

4 Helpful Tips to Prepare You for Your Divorce Mediation?

After you have decided to mediate your divorce, there are a few things that you should do to properly prepare yourself for the mediation process? Coming to your first mediation session unprepared may prolong the process. The final divorce agreement can be far from what you expected simply because you have not even thought about what will be your bottom line, and/or how much you are willing to compromise, if anything.

Therefore, in order to make your divorce mediation more time-efficient and productive, and to achieve a more satisfactory result, it is very important for both parties to do their homework before mediation.

Here are some helpful tips on how to be prepared for your first mediation appointment:

1. Work out a game plan before the mediation:

Mediation is a process of interacting between you, your spouse and a neutral third party who is your divorce mediator. It is helpful if you and your spouse can work out a game plan in advance by asking each other what you really want. Do not argue about anything, just ask, listen and then respond.

In working out your plan, ask yourself the following questions and think of your answers:

- * What issues do you want to address and what is your offer for each issue? For example...what is the best way to divide the family assets?
- * How do you and your spouse wish to allocate time with the children?
- * On which issue(s) you are willing to compromise and on which you are not?
- * What are your most important concerns?
- * If you own a home, do you wish to keep it, sell it, allow one spouse to remain in the home for a time certain or move out?
- * What will be your budget both during the divorce or mediation process and post-divorce: How much do you need? How much you are able to pay?

- * What will your children need? Not only daily living expenses but also educational and extracurricular activity expenses.
- * What are the things you will not give up based on any circumstances?
- * At which point you would walk away from the mediation process and should you?

You have to keep your game plan in mind at all times. Don't let your emotions get the best of you. Both you and your spouse are here to solve problems, to find solutions and not just press each other's buttons. It might be helpful to have a checklist so you can look at it when needed to make sure you do not forget anything.

2. Gather financial information:

It is essential for you and your spouse to gather financial information on your family, yourself, and each other. It is helpful to make a list of:

- * your assets and possessions, including real property(real estate), jewelry, valuable collections, bank accounts, mutual funds, brokerage accounts, retirement plans, pension plans, insurance policies, vehicles, time shares, businesses, annuities, stocks, equity in companies, pending or potential law suits;
- * all debts and liabilities, including mortgages, lines or credit, credit card balances, student loans and personal loans from family members;
- * your income records: bring your pay stubs for the past four pay periods, self-employment income documentation, K-1's, 1099's, social security income, your federal and state tax return for past year and a current 401k statement and the like and; bring
- * any medical and life insurance documentation showing what you have and own.

4. Educate yourself

Gather as much information as you can such as from your mediator's website, or from a consultation with a family law attorney whom you can later use to review your final divorce agreement if you so choose or simply read internet blogs or articles from reputable sources. We spend a great deal of time writing and updating our blog and website on current divorce and

mediation issues that you need to be aware of at www.amarallaw.com .You should at least be familiar with the law, the legal terms, and their meanings. If you do the homework beforehand, it is less likely that you will be surprised during the mediation sessions and will better able to understand what your mediator is trying to empower the both of your to agree on.