

MAY 12, 2020 BY: NANCY KAYE

The Corona Virus and Divorce



During this unfortunate pandemic, we are forced to self-quarantine, our outside social interaction is prohibited. Close quarters, 24/7, can put nerves on edge. If marriages were previously strained, this close confinement can make the living situation more problematic. It may be a great opportunity to work with a family therapist to develop

coping skills, or alternatives to make the marriage work.

If therapy doesn't work, and you are unable to continue with your marriage, a Collaborative Divorce may be your best alternative to litigation. The courts are closed, and any pending cases will receive priority. There has already been a backlog of cases before the corona virus has effected all our lives. Are you prepared to live in limbo for an indeterminate amount of time?

Litigation tears families apart. Each party viciously tries to make the other person seem worse in order to have a judge decide in their favor. Struggles for parenting time, passion for winning their cause at all costs to the family, and competition in court all have devastating effects on the children and your finances. Unlike TV or the movies, you don't have your day in court. After the attorneys are gone and the

case is closed, the parents must somehow pick up the pieces and establish a working relationship for the children's best interest. Litigation looks at today: he gets this; she gets that; legal costs \$\$\$ "*que sera sera.*"

With Collaborative Divorce, like Litigation, both spouses are represented by counsel. Unlike litigation, the resolution and disposition of your marriage is handled outside the courts, and you are part of the process to determine how the Settlement Agreement will meet your financial and parenting needs. The process is transparent and the clients *work* towards a mutually agreeable parenting and financial goals with the help of the professionals.

In **Collaborative Divorce**, each client is represented by their own attorney. There are other professional team members, a neutral family specialist to help with parenting plans, and a neutral financial divorce specialist that helps in the gathering information on assets and liabilities, developing post-divorce budgets and helping with financial settlement options. The Collaborative Process takes *active* involvement by the attorneys and neutrals with specific specialties to ensure that expertise is given to the clients to ultimately be masters of their own fate. You use the right professional for each task. The couple gains financial knowledge throughout the process so that informed decisions can be made. When considering settlement, different scenarios are analyzed until the right picture is formed for the couple. Nothing is lost by resolving issues respectfully.

Collaborative Divorce should be the process that will make the most sense for you, your children and your family. Although you may no longer be husband and wife, you will always be a family. How you handle the process of divorce is important in moving forward.