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## DISCLAIMER

While great care was taken to prepare this course, it is not a substitute for legal, financial, medical or other professional advice based on your specific circumstances. Consult with an experienced Family Law Attorney, Mediator, Accountant, Certified Financial Planner® (CFP®), and Certified Divorce Financial Analyst™ (CDFA™) about your specific case. While the author of this course is a Certified Financial Planner® and a Certified Divorce Financial Analyst™, in this course, she is not dispensing financial advice based on your own situation, or legal advice either directly or indirectly. The intent of this course is to help you move through your divorce and avoid becoming a financial victim of your decisions and those of your spouse. Under no circumstances will Adrienne Rothstein Grace or any of her representatives be liable for any special or consequential damages that result from the use of, or the inability to use, the information or strategies communicated through these materials, or any services provided prior to or following the receipt of these materials, even if advised of the possibility of such damages. You alone are responsible and accountable for your decisions, actions and results in life. By your use of these materials, you agree not to attempt to hold Adrienne Rothstein Grace or her agents or employees liable for any such decisions, actions, or results, at any time, under any circumstances.

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## KEY POINTS

WHAT WE'LL COVER IN THIS SESSION

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- Introduce the critical financial documents you'll need to prepare for negotiations ahead
- Choose the right divorce process for your situation. High conflict? Amicable?
- Mediation, collaborative process, litigation- Which will be right for you?
- How you can protect yourself and your children as the divorce process begins or proceeds

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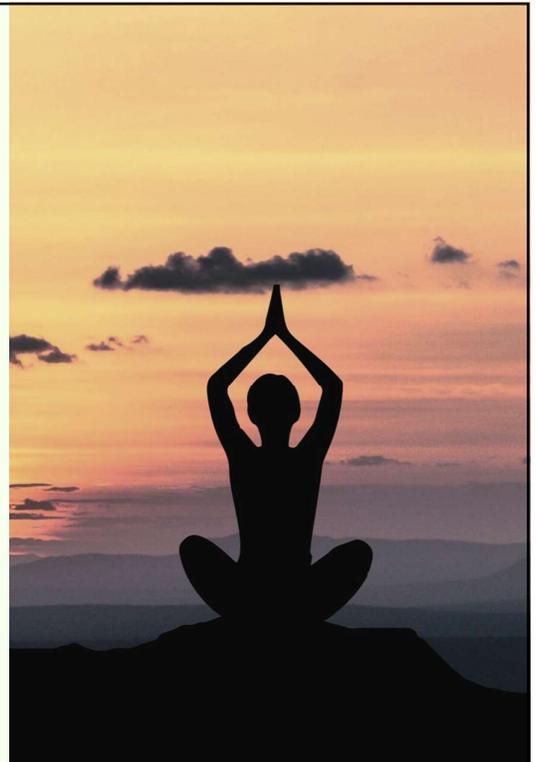
## SETTLING IN

WITH REV. JENNIFER

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Let's get started with a grounding exercise, a brief meditation with Rev. Jennifer to help you center yourself to receive all this information and move on!

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# MARRIAGE IS ABOUT LOVE, DIVORCE IS ABOUT MONEY.

## THREE MAIN AREAS OF DIVORCE NEGOTIATIONS

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### Dividing Marital Property

Of all the assets that were acquired during your marriage, what do you keep and what goes to your ex?

### Alimony/Child Support

Establishing alimony/spousal maintenance and child support. How much? How long?

### Custody

If you have kids, creating a co-parenting agreement to spell out custody, where the kids sleep at night, time spent with each parent, etc.

(This is beyond the scope of the course.)

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# DOMESTIC ABUSE

## ONE IN FOUR RELATIONSHIPS CARRY SOME FORM OF ABUSE

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If you or someone you know is experiencing or has suffered domestic abuse, mental, emotional, financial or physical, contact your local domestic violence shelter, or call the National Domestic Violence Hotline at **1-800-799-SAFE (7233)** for immediate help in your area. Help is available in English, Spanish, and 170 other languages through interpreters.

Domestic abuse recognizes no economic or educational boundaries and can be found in homes large and small, regardless of wealth, education, neighborhood or ethnicity, especially following covid quarantining.

**IT'S NOT YOUR FAULT.** It takes strength and courage to stand up for yourself and your children and say, "no more." You can do it.

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## DIVORCE 101

### SETTING THE STAGE

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For most people, divorce is a once-in-a lifetime event. If you've never done something before, how could you know how to do it most effectively? Avoid the pitfalls and simple mistakes that so many women make.

**You have to get it right the first time, since there are no do-overs in divorce.**

We recommend, regardless of which divorce process you choose, that you find an attorney to represent your interests, either on retainer or just for consultation.

There are too many things you don't know to try to go it alone.

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## DIVORCE 101

### SETTING THE STAGE

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We strongly recommend that you to see a counselor, a mental health professional, a social worker, or your clergy for emotional support.

Divorce leads you into uncharted territory. What was safe and secure, is no longer. So many things are changing, all at the same time, and you have to make major decisions that will impact the rest of your life-now! Everyone needs a little help.

A counselor can help you find coping strategies to make this process a little easier for you. If it's a little easier for you- you can help make it easier for your children, as well.

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## DOCUMENT, DOCUMENT, DOCUMENT

One of the main pitfalls of divorce for women is not fighting for what you are entitled to in the settlement; in most cases this is roughly half of everything. Why aren't all settlements fair?

### **One reason is that Women Don't Ask!**

We've been trained as little girls to play nicely, to avoid conflict and to nurture. This can prevent us from 'playing hardball'- standing up for what's rightfully ours and what we will need to successfully transition from We to Me.

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Our goal is to **empower** you to overcome this natural reluctance and get your share, so you can take care of yourself and your kids.

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## DOCUMENT, DOCUMENT, DOCUMENT

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It's hard to ask for what you are entitled to if you don't know what you have. You may not know all the assets of your marriage, especially if you were not the money manager. So, we suggest that you locate **all** the financial documents that you can:

- Statements, invoices, contracts, titles, bills of sale, loans, credit cards, investment accounts, benefit statements- EVERYTHING you can find. The sooner you begin your investigation and collection, the better.
- If you or your spouse own all or part of a business, information about the business will be important to gather, as well.

I'm putting this out in our first recorded session to remind you how important it is to gather all this information. It is not the work of one day, one week or maybe even one month, so the sooner you start, the better.

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## CHECKLIST: FINANCIAL DOCUMENTS

IN YOUR WORKBOOK



Here is a list of all the documents you may need to be fully aware of all your assets. Not everyone will have or need every document, but all of you will need many of them. This list can also be found in your Workbook.

**We are focusing so much attention on this because it's such a crucial part of your process!**

To provide a complete and clear picture of your finances, gather as many of these documents as you can. Don't be intimidated by the comprehensive nature of this list. This is not the work of one day!

Having as much documentation as possible will enable your CDFA™ and your team to put together the best financial package possible for you. Do the best you can. Copy documents or take a picture of them on your phone. Include statements from closed accounts. We may be able to trace where the funds from the closed account went, or how they were spent.

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## FINANCIAL DATA

- Tax Returns – Last three years – For You, Spouse, and Joint Personal Tax Returns
- W-2s and 1099s – Last 3 Years
- Partnership/Corporate Tax Returns
- Any Amended Tax Returns
- Partnership/Corporate Financial Statements for You and Spouse

**WHY DO WE NEED ALL THESE?**

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## INCOME & EXPENSES

- Payroll Stubs (3 most recent) for You and Spouse
- Monthly Expenses for You and Spouse  
(We'll talk more about this in Session 3)
- Monthly expenses for Children  
(We'll talk more about this in Session 3)

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## BENEFITS & RETIREMENT ACCOUNTS

- Social Security Statements for You and Spouse
- Life Insurance Policies Most Current Statement for You and Spouse (Personal and through Work)
- Stock Options for You and Spouse
  - Benefits Booklets
  - Most Recent Statements (three years)
- IRA, Roth IRA, Keogh, SEP, 401(k), 403B, 457 & Non-Qualified Deferred Compensation Statements for You and Spouse
- All Employee Benefit and Executive Compensation Booklets and Statements for You and Spouse
- Plan descriptions (Defined Benefit (pension) and Defined Contribution 401(k), 403(b), IRA's, Deferred Comp, etc.) for your plans and the same for spouse's plans:
  - Summary Plan Description
  - Benefits Estimate:
    - At Earliest Retirement Age
    - At Normal Retirement Age
    - At Current Age (If Eligible)
  - Early Retirement Option Elections
- Qualified (IRA) and non-qualified annuities

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## YOUR HOME & OTHER REAL ESTATE

- Primary Residence
- Other Real Estate
  - Vacation home
  - Rental property
  - Investment property
- Is the title in joint name? Your name? Spouse's name? Other?
  - Appraisal
  - Date of Purchase
  - Purchase Price
  - Original Mortgage Amount. In whose name is the mortgage?
- Current Mortgage Amount as of (date)
  - Interest Rate/Length of Mortgage
  - Monthly Payment
  - Second Mortgage Info
  - Home Equity Loan or Line of Credit

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## ARE YOU OVERWHELMED?

- Don't feel bad. Most women reach out for some extra help to get this report done.
- I'm available to help you identify and find what you need, and get your financial statement in order, at an additional fee.
- Contact me at [adrienne@adriennegrace.com](mailto:adrienne@adriennegrace.com) for more information.

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## BANKS & INVESTMENT ACCOUNTS

- Cancelled Checks and Bank Statements for your and spouse's joint, business, partnership and corporate accounts for previous six months
- Savings Account Statements for your and spouse's joint, business, partnership and corporate accounts for previous three years
- Statements for your and spouse's individual, joint, business, partnership and corporate accounts:
  - Securities, Money Markets, Brokerage, CDs, Commodities
  - Mutual Funds, Investment Accounts, Stocks & Bonds
  - Annuities
  - Cryptocurrencies



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## BUSINESS INTERESTS

- Business or Partnership Agreements for you or spouse
  - If you don't own 100%, who owns the rest?
- Small, privately owned businesses have great potential for hiding assets and sheltering cash.
  - Learn as much as you can.

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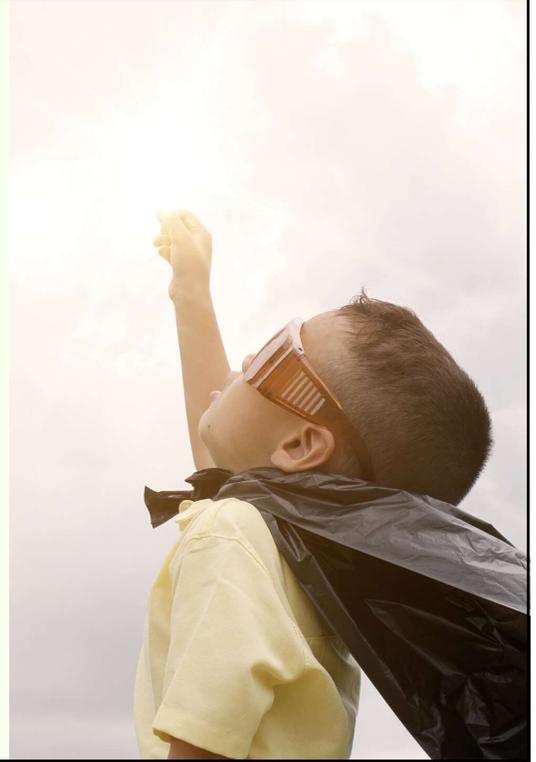
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## CHILDREN'S ASSETS

- Children's Bank, Savings, Insurance account statements for previous three years
- Any investment account statements for previous three years

**Why would we ask for these?** Because usually one parent is the custodian for the account, and that parent has the ability to make transactions in the children's accounts. You want to keep these assets safe for the kids.

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## LIABILITIES: WHAT YOU OWE

- Loan and Credit Card Statements for yours and your spouse's individual, joint, business, partnership, and corporate accounts
  - This includes personal credit cards as well as any corporate cards which could be used for personal expenses.
  - People often concentrate exclusively on the division of assets- but you divide all debt, as well

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## DIVORCE PROCESS

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OK, now that we have you working on the financial documents you'll need, let's talk about process.

- Which divorce process you choose can have a major impact on how much your divorce costs, how long it takes, and on the level of conflict as you split up.
- Whichever way you choose to go, your divorce will cost more than you thought it would, and more than you feel it should. However, this is not the time to scrimp on professional advice.
- The decisions made today will impact your finances, perhaps for the rest of your life. Consider this an investment in your freedom. We'll talk more about this in session 7, as well. Start gathering cash now, whichever way you can. It will be needed.

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## LEGAL SEPARATION VS. DIVORCE

- If you are clear that you don't want to continue living with your spouse, but you are not certain that you want a divorce, then a **legal separation** may be the answer for now.
- With a legal separation, you can live your lives separately, with the same legal rights as a divorce, but you and your spouse will still legally be married. You can live apart, divide your assets, and decide child custody. You can negotiate for spousal support and/or child support. About the only thing you can't do is get re-married. If you later decide to divorce, you will have to go through a legal process to officially terminate the marriage.
- You may consider an informal trial separation and see how that works out, but If you plan to live apart for any substantial period of time, a formal, written separation agreement can protect you. Communication between you may deteriorate, Incomes could change, assets be bought or sold, or funds transferred or mismanaged without your knowledge. A written legal separation agreement, stating each spouse's rights and responsibilities, division of property and support, can protect your interests and that of your children.

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## WHY LEGAL SEPARATION VS DIVORCE?

- You and/or your husband are opposed to divorce for religious or moral reasons.
- You or your spouse will remain eligible for the other's health insurance coverage only while married
  - Please check the policy carefully. Some insurance carriers will specifically exclude legally separated spouses from coverage, but many will allow it to continue.

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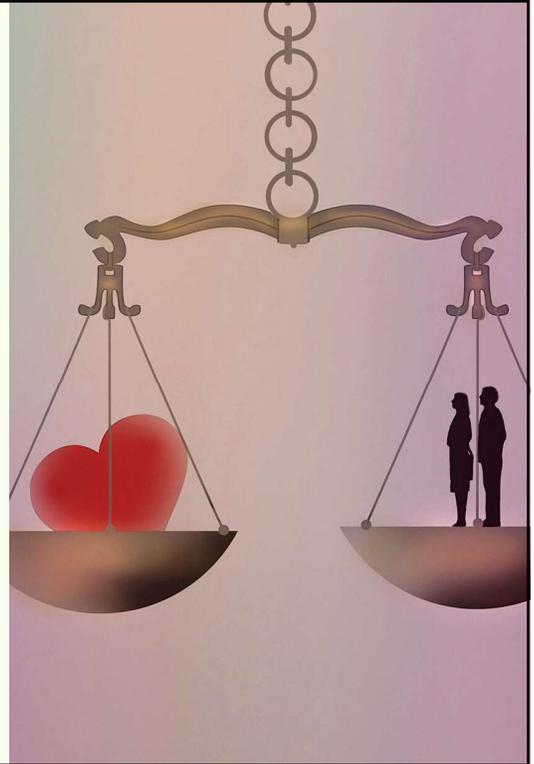


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## WHY LEGAL SEPARATION VS DIVORCE?

- The cost of workplace group policies is often heavily subsidized by the employer. Even a modest private insurance policy can be dramatically more expensive, with high co-pays and deductibles.
- There are tax benefits for filing income tax as 'married'.
- Negotiating a separation agreement may be less stressful than negotiating a divorce.

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## MEDIATION-COLLABORATIVE-LITIGATION WHICH IS BEST FOR YOU?

- There are pros and cons to each of these processes.
- Each requires a different level of your personal involvement, potential for crafting a custom solution, time, expense and protection
- Grab your **Divorce Process Comparison Chart** (from the course workbook) and let's talk

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## MEDIATION

- Mediation is an out-of-court process, referred to as ADR- Alternative Dispute Resolution. You determine your own timeframe, without being limited by the court's often inconvenient schedule.
- When you reach agreement, an attorney/mediator will prepare a draft for your review. Upon your approval, s/he will draft the actual documents to be submitted to the Court. A non-attorney mediator would refer the drafting to a mediation-friendly attorney.
- Many mediators will urge/require that you bring the proposed settlement to your own attorney for a review, to be certain that it meets all your needs.



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## MEDIATION

- A neutral mediator will work with you and your husband to help you reach agreement on all the aspects of your separation or divorce: division of all your assets and debts, retirement plans, child support and alimony, and a parenting plan for any children.
- It's a voluntary process which assumes that there will be full, honest and accurate disclosure of all information.
- Each of you are responsible to freely represent your own interests and entitled to be heard without coercion or intimidation.



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## MEDIATION

- As neutral facilitators, mediators can develop creative solutions and craft a customized plan for your specific needs and desires, even if it does not follow existing case law guidelines- without taking sides.
- The good news is that the mediator is neutral.
- The bad news is that the mediator is neutral- And won't tell you what to do.
- Mediation can be a respectful and fair process, allowing you and your husband to create your own solution to ending your marriage while minimizing the harm to your children and perhaps reshaping your family, rather than destroying it. It's challenging and can be fruitful, not easy.

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## HOW DOES IT LOOK?

- Most likely the two of you sit in a conference room with the mediator sitting between or across from you.
- The mediator asks questions to move the process along.
- He/she will encourage you to speak your views and will re-frame your interests and positions so that each of you can understand both your own goals, and your spouse's and work toward a negotiated solution, piece by piece.

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## MEDIATION PROS VS. CONS

### ✓ PROS

- Can be the least expensive process. You work with one neutral mediator, who helps you reach agreement.
- You can consult outside experts (CDFA, CPA, mental health providers, etc.) at your discretion.
- Many mediators will urge/require you to have your own attorney review the proposed final settlement agreement before it's signed.
- You control the timetable and may agree to terms that meet your needs outside of the legal requirements.
- Out-of-court process, so your negotiations are private.

### ⊖ CONS

- Process relies on honesty and complete disclosure of financial and other records, voluntarily offered by both spouses. This might not be possible with a history of lies and mistrust.
- There is no national licensing of mediators. Some mediators are also attorneys; some are mental health professionals. Others mediate based on their own life experience and a basic 40-hour mediation training. This leads to a wide variation in skill and results.
- If your mediator is not highly skilled, there could be bias in the results.
- There may be an overwhelming imbalance of power, intimidation, drug use- which may interfere with your being able to effectively speak up and participate on a level playing field.

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## QUESTIONS TO ASK YOURSELF

Is my mediator skilled and knowledgeable?

Can I speak up for myself, or do I feel intimidated even thinking about it?

Can I trust that he's telling the truth?

Can I trust that the financial records submitted by my husband are accurate and complete?

Do I want a neutral third-party or do I really want an advocate to look after my interests?

MEDIATION

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## COLLABORATIVE PROCESS- THE BRIDGE BETWEEN MEDIATION AND LITIGATION

- Collaborative practice was introduced in the 1980's to allow attorneys to act as problem solvers and help couples come to agreement out of court.
- If you would like to negotiate with respect- but with support, **Collaborative Process is for you!**
- During a Collaborative Divorce, you and your spouse will each hire your own attorney who has been specially trained in the Collaborative process. The attorney's role is now to advise and assist you in negotiating a settlement agreement out of Court, They will represent you well, but the goal of the process is an agreement, not a fight.

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## COLLABORATIVE PROCESS

- Each of you meets with your attorney separately to discuss goals and concerns. Then, with your attorney **always by your side**, you meet with your spouse and his attorney for all settlement discussions and negotiations.
- Most meetings are four-way, so you can express your concerns and negotiate face-to-face. It's really the only way in a legal proceeding that conversations can take place freely with everyone- your attorney, your spouse, his attorney and you, together.
- The cornerstone of the Collaborative process is your commitment reach an agreement out of Court.

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## COLLABORATIVE PROCESS

- You, your husband, your attorneys and any consultants all sign an agreement (the Participation Agreement) that requires everyone, including the lawyers and their firms, to withdraw from the case if a settlement is not reached and/or if litigation is threatened.
- If this happens, you must start all over again. To protect the confidentiality of the process, neither of you can use the same attorneys or consultants - **That is your commitment to the process.**
- The privacy of this collaborative process can be a great benefit, especially to high net worth couples, and those who have privately held businesses.

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## NEUTRAL PROFESSIONALS

YOU CAN INCLUDE



Certified  
Divorce  
Financial  
Analyst



Neutral Child  
Development  
Professional



Coach or  
Therapist



Business  
Valuation  
Professional

**You may include any of these professionals in any divorce process not just collaborative.**

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## QUESTIONS TO ASK YOURSELF

Is it important to you to craft a personal solution to your divorce, rather than relying upon the decisions of a Judge you cannot choose and do not know?

Do you want to end your marriage with respect and integrity? Do you want to make this process easier for yourself and your children?

Do you trust your husband to provide truthful, complete and accurate information to support your divorce process?

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## WHO SHOULD NOT USE ADR OR OUT OF COURT PROCESS?



You suspect your spouse is and will continue to lie to you and hide assets/income.



There is a history or threat of domestic violence (physical and/or mental) toward you and your children.



Your husband is domineering, and you have trouble speaking up or you're afraid to voice your opinions, even with your attorney at your side.



You and/or your spouse have a drug or alcohol addiction, or are mentally impaired.

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## LITIGATION

- When an easy resolution is not possible, the best thing to do is to hire an attorney and let them take care of your interests in court.
- Up until that point, both attorneys may have been "negotiators," trying to get the spouses to compromise and come to a reasonable resolution. But once in Court, negotiations and compromise often take a back seat to the new goal: to "win" and get the best possible outcome for you.
- An experienced divorce litigator can guide you through the process, and minimize your direct contact with your soon-to-be ex.

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## LITIGATION

- In high conflict situations, this may be the best course of action. Your attorney will prepare a case on your behalf. You no longer have as much of a role to play in the process. Your attorney will represent you in most hearings, and communication goes between your attorney and your spouse's attorney, and the court.
- Sworn statements of net worth are generally required at the start. Any documents not provided willingly can be formally demanded by the court.

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## LITIGATION: GUARDIAN AD LITEM

- If you have children and custody or child support is to be decided by the court, it may appoint a Guardian Ad Litem to represent them, who may be an attorney, social worker, or mental health professional.. They will assess custody and make recommendations to the court.
- The Guardian ad Litem is not required to advocate for what the child wants. She can have broad powers to investigate private and personal matters, including interviewing the children and others involved.
- You are responsible for paying the costs of the Guardian ad Litem



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## LITIGATION

- Even in this adversarial model, around 95% of all divorce cases do eventually reach a settlement.
- If a settlement can't be reached, a trial is scheduled. Your attorney presents your demands to the Judge, backed up by supporting documents, including how much money you need based upon your lifestyle, the funds available, and how the assets are to be divided. There are "arguments" on both sides, i.e. reasons for the demands, presented both in writing and then orally by your lawyer. Witnesses, both personal and professional (like a business valuation specialist) can be called to testify. Your attorney's focus is to present your demands as completely and favorably as possible.



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## LITIGATION

- It will be a judge who usually knows very little about you and your family who will make the final decisions about your settlement: child custody, division of property, alimony, child support- the whole thing.
- That's a very big risk for both of you to take, and that's also why the threat of going to Court is usually a good motivation to reach a settlement.
- When both sides have completed their presentations, often over a few days, the judge will review everything, and make a ruling. The judge's ruling is final.
- The results will be written out into a Decree of Divorce, which you both sign, the judge signs and it's stamped with the court seal.
- This document will act as a judgment that both parties must obey. If you didn't go to trial but settled your case instead, the divorce decree will contain the terms of the settlement that you both agreed to. It's still a binding document

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## LITIGATION

- Even in this adversarial model, around **95%** of all divorce cases do eventually reach a settlement.
- If a settlement can't be reached, a trial will be scheduled. Your attorney will present your demands to the Judge, backed up by your supporting documents. This can include how much money you need based upon your lifestyle, the funds available to support that lifestyle, and how the assets are to be divided. There are "arguments" on both sides, i.e. reasons for the demands, presented both in writing and then orally by the lawyers representing you. Witnesses, both personal and professional (for example, a business valuation specialist) can be called to testify. Your attorney's focus is to present your demands as completely and favorably as possible.

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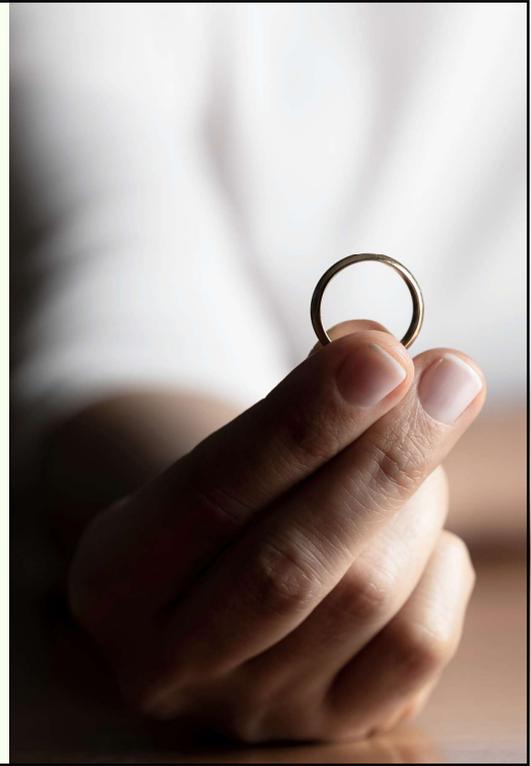


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## LITIGATION

- Going to trial is a very complex procedure- and it's expensive, in lawyer fees, court expenses, mental anguish and time. Court schedules are rarely convenient, and you may be called to appear at a hearing, where your only role may be to sit in the corridor and pretend that you don't see your husband sitting down the hall, while your lawyer meets with his lawyer and the judge's law clerk.
- You want to fight for what you are entitled to, and what you need. We recommend that you weigh the potential results against the expenses involved.
- We'll discuss how to evaluate a settlement proposal, later in the program.

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## PROTECT YOURSELF AND YOUR CHILDREN

When divorce is on your doorstep, it's only natural for protective behavior to come into play. After all, your best friend, partner, lover, protector- is no longer any of those things.

**It's time to begin to protect yourself.  
This is not selfishness. This is survival.**

Here are several ways to protect yourself. You may not need all of them, but please read the entire list for things you may not have thought about, but which could help.

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## PROTECT YOURSELF ON THE INTERNET

- Set up a new email account to deal with divorce issues. It's easy and free; go to gmail or another online email server and establish a new account for yourself.
  - Make up an email address that's fun or uplifting: 4Mynextchapter@gmail.com; Fun4future@---; M3Time@---
- To secure your communication, change the password on your computer, your other emails, your phone.
  - Do not use house numbers, birthday or anniversary dates, or passwords you've used before. Do not write them down where they can easily be found or save them to the computer.

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## PROTECT YOURSELF ON THE INTERNET

- Open a post office box or use an alternate address for post office mail.
- Consider using What'sApp instead of texts for your personal messages, for greater security.
- If at all possible, avoid using your work computer for communications about your divorce or with your ex. Work communications can legally be monitored.

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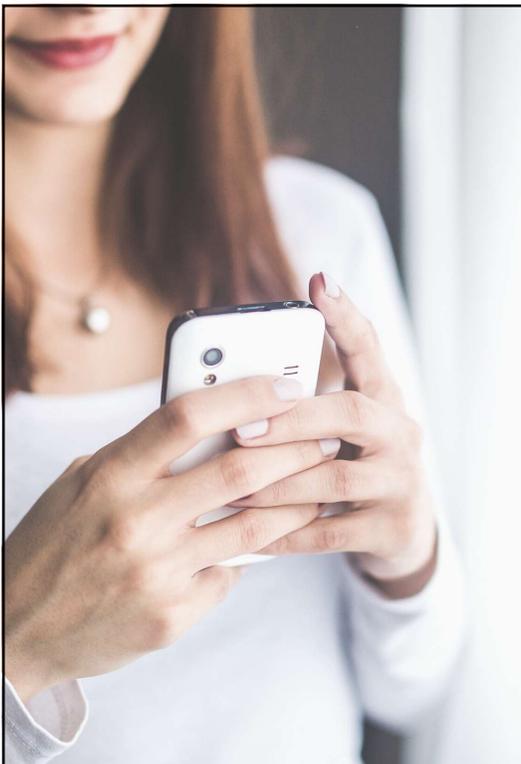


## PROTECT YOUR CELL PHONE

- Put a new password on your phone
- Enable touch id for your fingerprint only
- Enable face recognition, so it's your face that opens your phone.
- If you are at all concerned that you might be followed, disable the GPS feature on your phone.
- Download your pictures - family, friends and documents to an alternate storage location, like Dropbox or other cloud applications with a new password.

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## PROTECT YOUR CELL PHONE

- Control your reaction to texts, especially from your soon-to-be-ex. Just because he texts or calls does not mean that you need to respond immediately. If you can, set a time when you will respond,
  - If the texts are frequently abusive, save them to share with your attorney.
  - If you are in person, and he starts being abusive or demanding that you make a concession in the divorce right then, try saying: 'I don't want to talk about this now', and walk away. Or, 'I can't make any decisions without talking to my lawyer'. Or, 'let's take that up in mediation, not now'.

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## BANK ACCOUNTS & CREDIT CARDS

- Go to a new bank, online or local, and open a checking and savings account in your name as an individual.
- Do not use a bank where you have joint accounts.
- Direct the bank statements to your new email account or establish an alternate address to use for postal mail, a post office box, or a reliable friend who can take your mail.
- If you don't already have one, apply for a credit card in your own name. It may be easier to obtain credit when you can still use full marital income.



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## START GATHERING CASH

- Divorce costs more than you think it will, and more than you think it should. We advise that you begin to gather as much cash, as you can.
- You'll need to pay your attorney, your CDFA, and other professionals to get started. I'm sure you can think of many creative ways to generate cash, other than the obvious- this may not be the right time to start a new job.

### Here are a few ideas to get you started:

- Establish a pattern of regular cash withdrawals from your local ATM.
- Sell things you don't need on Ebay or other online site

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## START GATHERING CASH

- When grocery shopping, pay with a joint bank debit card, and add a cash withdrawal to the bill.
  - Most stores will allow you an additional \$40-\$60 per trip.
- If you get occasional credit card offers with 0% in your name, consider applying, just to have it on hand.
- If family members have offered to help you out, accept the help. This is not a frivolous matter; this is the rest of your life.

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## START GATHERING CASH

- If you are working and have savings transferred from your paycheck, add your new account to your deductions, and either take out more, or split the deposits between the old account and the new one. That way, deposits to the existing account won't stop, but you will be saving some on the side.
- Drop the percentage of funds you contribute to your 401(k) plan until the divorce is settled. Redirect those funds into cash. This is just for a limited time. (more about 401k plans in Session 6).

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## A WORD OF CAUTION

- We talk about half of all marital assets belonging to you.
- It might be tempting to just withdraw half of all your accounts, and put them into your own account. Please discuss this with your attorney before taking any such action.

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## VALUABLES

- If there are valuable items in the house that you either want to retain, or just want to safeguard, first: Take a pictorial tour of the house, focusing on the items you have in mind: heirlooms, collections, jewelry, other items of particular value. Record photos or video on your phone, to have a record.
- You may remove these things to a safe place, if that can be done without controversy. You are not stealing your own items, just moving them. It's usually easier to have them safe than to fight to get them back.

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## MEDICAL ISSUES

- Are you covered under your husband's health insurance policy currently?
  - If you have been putting off elective surgery, expensive dental work, or new glasses, consider getting them done now.
  - You will not be able to continue on your husband's health insurance once you are divorced. If your next policy is not subsidized by an employer, it may be quite expensive and provide fewer benefits.
  - Get your medical issues taken care of, get the kid's braces started, do what you need to do while 'good' health care coverage is available, before your divorce.

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## HOME REPAIRS

- Fix the house and the car while you have joint funds available. While this is not the time for a full remodel, do take care of repairs and cosmetic improvements that may increase the value of the house, especially if you plan to sell.
- It's also helpful to use joint money to do a fix-up of the things that have been bothering you for years- if you plan to keep the house.
- More about the house in Session 5: Should I stay or Should I go? Don't let the House Rule.

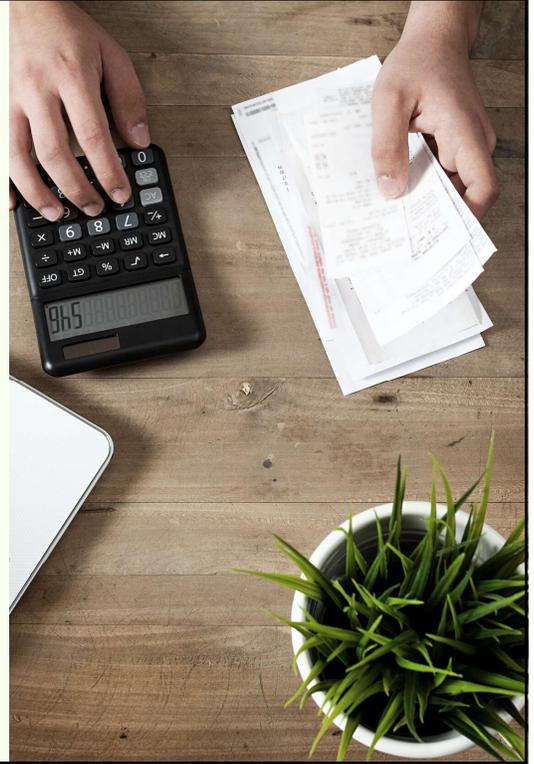
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## STATUS QUO ORDER

- Most courts will issue a 'status quo' order when a divorce action is started.
- This means that however things were done before, they should continue in the same way. Whoever paid the bills should continue to pay them, lessons and other children's activities should continue, so do what you need to. Start now.

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## PROTECT YOUR CHILDREN

- Are you concerned about your children's safety during this process? Hopefully, your divorce will proceed amicably, and you and your ex will keep your children's welfare paramount
- Just in case- secure their birth certificates and passports
- Let their schools know of the situation so that they can be aware of any change in behavior, or if an unauthorized person comes to pick your child up from school, or remove them at an unusual time
- Secure their medical and immunization records, and let their doctors know of the change in status, as well.

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## IN REVIEW

WHAT WE COVERED IN THIS SESSION

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- Introduction of the financial documents you'll need to get a full picture of where you stand financially
- Your choice of divorce process to help you decide how to meet your particular situation: Mediation, Collaborative Process or Litigation
- Steps you can take to protect yourself and your kids as this process gets underway.

**What's next? Into the financials!**

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