

I've Called the Lawyer, Now What?

BY DEBBIE MARTINEZ, DIVORCE COACH



PEOPLE GOING THROUGH A DIVORCE THINK ONCE THEY hire a lawyer, they are fine. Not so! There is so much more that goes into a divorce. Although your attorney is the key piece, there are several pieces to this puzzle. Divorce is an emotional, spiritual, financial and legal mine field; therefore you need a team approach. Thinking of divorce is overwhelming and an area one might not know how to navigate unless of course you are Elizabeth Taylor and have divorced seven times! So for those of you not so experienced in divorce, here is a guideline.

1. Hire a divorce coach and here are the reasons why it's worth the investment. A divorce coach will pull everything together for you, which includes:
 - » Assist you in determining what is most important to you in the divorce process;
 - » Assist you in creating goals for what you want for you and your family presently and moving forward;
 - » Identifying and prioritizing your concerns;
 - » Assist you in managing the emotions that are part of the divorce process and in reducing stress;
 - » Assisting you in strengthening your communication skills and communicating your needs;
 - » Teaching conflict resolution skills;
 - » Assisting in developing co-parenting skills;
 - » Assisting in developing a parenting plan with your spouse;
 - » Assisting in setting up post divorce goals;
 - » Helping understand each stage of the divorce;
 - » Giving you unbiased, objective and educated information;
 - » Reducing the cost of the divorce.
2. Decide what type of divorce process works best for the both of you. There is litigated, collaborative and mediation. Litigated is the most common and "traditional" divorce, where each party gets their own attorney and financial person. Just because the word litigated is used, doesn't mean you will end up in court but that is always an option. In collaborative, both parties have their own attorney but a financial neutral and a divorce coach/mental health professional that work as part of their team. This type of divorce proves to be less contentious and opens up communication between parties. Mediation is the third choice where by the parties go to a neutral mediator and come up with an agreement, which they then bring to their own attorneys to review.
3. Interview and hire the appropriate attorney or mediator. If you choose to go the collaborative route, you will need to find an attorney specifically trained in collaborative. Remember, you are hiring an attorney to get you the best agreement possible, not to be your new best friend.
4. Meet with your financial professional that works closely with your attorney. It's always advantageous to work with people who have a good working relationship with your attorney.
5. If appropriate to your case, meet with an estate attorney before mediation so that all changes/issues can be addressed before or at mediation and not after the ink has dried on your agreement.
6. Meet with a financial planner before mediation as well. You need to have a clear picture of what your future will look like before you start negotiating.

Just like every marriage is unique, so is every divorce. Just because your friend or family member used a certain attorney or wrote their agreement on the back of a napkin over wine, doesn't mean yours can be that way. Do your due diligence and you need to feel comfortable about your choices and decisions. This will be the first step and the most important one, into your new life.

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.



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PET HEALTH

Pet Cloning (Cont.)

a tissue biopsy kit to the client. A veterinarian will be requested to obtain a skin biopsy the size of a dime from the original pet. This can be obtained under sedation or up to 12 days post mortem if the pet has already passed away. About six months after the company receives the adult skin cell biopsy, the eight-week old clone pet is delivered to the client. It does sound simple. However, pet cloning is extremely controversial raising debate regarding the morality and ethics of the procedure. Those in favor argue that cloning does not contribute to the dog and cat overpopulation; it facilitates important scientific knowledge to researchers, strengthens the human-animal bond, and does not involve inhumane treatment of animals. Those against the procedure contend that this industry sells a false expectation that the cloned pet will be a complete identical twin of the original pet. They argue that the cloning procedure causes pain and distress on the animals involved, and have extremely high failure and mortality rates. The Humane Society condemns pet cloning due to an already existing overpopulation of animals and the potential for animal suffering.

Pet cloning even though commercially available, is still an experimental technology. Many clones are produced that are born in poor health, born with defects, or stillborn. About 12 surrogate mothers need to be impregnated to ensure a successful clone. At rare times when more than one healthy clone is produced, and the client request is for only one clone, what is supposed to be done with the rest? Before considering cloning of a beloved pet, proceed with caution and consider instead saving a life by adopting an abandoned shelter animal. The world for that pet will change forever.

Dr Marta Sanchez-Emden is the founder of the Animal Health and Rehab Center in South Miami. She has been practicing Veterinary Medicine in Miami for over 20 years. As a Certified Veterinary Journalist, she is the resident veterinarian for various national TV shows. She authored the book "CHIHUAHUAS: How to Be Your Dog's Best Friend," available on Amazon. Follow her at youtube.com/ahrcvet, Facebook.com/dr.sanchez.emden, [@DrMartavet](http://Twitter), and www.animalhealthrehab.com.