

Client Expectations

ABOUT MY OFFICE:

I work by appointment only. Please do not show up at my office to speak with me or my staff without an appointment. This is necessary to maintain your confidentiality and privacy.

Office hours are Monday through Thursday, 8:30 AM to 5 PM, and Friday, 8:30 AM to 12 PM. Please do not expect returned calls or answered emails outside of these hours. If you believe your situation is an emergency after hours, you should call law enforcement.

I will return phone calls based on the priority of the situation. If you leave a message, your message will be passed on to me and my staff. Calling multiple times will not get your call returned any faster.

To save both time and money, please utilize my staff to answer your questions and give you status reports. My staff cannot give you legal advice.

If it is of the utmost importance that you and I maintain a trusting and confidential relationship. Please tell me if you believe you “messed up” or did anything that may hurt your case, so I can take action to minimize harm and protect you. If you are dishonest to me, I will terminate my services.

ABOUT OTHERS:

Legal pleadings (Petition for Dissolution, Answer, Motion, etc.) are legal documents filled with allegations that must be pled (and some that are merely made to posture for a client). Do not waste your emotional energy (get angry or upset) on the contents of legal pleadings filed by your spouse or the opposing attorney. It is not worth it.

I cannot control your spouse. They may say hurtful things about you, put their personal desires before the needs of your children, and they may drag their feet to prolong your case. Do not stoop to their level.

I cannot control your spouse’s attorney. He or she may accuse you of things you have not done, may fight over trivial matters, or may be non-responsive to my requests. Ignore them and let me worry about the opposing attorney.

I cannot control the judge. It may take many months to get a hearing. The judicial system is slow and this will be frustrating to you. There are thousands of family law cases filed each year and most contested cases take at least a year to finish.

WHAT I EXPECT FROM YOU:

You will treat everyone with respect, including my staff, mediators, judges, and the opposing attorney, no matter how much you dislike him or her.

Most of your online research or your friend's advice will be incorrect or will not apply to your case. Do not compare your case to another case. Your attorney is the only reliable source of information regarding the process and status of your case. If you have questions about your case, please call me.

You should behave as though a detective is following you and recording your conversations. Everything you do is fair game and will be used against you by your spouse and the opposing attorney. If you choose to start a new relationship, that individual may become involved in your case and may be called as a witness by your spouse.

Do not record someone without their knowledge or permission. **THIS IS A CRIME.**

Do not check your spouse's email, even if you remember the password.

Put your children's needs before your own, no matter how you feel about the other parent. Do not badmouth the other parent to your children. Do not complain to your children about child support. Do not use your children as pawns or messengers.

ABOUT THE LEGAL PROCESS:

I will be present at all court appearances. You will speak with me and understand what to expect before each hearing. Not all court appearances require your attendance, although you may attend every hearing involving your case, if you wish.

Most cases take several months to move through the court system. There are several steps that have to be taken before a trial will be set, for instance, discovery, depositions, parenting evaluations, pretrial hearings and motion hearings. All events must be coordinated with all parties, including the opposing attorney. I will do all I can to move your case forward, but you will still be frustrated with the time it takes to finish your case.

Discovery is the formal name for exchanging information through subpoenas, written questions (interrogatories), request for documents and depositions. One form of discovery is subpoenas. These can be sent to any third party who may have information about you, your spouse, business dealings, employment, education, or your children. Through subpoenas, we may ask for information from employers, banks, lenders, business partners, educational facilities, stock brokers, teachers, churches, etc. In most cases, there is very little I can do to stop the other attorney from seeking this information by subpoena.

Another form of discovery is depositions. A deposition or "to depose someone" means that person is required to give testimony under oath usually at a court reporter's office. The purpose of depositions is to find out information, such as what a person may testify to in court. The testimony is memorialized in a transcript, which can be used in court.

Discovery has its own set of rules and deadlines which I will inform you about during the process. Discovery can be costly.

ATTORNEY'S FEES:

Lawsuits are expensive and can cost hundreds of thousands of dollars. The more you and your spouse agree upon, the less money you pay to attorneys to resolve these disputes. Other expenses can include court reporters, psychologists, accountants, business valuers, other expert witnesses, transcripts, and filing fees. The more acrimony between you and your spouse, the more likely your case will involve multiple hearings, extensive discovery, expert witnesses and a lengthy trial.

For every step in your case, I will try to estimate your ongoing expenses to the best of my ability, but I cannot predict or control the actions of your spouse, the opposing attorney, or the judge.

I SWEAR THAT I HAVE READ THE ABOVE AND UNDERSTAND ALL OF THE CONTENTS CONTAINED HEREIN.

Date

Client's signature

Client's printed name