

10 Tips to Make Your Divorce Easier and Less Costly

Getting a divorce doesn't have to be terrible and costly. After all, you don't want to work against each other (so much) so that the things you worked hard to earn during your marriage are depleted. You'd like to get to a swift, amicable and fair resolution. Here are 10 tips that will help you obtain those goals:

1. Be patient

Patience is often your most valuable tool during your divorce. The process can take some time. Don't expect things to happen overnight. Give yourself the time you need to digest what is happening, and make sure to think over your options carefully before making a decision.

2. Be truthful

Honesty is the best policy, especially when dealing with a divorce. You don't want to 'sling mud' or try to conceal or alter information that you need to disclose during the divorce process. It will make everything take much longer, and, in the end, will cost everyone involved more money.

Example: If you fail to disclose an asset that is later discovered by your spouse, they could be awarded 100% of that asset instead of a 50% community property share. Chances are, if you lie, the 'players' (judge, ex, attorney, legal coach, mediator etc.) will find out about it. The truth allows you to obtain the best advice possible, and, in the end, will make for a smoother process.

3. Be organized

Gather as much documentation related to your divorce as possible. Things like three years of tax returns, several months of income information, any relevant property details and other financial information will be very valuable to you when it comes time to negotiate and divide your property and finances. If you are self-employed, it is important to gather the last three years of profit and loss statements, too. If you were left something from a family member, make sure to bring documentation proving that it was left to you (and only you).

Also, take inventory of what assets and debts you have or think you have, and get a list of your monthly expenses together. You will be better equipped to discuss support if you have a solid idea of your expenses on hand.

4. Make a list of what you want

List them in importance to you. Don't be afraid to give up something you don't want in exchange for something that you do want. You may want to meet with a financial planner to get a better sense of what it is you are working with.

5. Be reasonable and ready to compromise

Divorce is stressful, but remember that you need to be reasonable with your expectations. You aren't entitled to everything, leaving your ex with nothing. Being reasonable with your expectations and compromising will reduce animosity and make for a less expensive divorce.

6. Don't try to 'punish' anyone

Doing things to intentionally create conflict or to instigate a fight will only cost you in the end. You don't want to spend more time, energy and money trying to get back at your ex or anyone else. It's not worth it and won't get you anywhere. Stay in integrity, even if they aren't.

7. Check your feelings at the door

It's easy to get caught up in the emotional side of divorce — you are all human, after all. Try not to bring your emotions to your negotiations. If you need someone to talk to, see a therapist or call a friend. Unfortunately, divorces are complicated and the more you think of it as a 'business deal', the better off you probably will be.

8. Understand your rights

Talk to an independent attorney before attending mediation or starting to negotiate on your own. Know what you are legally entitled to, and what you aren't. This will ensure that you won't waste your time arguing for something you were never going to get in the first place, or lose credibility in the eyes of your ex, mediator or judge. The same goes for knowing what the other person is or isn't entitled to.

9. Don't believe everything everyone else tells you

Perhaps your friends got divorced four years ago. She got everything and he got nothing, so you should expect the same outcome, right? Wrong. A lot of friends have advice that they want to give you about what you should be getting from your divorce. Politely accept, but don't take it to heart.

Truth is, every single divorce is different.

There are different facts, issues, assets and circumstances. While your friends or loved ones are trying to do right when offering advice, chances are it doesn't apply. Your consulting attorney and mediator are very capable and know what they are doing. Let them do their jobs.



10. Know your divorce options

A lot of people don't realize that a convenient, affordable online divorce is even an option. Whether your divorce is contested or not, you must complete the ~20 mandatory forms required in your state. We recommend saving thousands and completing them independently or with the support of a Hello Divorce legal document assistant — you get the same quality and results without paying high lawyer fees. The reality of it is that you should only hire an attorney for real legal issues, advice and negotiations — not simple paperwork.

The average divorce is more than \$12K — per person!

The average Hello Divorce divorce is \$1,500 — per couple.



Mediation

The other major way to save is through mediation. Mediation is a good alternative to litigation. It is quicker, more comfortable, and far less costly for all involved. During mediation, the two of you meet with one person whose goal is to help you reach agreements on issues in your divorce. They won't be able to give you advice, but they will be able to help the two of you navigate the divorce process and resolve things in a fair manner. You won't have to be at the mercy of the court and a judge to make decisions for you — you will be able to make them together.

There are several things you can do to prepare for mediation:

Be a good listener

Listen closely and carefully during mediation and speak when it is your turn to speak. Don't interrupt your ex. Let them have their say, and you will get your chance as well.

Choose a great consulting attorney

Having an attorney to fall back on during mediation helps you stay organized and informed. (These attorneys do not attend mediation with you; rather, they are someone that you can contact to help figure out your best and worst-case scenarios, gather legal advice, and help identify legal claims you may be entitled to.) Make sure to interview several different consulting attorneys and choose wisely. They will be a great asset to you during the negotiation process.

Find out how Hello Divorce can help you to an affordable, hassle-free divorce. [CLICK HERE](#) for a Free Strategy Session.