# Why Do I Need a Divorce Coach?

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 “I’m not crazy. I’m just getting a divorce.”

 “I don’t need extra people involved in my divorce. All I need is a good lawyer.”

 “I just want to get this over as quickly and simply as possible.”

 “I don’t even want to get divorced.”

 Does this sound like you? Perhaps you are right that you don’t need a divorce coach, but many couples in Collaborative Divorce find that their coaches help the divorce process to move more quickly and smoothly. A better understanding of what a coach can do for you may help you to decide which kinds of professionals you want on your Collaborative Divorce Team. Depending on your situation, you may want to meet separately with the different members of your team, or it may make more sense to work together in 5- or 6-way meetings, with lawyers, coaches and financial professionals. Including a coach as part of your divorce team will save you time and money: The coach’s job is to facilitate communication and cooperation, and insure that your divorce proceeds as smoothly and efficiently as possible.

 The stress of ending a marriage often results in a breakdown in communication. You may need to develop new ways of discussing family matters in order to resolve the legal and personal decisions involved in your divorce, especially if there are children involved. Coaching is an extremely effective method of discussing needs and interests, and learning how to communicate. Your coach can help you to develop a conflict-free, business-like style of handling routine matters. As you move forward, both parents must work together on decisions like the children’s education, health, and recreational activities. Many decisions lie ahead, from how to handle schedule changes, to significant life choices. You both will need to learn how to become cooperative and involved partners in this process.

 Effective communication tools are particularly important during the divorce process. Having your coach present during difficult conversations about alimony, child support, retirement funds and housing reduces the disruptiveness of emotional escalations, and helps to pave the way towards fair settlements. Your divorce coach can help you to clarify your needs, concerns and questions, and help you to express these in ways that your husband/wife will be more likely to hear and consider.

Finally, your coach’s office may be the best place for you to make the non-legal decisions pertaining to your divorce. Who will live where? What will the children’s schedule be? How will we handle illnesses? Or vacations, or business trips? Who gets the photo albums? And where will the pets reside? The most efficient and least expensive way to address these types of issues is with a professional who specializes in families and conflict resolution.

All agreements made in coaching sessions are written up by the coach, and forwarded to your lawyers, who will incorporate them into your divorce decree. This legally binding document addresses your specific concerns, and is tailored specifically to your family and your situation. Decisions which are mutually agreed upon will generally be more viable over time than decisions which you resent or begrudge. Working collaboratively, you will have maximum control over your family, instead of handing over important decisions to a judge who does not know you, or fighting in an adversarial manner. The long-term payoff of this approach hopefully will be a more peaceful life post-divorce, as both parents will be able to communicate clearly and co-parent effectively for years to come.