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columns



the mindful divorcée

BY DEBBIE MARTINEZ, DIVORCE COACH

## Do I Need a Divorce Coach?

**Y**OU HAVE DECIDED THAT YOU WANT A DIVORCE, BUT YOU'RE NOT SURE IF YOU need a divorce coach. You have a competent attorney and you have started seeing a therapist... so why the need for one more person? I have heard this dilemma from many clients, so in the hope of bringing clarity to the roles of the players in a divorce, let me explain.

The tide has shifted from an attorney-client relationship to a team approach. "Well, if I have an attorney and can utilize his paralegal, isn't that enough?" My answer to that question is always, "It depends on your situation." Your attorney is hired to give you legal advice and get you the best possible settlement. What I find rings up attorney bills faster than the bell at McDonalds drive thru is actually clients



venting, asking for opinions on non-legal questions and sending multiple emails. They use their attorney as a problem solver and therapist. What ends up happening is the client then forms a "friendship" with the paralegal and now calls her. Enter Stage Right the coach. If this client was working with a coach she would make calling the coach her first line of defense. The coach charges way less than the attorney, remember the attorney is billing in 15 minute increments at 300+ an hour whereas the coach is half that and more readily available. My policy is that I return my client's phone call as soon as I can, even on weekends. I have had clients call me at 8:00 at night upset over a logistical issue with the ex. Not only do I let that person vent for a limited time but we brain storm solutions so they hang up with a game plan.

Ok, now you tell me you have a therapist and why do you need a coach? I had a therapist and a good one when I was going through my divorce but we spent a lot of time rehashing things and me venting and even though I walked out of the session feeling better because I had gotten my anger out, I wasn't moving forward. My issues were not ones that were deep seeded but just your typical, "my man done me wrong" issues. I needed goals, inspiration and accountability. A divorce coach gives you all that and more. A coach and therapist share certain traits but a divorce coach does things that are completely different than a therapist and a therapist does things that a coach can't do. I have referred many a client to a good therapist and have worked in tandem with both a therapist and a psychiatrist with my clients.

A divorce coach is someone who is knowledgeable with the laws of divorce but does not offer legal or financial advice. He/she has the skills of negotiation and looks at the big picture for both parties as well as the emotional well being of the client. He/she sets goals with the client and builds in accountability, clarifies where the client is and where they want to be, helps them with organizational skills related to the divorce, assists in co-parenting strategies, pulls all resources together in a team approach and refers the client to a therapist or child specialist as appropriate. A coach walks with her client hand in hand through the entire process as a support and thinking partner. Let's face facts, divorce is a major life altering experience and your brain is not firing at 100 percent so it stands to reason you will not be making the best decisions or have the capacity to look at all the ways to resolve an issue because you are emotionally attached.

Make suggestion is to talk with a person that has gone through a divorce without a coach and then talk to someone that has. The choice will be evident.

*Debbie Martinez, MA is a certified, mindful life coach specializing in divorce (aka: heartbreak coach). She professionally coaches clients on how to avoid the breakup backlash and live better, not bitter. As a Florida Supreme Court Certified Family Mediator trained in collaborative divorce, Debbie gives clients the tools they need to successfully untie the knot and stand strong in the wake of adversity. She brings her formal training and life experience into her coaching practice to empower and educate clients through their divorce journey and onto new beginnings. You can contact Debbie at [debbie@transformationthrudivorce.com](mailto:debbie@transformationthrudivorce.com).*