DIVORCE YOUR LOVED ONE WITH DIGNITY!

by Gregory Rabinowitz, Esq.*

"Divorce Your Loved One With Dignity" is embossed on a Mexican Law Office sign hanging over Frank Sinatra in an old movie poster and it makes me grin every time I see it. After practicing Matrimonial and Family Law on Long Island for the past 16 years, more often than not, each time a potential client sincerely assures me that their divorce will be "amicable," the case begins to mimic the antics of Michael Douglas and Kathleen Turner in "War of the Roses". What the "amicable" client does not understand is that, usually, if you were truly able to keep it "amicable" then you probably would not be sitting opposite a divorce attorney. I cannot imagine any other field of law where the emotions could run as high. Dividing houses, bank accounts, 401k's and hard earned pensions is emotionally draining. Oh, did I mention the stress and gut wrenching angst that accompanies fighting over child custody and visitation issues?

Now, add the variable of the dreaded divorce lawyer. Unfortunately, there are some matrimonial lawyers out there who unknowingly, or sometimes deliberately, exacerbate and rile the clients' emotions and "fan the flames". The result, more fighting - which translates into more counsel fees, less assets and most importantly, less money available for the children's college and graduate educations. Then there's the divorce lawyer who makes you promises or guarantees (that you do not know at the time cannot possibly be met) and then virtually disappears as your case is assigned to a less experienced associate that you meet for the first time after you have signed and paid your retainer.

In this day and age, you do yourself a great disservice if you do not thoroughly investigate your options. Who should you use as the mediator? Should you use a social worker who, most likely, never sat for or passed the Bar exam? Should you use a lawyer who only mediates and has never tried a case? Are you still a mediation candidate when your spouse threatens that if you don't mediate, they will make sure that you will be living out in the street and will never see a dime? What are the differences between a divorce and a legal separation?



Here's a freebie - you are not legally separated simply by living separately! You must be an educated consumer. Bring a list of questions to your initial consultation. If you are meeting with a seasoned practitioner; all of your 'questions should be answered in advance of your having to ask them. Finally, even if the attorney was highly recommended by a trusted source, you must still use your "gut". Just because the attorney was right for cousin Tilly, doesn't mean the attorney is right for you or your situation. Yet, do not fret, if you hire the right attorney, you can "get divorced with dignity." I've seen it!

Gregory Rabinowitz, Esq. is a matrimonial and family law practitioner. He is a barrister of the N.Y. Family Law American Inn of Court and member of the Nassau and Suffolk County Bar Associations and Matrimonial Law Committees and the N.Y.S. Bar, Family Law Section. He has handled numerous matrimonial cases from inception to completion, including the trials and appeals thereof. He has also lectured to fellow matrimonial practitioners. Mr. Rabinowitz founded N.Y. Divorce Options where clients can evaluate the realities and/or benefits of mediation verses litigation. Mr. Rabinowitz does not rely upon associates and does all legal and counseling work himself. He can be contacted at his Woodbury Office at (516)678-4667 or (516)OPTIONS or at <http://www.nydivorceoptions.com/>.

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