**WHAT IS THE MEDIATION PROCESS?**

The answer varies for every couple. Mediation provides couples an opportunity to address issues that have arisen during the course of their marriage and to determine new ways to manage conflict. This allows them to consciously shape the future of their communication, relationship and family.

Whether couples determine to divorce or continue to work on their marriages, mediation enables participants to identify, express, and address their needs in an open and respectful environment.

So what is the mediation process? A process focused on serving the future, whatever the future may be.

**WHAT IS THE MEDIATION PROCESS GOING TO DO TO MY FINANCES?**

Compared to the litigation process, the mediation process saves most couples money, and a sizable amount at that.

In mediation, both partners meet together with the mediator.  The sessions are approximately an hour and a half to two hours, but they do vary depending on the needs of parties and the subject matter of the particular session.

Each person is given the opportunity to speak and be heard by the mediator and the other party as the mediator facilitates structured conversations addressing all issues of the divorce.

By working cooperatively and directly with the facilitative mediator, couples save considerable time and money that would otherwise be expended if the parties communicated through separate attorneys and proceeded in preparing for trial.

In mediation, clients usually pay one mediator (at least for the majority of the process) versus paying two separate attorneys.  Clients resolve the issues together rather than communicating everything through their separate attorneys (who them must relay information to one another, and then back to their clients).  This in itself cuts time and costs significantly.

Mediation also provides clients with homework and worksheets that they complete outside of sessions so they can work through some things themselves and utilize the mediator for areas where her professional expertise is most needed.  Mediation is protective of family finances, enabling couples to considerably conserve on legal fees typically expended in contested divorces.

**WHAT IS THE MEDIATION PROCESS LIKE FOR CHILDREN?**



Instead of forcing children to choose between you and your spouse, by choosing to mediate, you choose them.

Mediation protects children by allying their parents rather than dividing them.  When parents choose to mediate, they send the message that they are taking control and sharing responsibility for resolving the current situation.

Parents set an example of managing conflict with respect and creativity.

Mediation demonstrates to children that they are being well parented and that they are safe, even as things change.

**WHAT IS THE MEDIATION PROCESS’ EFFECT ON FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS?**

Mediation supports both parties’ best interests, which in turn supports the best interests of the children and family as a whole.

Divorcing parents will likely need to communicate, coordinate, and problem solve with one another for many years to come.  In mediation, parties can develop guidelines for communicating in the future that suit them both.

So, what is the mediation process going to do for your family relationships? Create the foundation for strong, respectful, ongoing connections that will impact the quality of family life for decades.

**WHAT IS THE MEDIATION PROCESS TIMELINE COMPARED TO THE LITIGATION TIMELINE?**

In the adversarial process, dates and deadlines are set by court rules.  Parties are mandated to adhere to them.  If a party wishes to change a date, he or she must make the request to the court, which may entail filing certain papers.

The consequences of failing to comply with an order or directive imposed by the court can range in severity.  A compulsory schedule invariably increases pressure and the sense of urgency with which parties are already struggling.

In mediation, the parties are bound only by the timetable they create for themselves.  The mediation process gives participants the power to manage their own time and progress.

The Chinese word for crisis is made up of two symbols: one is the symbol for danger, the other for opportunity.  While divorce brings uncertainty and upheaval, it simultaneously provides an occasion for growth and enhancement.  Mediation clients maintain control rather than feeling victimized by systems beyond their control.

**WHAT IS THE MEDIATION PROCESS GOING TO DO TO MY WORK OR HOME SCHEDULE? WILL I HAVE TO ATTEND APPOINTMENTS DURING BUSINESS OR SCHOOL HOURS?**

Our flexible appointments, including evening and weekend hours, allow clients to arrange meetings around their schedules, minimizing disruptions to their work or home lives.

We appreciate that divorce brings not only added stress but additional tasks.  By working with our clients’ schedules, we attempt to keep their lives on course throughout the process.  By maintaining the family’s regular calendars as closely as possible, couples can provide an important source of predictability and structure during this time.

**WHAT IS THE MEDIATION PROCESS’ SCOPE?**

The scope of mediation can be quite wide ranging.  Legal and nonlegal issues of import can be discussed and decided during sessions.  Sessions can be used to address a wide array of concerns impacting separating and divorcing parties.

**WHAT CAN THE MEDIATION PROCESS RESOLVE THAT LITIGATION CAN’T?**

All mediation sessions focus on unsettled issues— some of which are not adequately resolvable through litigation.

Once the parties arm themselves with opposing counsel, the chance to discuss personal aspects of the marriage is typically lost.  In mediation, parties have the opportunity to address unresolved issues from the marriage impacting their current situations.  Mediation is a gift that can provide parties with clarity, closure, and liberation.

**WHAT IS THE MEDIATION PROCESS LIKE IN TERMS OF PRIVACY?**

The mediation process is completely confidential.

Mediation provides an environment where personal or sensitive issues can be managed privately, rather than in open court.  Whereas the adversarial process can leave litigants feeling exposed and violated, the mediation process is respectful and non-judgmental.

Mediation provides an environment conducive to expressing feelings and resolving concerns.  Your trained mediator is uniquely equipped to furnish a setting where parties speak with candor and without risk of embarrassment; exchanges lead to clear, equitable solutions and agreements comprised of fair terms.

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**WHAT IS THE MEDIATION PROCESS GOING TO DO FOR ME?**

Mediation creates better agreements, greater compliance, and better results for everyone.

Mediated divorces rarely return to court; parties are satisfied and comply with the terms and conditions of their divorce agreements because they have chosen the terms and conditions themselves.