

# Using a Divorce Coach or Consulting Attorney

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Learn more about divorce coaches and consulting attorneys and find out whether they may be appropriate in your case.

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Updated: Sep 30th, 2019

The divorce process be exhausting, stressful and heartbreaking—all at the same time. How you and your spouse decide to [divide assets](#) and [share custody](#) will affect you for many years to come.

## What Is a Divorce Coach?

A divorce coach is different from an attorney and different from a therapist. A divorce coach won't offer you legal advice and isn't a substitute for hiring a traditional divorce attorney in your case. Instead, the best way to describe a divorce coach's role is "mentor."

Many spouses aren't prepared for the emotional toll that divorce takes on them. While some people turn to a network of family and friends, others try to turn to their attorney for lifestyle and interpersonal advice. That's not a typical attorney's role and will cost you in substantial legal fees at the end of the day.

Your divorce attorney's job is to understand the law and to protect your interests from a business perspective. Many attorneys aren't able to provide you with advice for handling your spouse's belligerence or talk through your fears about going to court. This is where a divorce coach can help.

Divorce coaches assist clients in making and reaching divorce goals. Moreover, a divorce coach can support you through the challenges you'll face in a divorce and help you prepare to handle a difficult spouse. Coaches won't tell you how to handle your legal affairs, but they will help you organize your goals and map out how you'll get through a divorce.

## **Do I Need a Divorce Coach?**

So you've already hired an attorney and now you're wondering if you need a divorce coach. Divorce coaches usually work with attorneys to help clients sift through what's important to them in a divorce.

Typically, a divorce coach's hourly rate will be lower than a [divorce attorney's hourly rate](#). So you can save money by sorting through issues and setting goals with your coach (more on this below). Together, you and your coach can present your divorce goals to your attorney.

Even if you haven't yet hired an attorney, an experienced divorce coach can alleviate some of the financial and emotional pressures of divorce from the get-go.

## **Should I Consider Using a Consulting Attorney?**

If you don't believe you need any legal advice at all, theoretically you can represent yourself in court on all the legal aspects of your case and rely on your divorce coach for non-legal issues. However, this is not typically recommended. It's important to get at least some legal advice about you and your spouse's proposed settlement agreement to make sure your rights are protected.

Since a divorce coach cannot review agreements, you might want to hire a "consulting attorney," instead of a traditional attorney that handles your case from start to finish. A consulting attorney will only look at specific aspects of your

case, as directed by you. If you and your spouse are working well together and it appears that you will be able to resolve all of your divorce-related issues, a consulting attorney could be a very good fit for your case.

For example, many couples hire a consulting attorney to help them work through self-help divorce forms. A consulting attorney can explain the purposes of each form and help you understand the financial impact of issues like child support and debt division. Another area where consulting attorneys can be helpful is [divorce mediation](#). Consulting attorneys can help you prepare for mediation, explain your rights and responsibilities, assist you in reaching a settlement and understanding its long-term impact, and can draft and/or review any proposed settlement agreement before you sign it.

Many retired family law attorneys or attorneys who've changed career paths become consulting attorneys. They will be familiar with the law and can give you limited advice. However, a consulting attorney can't advise you the same way that a traditional attorney can and will not typically represent you in hearings or at a [divorce trial](#).

## **How Much Do Divorce Coaches and Consulting Attorneys Cost?**

In a [survey](#) we took of our readers who had recently been through a divorce, the average hourly rate paid for a consulting attorney was \$230, and the average total fee was about \$4,600. (This was a national average; see our separate study of [hourly rates reported by family lawyers across the country](#) for details on rates in different states and metropolitan areas.)

You can expect to pay a lower hourly rate for a divorce coach. Rates for both consulting attorney