

Top 5 Questions to Ask When Consulting with a Divorce Attorney

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You are in the midst what is arguably the most difficult and stressful moment of your life. You are facing the breakup of your family. You are likely terrified about your finances and what will happen to your kids.

You have made the wise decision that you need a divorce attorney to help you. Did you know, however, that your choice at this critical moment, when everything is weighing on you, can be one of the most important choices that you have ever made?

You should interview divorce lawyers before hiring one. Here are the top 5 questions that you should be armed with:

1. Does the divorce lawyer have enough experience and resources to protect you? Sadly, there are many lawyers who market themselves as a "divorce lawyer" who are really dabblers. They handle lots of different areas of law, and may only take in occasional divorce cases to help pad their income. Ask the lawyer whether she *specializes* in family law? How many cases has she handled? Does she have adequate staff support? Other lawyers in her firm to consult and experienced staff to assist her?
2. What are the costs? Too often, lawyers play "hide the ball" when it comes to fees. You should expect clear answers about the lawyer's hourly rate, as well as all staff assisting her? Do you receive itemized charges? Do you receive a monthly invoice?
3. What is their philosophy about settling cases? You can and should expect a lawyer that is comfortable in the courtroom. But, you don't want a lawyer whose is so fight-oriented that they will push you to trial without pursuing good settlement options that will protect you and your kids. Remember, most divorce lawyers charge you by the hour. Unethical ones have a built-in incentive to stir up a fight.
4. How much experience do they have with child custody issues? There are many lawyers who consider the child custody part of the case a side issue, or one that is very simple. This is the opposite of the truth. The child custody issues in your case are often the most complex and most important part of the whole divorce.
5. What is their policy about returning calls and responding to emails? You have an absolute right as a divorce client to be kept in the loop on every, single thing that happens in your case. Too often, divorce lawyers fail to communicate and negotiate without their client's consent. You should insist on a guarantee, for example, that your questions will be answered within 24 hours, and that you will receive a copy of every, single communication or court document in your divorce case.