

Separation Woes? Consider This Two-Pronged Approach

Imagine a parent in the process of separation and feels challenged getting along with the other parent.

Imagine the children are no longer minors and it is understood that they would set their own course in terms of who they would live with, but one parent is concerned about how best to maintain an ongoing relationship regardless of their choice.

Imagine that parent was of the view that the other parent would not attend for counseling together to address issues and also expressed concern that settling property and financial issues may be difficult due to their conflicted past.

Scenarios like this are actually not so difficult to imagine. They occur regularly. However, what is one to do? How does one proceed in this context to resolve the technical aspects of their separation and maintain as best as possible, their relationships to at least the children if not an ongoing co-parenting relationship with the other parent?

These are situations that can be ripe for an escalation of conflict where the fight over the tea kettle is infused with the unresolved issues of the past. These are scenarios where people can inadvertently get caught up in the principle of the fight and lose sight of the value of the dispute.

This is where [collaboratively trained family law lawyers](#) are well suited to help separating couples/parents resolve things reasonably.

Collaboratively trained lawyers help couples resolve their disputes respectfully and seek to minimize the impact of unresolved issues during the dispute resolution process. In the collaborative process, separating couples sit round table with their lawyers so the couple can negotiate the terms of their separation directly but with the safety and support of their lawyer present to guide them. This is such a different process than the traditional family law approach where the lawyer takes over the negotiation on your behalf and makes demands of the other parent through their lawyer who will likely only respond in kind.

In addition to utilizing collaboratively trained family law lawyers where you maintain control of the process and outcome, there is a significant role for a [separation coach](#).

The separation coach meets with you individually and privately. The separation coach offers guidance to help manage one's own feelings and learn strategies to communicate in such a manner so as to reduce the risk of inflaming a situation. Knowing that at times it is not so much what one says, but how one says it, the separation coach can better equip a person to deliver their message consistent with reasonable intention. The separation coach can also help a parent speak with their children in a manner so as to help maintain or improve those relationships too.

While using collaboratively trained family law lawyers and a separation coach is not a guarantee of a successful outcome, this powerful combination can go a long way to help drive your situation in a better direction, lower the risk of litigation and help maintain or improve relationships.

If the story above seems at all familiar or similar to your own, consider this two-pronged approach to getting through your separation as peacefully as possible. In the event that matters have already gone awry through litigation, a separation coach may still be of value to help a parent from making a poor situation worse. These kind of disputes tend to resolve better if at least one parent keeps their cool and manages well.

Now imagine your matters settling reasonably.

Gary Drenfeld, MSW, RSW
(905) 628-4847

gary@yoursocialworker.com
<http://www.yoursocialworker.com>

Gary Drenfeld is a social worker. Courts in Ontario, Canada, consider him an expert in social work, marital and family therapy, child development, parent-child relations and custody and access matters. Gary is the host of the TV reality show, Newlywed, Nearly Dead, parenting columnist for the Hamilton Spectator and author of Marriage Rescue: Overcoming the ten deadly sins in failing relationships. Gary maintains a private practice in Dundas and Georgina Ontario, providing a range of services for people in distress. He speaks at conferences and workshops throughout North America and was the first social worker to sit on the Ontario Board for Collaborative Family Law.