

## ***My Own Collaborative Divorce: Information for my Spouse***

Obtaining legal advice for family matters can be a daunting, stressful, and even intimidating experience. Your spouse or ex-spouse may have some familiarity with a collaborative law approach, or just the opposite: you may be interested in collaborative law, and yet your spouse or ex-spouse does not think it would work, or may even be threatening legal action. It could also be that one of you has filed a Petition already.

Wherever you happen to be in the process, you owe it to yourself to be aware of the options available to you before making some of the most significant decisions you will ever make. One option is that you and your spouse or ex-spouse may use mediation without hiring a lawyer. Or, you may both hire collaborative law attorneys and work together as a team. You may also create an amicable, uncontested divorce, with lawyers consulting throughout the process. The time-worn approach is traditional litigation, in which you both hire family law attorneys, and use the court system to solve your dispute.

Collaborative law is not for everyone; for those who have a tough time handling conflict, or have been victimized in the relationship, hiring an aggressive lawyer may be the most appropriate approach. However, for the vast majority of family law disputants, we believe that collaborative law should at least be considered as an option for several reasons. It gives our clients the most freedom and power to craft agreements that work for everyone involved. It costs on average at least 40-50% less than traditional litigation. It reduces conflict during a very stressful transition in life. Finally, for children involved, the Collaborative Divorce process enhances communication and reduces conflict that impacts them during the matter.

The results prove the point. After resolving your matter through collaborative law, there is a less than 5% chance that you will end up in litigation to resolve subsequent issues as compared to a 50-90% chance after reaching agreement through litigation. So, if the peace of mind and well-being of your family is important to you, your odds of success are much higher in using the collaborative law model. Again, it is not for everyone. But for most, especially those who are willing to participate fully in the process, it has the chance of facilitating as close to a "win-win" result as is possible.

A consultation with a collaborative law attorney would provide you a chance to evaluate your options, and specifically consider your own circumstances, and whether or not the collaborative law model would work best for you and your family. At the end of the consultation, you may then wish to meet with another attorney until you find the person you feel most comfortable working with. Considering each approach is very important: mediation, collaborative law, uncontested/consultative, or traditional litigation. After fully considering each option, you will feel more satisfied with the process that you ultimately choose.

Storch Law, PLLC has referrals to some excellent attorneys who are trained in the collaborative practice model, and with whom we regularly partner. Feel free to contact our office, and we will give you their contact information.