

8 Things to Expect When Getting a Divorce



The thought of getting a divorce usually comes with a lot of different emotions, none of which are happy. That's true even if you're the one who wants the divorce. Divorce is scary for everyone involved. Fear of the unknown can be daunting. To help overcome that fear, it's important to hire an experienced family law attorney who can answer your questions and guide you down the path with compassion. Here are eight things to expect that will help you manage your expectations during the divorce process.

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Expect to interview at least three family law attorneys.

You should hire an attorney who makes you feel comfortable and confident. An attorney who handles only family law matters will have more time for you and be more available than an attorney who handles lots of different legal matters.

Do your homework before you decide on which lawyer to hire for your divorce. Referrals are a good place to start, but dig deeper. Where did the lawyer go to school? How long has the lawyer been practicing? Does the lawyer practice exclusively in the area of family law? Did the lawyer have good mentors?



Expect to have your family law attorney help you make good decisions.

When you are overwhelmed by emotions, you may not make the best decisions to reach good conclusions. Fear and anger are particularly harmful sentiments when you're trying to make choices that could affect the rest of your life.

Listen to your attorney when he or she makes suggestions. Your attorney not only knows the applicable law but can also provide ideas for resolution that you might not have considered. Part of an attorney's role in being a good advocate for you is telling you that your anger is clouding your judgment. Including a therapist on your professional team can also help you make better decisions.

Expect your attorney to help you consider all of the financial implications of the divorce.

Unless you have accumulated vast wealth during your marriage, your lifestyle will change because of your divorce. Maintaining two households instead of one is simply more expensive. You should consider how to adjust your budget to account for having less disposable income. A financial advisor can offer suggestions on how to live within your means and is another good member to add to your professional team.





Expect alimony to be a more difficult discussion.

Now that alimony is no longer tax deductible or includable in income, it is more important than ever to have a good team to help with your financial future. The loss of the tax benefits will have an impact on how much money is available to meet your needs.

Expect your attorney to discuss the pros and cons of various courses of action before undertaking those actions.

You should have a good understanding of what will be done on your behalf, including an estimate of how much something will cost. Consider ways to keep your legal fees from becoming astronomical, and ask your attorney to help you.



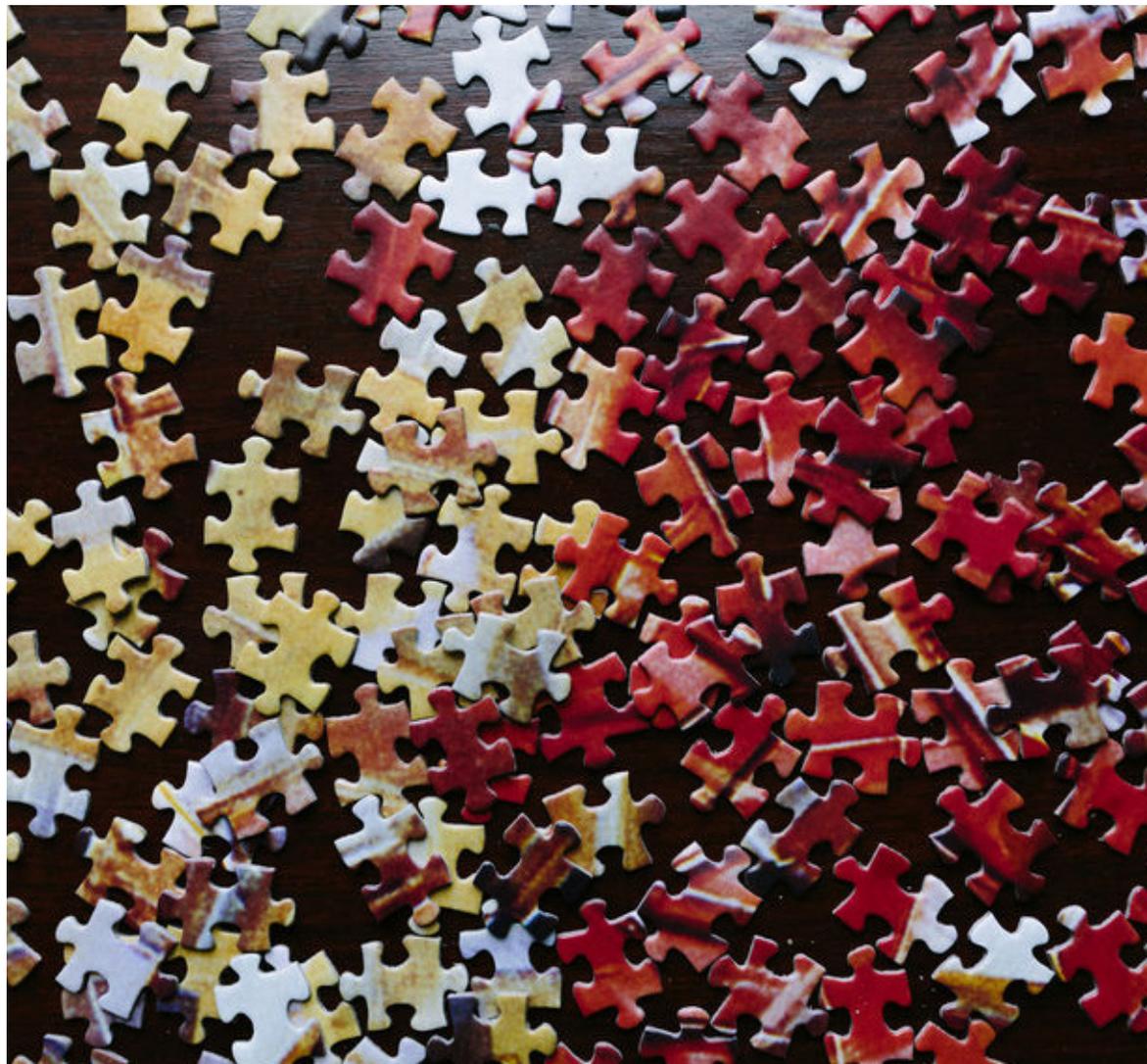
You should expect that it will take one to three years after your divorce to find your new normal.

Divorce is a major life event, but view it as an opportunity for self-reflection. Most of our clients come to us blaming their spouse for all the problems in their marriage, but it's highly unusual for only one spouse to be at fault. If you can take some deep breaths and be introspective, you may discover that you had a hand in the problems too. Recognizing that can not only lead to a successful next relationship, but will also help keep attorney's fees down.

The angry spouse who blames the other and wants revenge is the one that ends up with a huge bill from his or her divorce lawyer. Don't be that person. Save that money for the children's college tuition or something you've always wanted but didn't spend the money on because your spouse objected. You'll enjoy that treat much longer than you would enjoy the spite.

You should expect to consider dispute resolution alternatives before launching a “War of the Roses” divorce

Mediation and collaborative divorce proceedings provide a setting in which creativity has an opportunity to thrive. That will increase the chances of an amicable resolution that will provide both spouses with what they need. You are in the best position to know what you need. Mediation and collaborative law allow you to be the decision maker. That's far better than allowing some stranger (the judge) to make decisions for you.





If you must litigate, make sure you retain an experienced trial attorney.

A young attorney may provide a low hourly rate for your matter, but the lack of experience can lead to errors that are either expensive to fix or, worse, impossible to fix. For example, although child custody, child support, and alimony can all be changed under the appropriate circumstances, equitable division of assets cannot be changed. That's the law, and there is nothing that can be done to change the outcome. So, if an inexperienced attorney fails to handle something properly because he or she just did not know any better, you'll be the one paying the price.

The American Academy of Matrimonial Lawyers is a great place to find an experienced trial attorney. Melody Z. Richardson is a Fellow, and she, Kyla Lines and Daniel Bloom have a combined 70 years of trial experience. While the litigation route is expensive no matter what, you can reduce your fees overall by hiring a good trial attorney.

TO RECAP, YOU SHOULD EXPECT TO:

1. Interview at least three family law attorneys
2. Have your family law attorney help you make good decisions
3. Have your family law attorney help you consider all of the financial implications of the divorce
4. Have a more difficult discussion around alimony
5. Discuss pros and cons with your attorney before taking certain actions
6. Find your new normal 1-3 years after divorce
7. Consider dispute resolution alternatives
8. Retain an experienced trial attorney (if you must litigate)

If you start the process with realistic expectations and a grasp of how the courts work in your jurisdiction, you'll have a much better chance of achieving an outcome that provides you with what you need, although not necessarily what you want. You can make it through the process with an experienced family law attorney.



WE'RE HERE TO HELP

Richardson Bloom & Lines is here to help you every step of the way. Get started by [scheduling a consultation](#) with one of our experienced family law attorneys.

We provide guidance & planning for families in transition to reassure and empower you for the next chapter in your life.

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