

WELCOME!

PREPARE FOR DIVORCE MEDIATION GUIDE

This journal is crafted as a companion to provide insights, reflection, and support for those navigating the challenging journey of divorce.

It is important to note that the content within this journal is not a substitute for professional advice, counseling, or legal guidance. Every divorce is unique, and the emotional and legal complexities involved necessitate personalized professional assistance.

This journal focuses on a range of crucial aspects associated with divorce and mediation, providing thoughtful prompts and guidance.

Throughout its pages, you'll find sections dedicated to personal budgets, financial considerations, uncovering hidden financial assets, understanding the intricacies of alimony and child support, and navigating divorces involving narcissistic behavior.

As you engage with these topics, keep in mind that the goal is to facilitate personal reflection and awareness. For specific and personalized advice on legal and financial matters, we strongly encourage consulting with qualified professionals. As you embark on this challenging yet transformative journey, may these pages serve as a valuable resource, guiding you through the initial pains of divorce while providing a foundation for your financial and emotional well-being.

LET'S BEGIN...

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Chapter 1

Personal Finances

Personal Finances - Income

A financial budget, which starts with income, is a detailed document outlining all sources of income for individuals going through the divorce process. This segment typically includes details such as salaries, bonuses, investments, rental income, and any other financial resources. The income segment of a financial budget is crucial during divorce proceedings as it provides a transparent and comprehensive overview of the financial picture for both parties. It plays a pivotal role in determining alimony, child support, and the equitable distribution of assets, helping ensure fair and informed decisions during the divorce negotiation process.

LIST OF POTENTIAL INCOME:

- **Employment Income:** Salary, wages, bonuses, and any other income from employment.
- **Self-Employment Income:** Income from a sole proprietorship, freelance work, or any self-employed ventures.
- **Rental Income:** If applicable, include income from rental properties.
- **Investment Income:** Interest, dividends, and capital gains from investments.
- **Retirement Income:** Pension, Social Security benefits, and any other retirement income.
- **Alimony or Spousal Support:** Any support received from a former spouse.
- **Other Income:** Any additional sources of income, such as royalties, royalties, or royalties.



"Embrace the uncertainty.
Some of the most beautiful chapters in our lives won't have a title until much later."
- Bob Goff

Personal Finances - Expenses

A personal financial budget's expenses, in the context of divorce, is a comprehensive breakdown of all anticipated and current expenses incurred by individuals undergoing the divorce process. This section covers essential living expenses such as housing, utilities, groceries, transportation, healthcare, and childcare. It also includes discretionary expenses, debts, and any other financial obligations. This information aids in negotiating fair settlements, determining support payments, and ensuring financial stability for both individuals post-divorce.

LIST OF POTENTIAL EXPENSES:

- **Housing Costs:** Mortgage or rent payments, property taxes, insurance, and maintenance.
- **Utilities:** Electricity, water, gas, and other essential utilities.
- **Food and Groceries:** Monthly expenses for groceries and dining out.
- **Transportation:** Car payments, insurance, fuel, maintenance, and public transportation costs.
- **Healthcare:** Health insurance premiums, co-pays, prescription medications, and other medical expenses.
- **Childcare:** Expenses related to child care or daycare services.
- **Education:** Tuition, school supplies, and other educational expenses.
- **Debt Payments:** Monthly payments on credit cards, loans, and other debts.
- **Insurance:** Life insurance, homeowners or renters insurance, and any other insurance premiums.
- **Personal Expenses:** Clothing, personal care products, and other miscellaneous expenses.
- **Entertainment:** Expenses related to leisure activities, hobbies, and entertainment.
- **Taxes:** Estimated quarterly or annual tax payments.



Personal Balance Sheet - The Importance

At the commencement of divorce mediation or litigation, compiling a personal balance sheet is crucial for gaining a comprehensive understanding of one's financial position. This document provides a snapshot of assets, liabilities, and net worth, offering clarity on the marital estate. A personal balance sheet aids in the equitable distribution of assets and debts during divorce proceedings, serving as a foundation for negotiation. It promotes transparency, allowing both parties and their respective legal representatives to make informed decisions, ultimately facilitating a smoother resolution. By establishing a clear financial picture at the beginning, a personal balance sheet becomes an indispensable tool for fostering fairness and efficiency in the divorce process.

THE TOP EASIEST AND MOST AFFORDABLE TOOLS FOR CREATING A PERSONAL BALANCE SHEET:

1. Microsoft Excel or Google Sheets:

- Both Excel and Google Sheets are widely accessible and user-friendly spreadsheet tools. They offer flexibility and customization, allowing you to create a personal balance sheet tailored to your preferences. Additionally, they are typically free to use.

2. Mint:

- Mint is a straightforward and user-friendly personal finance tool that automatically categorizes transactions and provides a holistic view of your financial situation. It's free to use and is suitable for individuals looking for a simple way to track their finances.

3. WalletHub:

- WalletHub offers a suite of financial tools, including a free credit score and personalized financial analysis. It provides insights into your financial health and is easy to navigate. WalletHub is a cost-effective option for managing your finances.

4. Personal Capital:

- Personal Capital is a comprehensive financial management tool that includes budgeting and investment tracking. While it offers more features than just balance sheet creation, it's user-friendly and provides a clear overview of your financial picture. Personal Capital is free to use.

Personal Balance Sheet - Assets

In a personal balance sheet, assets represent the individual's valuable possessions and financial holdings.

- **Real Estate:**
 - Primary residence
 - Vacation homes or rental properties
- **Personal Property:**
 - Vehicles (cars, motorcycles, boats, etc.)
 - Furniture and household items
 - Jewelry, art, and collectibles
- **Financial Assets:**
 - Bank accounts (checking, savings)
 - Investment accounts (stocks, bonds, mutual funds)
 - Retirement accounts (401(k), IRA, pension)
- **Business Interests:**
 - Ownership in any businesses or partnerships
- **Insurance Policies:**
 - Life insurance policies
 - Health insurance policies
- **Other Assets:**
 - Annuities
 - Trusts
 - Inheritance

“Maybe part of finding what you wanted was recognizing what you didn't want.”



Personal Balance Sheet - Debts

In the context of a personal balance sheet, debts constitute the financial obligations and liabilities owed by an individual.

- **Mortgages:**
 - Outstanding mortgage balances on real estate
- **Loans:**
 - Personal loans
 - Auto loans
 - Student loans
- **Credit Card Debt:**
 - Balances on credit cards
- **Other Debts:**
 - Medical debts
 - Tax debts
 - Business debts
- **Joint Debts:**
 - Any debts incurred jointly during the marriage
- **Legal Obligations:**
 - Alimony or spousal support obligations
 - Child support payments
- **Outstanding Bills:**
 - Any unpaid bills or obligations

"Divorce is never easy. I don't care who you are or what the circumstances are.

It's a very, very heavy feeling, and at the same time, it feels like a weight has been lifted"
-Catt Sadler





Chapter 2

Hidden Money



Hidden Money in Divorce - Income

Identifying hidden income during divorce mediation or litigation is crucial to ensure fair and accurate financial settlements. Here are some red flags that may indicate the presence of hidden income:

- **Fluctuating Lifestyle:** A sudden change in the lifestyle of one spouse without a corresponding change in reported income could signal hidden assets or income.
- **Unexplained Financial Discrepancies:** Large disparities between reported income and the lifestyle maintained may indicate undisclosed income sources.
- **Complex Business Structures:** If a spouse owns a business, complex financial structures, or multiple business entities could be used to conceal income.
- **Cash Transactions:** Excessive use of cash transactions or withdrawals can make it challenging to trace income accurately.
- **Offshore Accounts or Complex Investments:** The use of offshore accounts, trusts, or complicated investment structures may be a red flag for attempts to hide income.
- **Overstating Expenses:** Inflating expenses or claiming deductions that seem excessive may be a tactic to lower reported income.
- **Undervalued Assets:** Deliberate undervaluation of assets during property division may contribute to hiding income indirectly.
- **Collusion with Employers:** A spouse may collude with an employer to defer bonuses, commissions, or salary increases until after the divorce is finalized.
- **Concealed Side Businesses:** A spouse might have undisclosed side businesses or sources of income that are not included in the reported financial statements.
- **Complex Loan Transactions:** Sophisticated loan transactions or financial arrangements may be used to divert income away from scrutiny.
- **Unexplained Debt Payments:** Payments towards hidden debts or financial obligations not disclosed during divorce proceedings may suggest hidden income.
- **Unusual Tax Returns:** Discrepancies or irregularities in tax returns, especially unexplained losses, may be a sign of hidden income.



Hidden Money in Divorce - Assets

Identifying hidden assets or property during divorce mediation or litigation is crucial to ensure a fair and equitable distribution of marital assets. Here are some red flags that may indicate the presence of hidden assets:

- **Undisclosed Bank Accounts:** Unexplained bank accounts or financial institutions not disclosed during the divorce proceedings.
- **Asset Transfers to Third Parties:** Transfers of assets to friends, family, or business associates in an attempt to hide them.
- **Offshore Accounts or Complex Investments:** The use of offshore accounts, trusts, or complex investment structures that could conceal assets.
- **Overstated Liabilities:** Claiming higher liabilities or debts to reduce the perceived value of the marital estate.
- **Hidden Business Interests:** Concealing ownership in businesses or professional practices during the divorce process.
- **Changes in Ownership or Title:** Transferring ownership or changing the title of assets without proper documentation or explanation.
- **Valuation Discrepancies:** Significant discrepancies between the reported value of an asset and its actual fair market value.
- **Missing or Altered Documentation:** Incomplete or altered financial documents, such as bank statements, tax returns, or property deeds.
- **Changes in Estate Planning:** Modifications to wills, trusts, or other estate planning documents that could be attempts to conceal assets.
- **Delayed Compensation or Bonus Payments:** Deferring compensation or bonus payments until after the divorce is finalized.



**TRUSTED RESOURCE FOR IDENTIFYING
ANY RED FLAGS IN THE FINANCES:**

Krista Shelton
krista@focusedforensic.com



Hidden Money in Divorce - Review Docs!

Identifying whether a spouse is hiding money can be a delicate process. If any of these areas raise concerns, it may be advisable to seek professional advice from financial experts or legal professionals who specialize in divorce and financial matters. Open communication and professional guidance are crucial when addressing suspicions of financial misconduct in a relationship. Here are a few different starting points:

- **Discrepancies in Financial Statements:**
 - Review your joint financial statements, including bank statements, tax returns, and credit card statements. Are there unexplained discrepancies, unusual transactions, or missing financial information that you weren't aware of?
- **Changes in Spending Habits:**
 - Examine your spouse's spending habits and lifestyle changes. Have they recently started making unexplained large purchases or changes in spending patterns that don't align with your shared financial goals or known income?
- **Secrecy and Lack of Communication:**
 - Evaluate the level of financial transparency in your relationship. Are there instances where your spouse avoids discussing financial matters, deflects questions about money, or seems unusually secretive about their financial activities?
- **Unexplained Assets or Debts:**
 - Take inventory of assets and debts. Are there unexplained assets, offshore accounts, or debts that you were not aware of? Are there discrepancies between the assets and debts disclosed and the actual financial situation?
- **Hidden Income Sources:**
 - Explore potential hidden income sources. Have you noticed any unexplained increases in your spouse's income or business revenues? Are there discrepancies between the reported income and their actual financial capacity?



Chapter 3

Life Post-Divorce



Post-Divorce: Future Budget

A post-divorce or “future” budget is a financial plan that individuals create after the completion of their divorce proceedings. This budget reflects the altered financial landscape that arises from the changes in income, expenses, and assets post-divorce. It is designed to help individuals manage their finances effectively, adapt to new circumstances, and achieve financial stability on a single-income or revised financial structure. It's crucial to be realistic and flexible when creating a post-divorce budget and planning for future lifestyle.

- **Income Sources:** Identify all sources of income, including wages, alimony, child support, and any additional income streams.
- **Fixed Expenses:** List essential fixed expenses such as mortgage or rent, utilities, insurance premiums, and property taxes.
- **Variable Expenses:** Account for variable expenses like groceries, transportation, healthcare, and other day-to-day living costs.
- **Child-Related Costs:** Include expenses related to child support, education, extracurricular activities, and healthcare for children.
- **Debt Repayment:** Plan for the repayment of any debts assigned during the divorce proceedings.
- **Emergency Fund:** Allocate funds for an emergency fund to cover unexpected expenses or financial setbacks.
- **Taxes:** Consider the tax implications of the divorce settlement and any changes in filing status. Consult with Amy (see below) for guidance.
- **Retirement Contributions:** Continue or start contributions to retirement accounts, taking into account any changes in financial circumstances.
- **Legal and Professional Fees:** Budget for any ongoing legal or professional fees related to post-divorce matters.



TRUSTED RESOURCE FOR POST-DIVORCE BUDGETING:

Amy Adler CPA, CFE, CDFA
Adler Divorce Financial Consulting
<https://yourdivorceasset.com>
amy@yourdivorceasset.com

Steps to Create a Post-Divorce Budget

1. Gather Financial Information:

- Collect information on all sources of income, including wages, alimony, child support, and any other financial resources.

2. List Fixed Expenses:

- Identify essential fixed expenses, such as:
 - Mortgage or rent
 - Utilities (electricity, water, gas)
 - Insurance premiums (health, auto, life)
 - Property taxes

3. Account for Variable Expenses:

- Consider variable expenses, including:
 - Groceries
 - Transportation (fuel, maintenance, public transit)
 - Healthcare costs
 - Personal care

4. Factor in Child-Related Expenses:

- If you have children, include costs related to:
 - Child support
 - Education expenses
 - Extracurricular activities
 - Childcare or babysitting

5. Address Debt Repayment:

- Plan for the repayment of any debts assigned during the divorce proceedings.

6. Create an Emergency Fund:

- Allocate funds for an emergency fund to cover unexpected expenses or financial setbacks.

7. Consider Taxes:

- Understand the tax implications of your divorce settlement and any changes in filing status. Consult with a tax professional.

8. Account for Retirement Contributions:

- Continue or start contributions to retirement accounts, taking into account any changes in financial circumstances.

9. Budget for Legal and Professional Fees:

- Include funds for any ongoing legal or professional fees related to post-divorce matters.

10. Plan for Short-Term and Long-Term Goals:

- Set financial goals, both short-term and long-term, such as saving for a home, investments, or education.





Post-Divorce: Future Lifestyle Planning

Considering your lifestyle after divorce is crucial for financial planning, emotional well-being, and setting meaningful goals. It allows for the creation of a realistic and sustainable budget, addresses the needs of children and family, and fosters adaptation to significant life changes. By proactively planning for the post-divorce future, individuals can make informed decisions, prevent financial pitfalls, and cultivate a holistic well-being that contributes to an improved quality of life.

- **Housing:** Determine the type of housing that aligns with your budget, whether it's maintaining the family home, downsizing, or relocating.
- **Career and Education:** Assess career goals and consider any necessary education or training to support future career advancements.
- **Social and Leisure Activities:** Plan for social and leisure activities that contribute to a fulfilling post-divorce lifestyle.
- **Health and Wellness:** Include costs related to healthcare, fitness, and overall well-being in your budget.
- **Travel and Vacation:** Factor in expenses for travel and vacations to ensure a healthy work-life balance.
- **Education Savings:** If applicable, set aside funds for your own or your children's education.
- **Financial Goals:** Establish short-term and long-term financial goals, such as saving for a home, investments, or other milestones.
- **Social Support:** Cultivate a strong support system of friends, family, or support groups to aid in the emotional aspects of post-divorce life.
- **Personal Development:** Invest in personal development activities or hobbies that contribute to your overall well-being.
- **Insurance Coverage:** Review and update insurance coverage, including health, life, and property insurance.
- **Estate Planning:** Consider updating your will, beneficiary designations, and other estate planning documents based on the changes in your life.





Chapter 4

Alimony (Maintenance)
& Child Support



Alimony (Maintenance) & Child Support

In divorce mediation or litigation, alimony (also called spousal “maintenance”) and child support calculations vary based on your state or jurisdiction and individual circumstances.

Alimony is typically determined by considering factors such as the length of the marriage, financial needs of the recipient, and the paying spouse's ability to contribute. Child support calculations usually involve factors like each parent's income, the child's needs, and the custodial arrangement. Legal guidelines or formulas may be used to calculate child support, while alimony decisions often involve negotiation or court discretion. Consulting with legal professionals is crucial to ensure accurate and fair determinations based on specific laws and circumstances.

QUESTIONS TO USE WHEN SPEAKING WITH LEGAL PROFESSIONALS:

Alimony Questions:

- What factors are considered when calculating alimony in our jurisdiction?
- How does the length of the marriage influence alimony calculations?
- Can you explain the impact of each spouse's financial needs and earning capacity on alimony?
- Are health or education-related factors taken into account in determining alimony?
- What are the tax implications of alimony, and is it tax-deductible?

Child Support Questions:

- How is child support calculated in our jurisdiction, and what guidelines apply?
- What factors influence child support, including income, custody arrangements, and extraordinary expenses?
- Can changes in income or custody arrangements affect child support amounts?
- What are the tax implications of child support for both parents?
- How are modifications to child support agreements handled, and under what circumstances?



Alimony (Maintenance) & Child Support

QUESTIONS TO USE WHEN SPEAKING WITH LEGAL PROFESSIONALS:

Legal Procedures and Enforcement:

- What legal mechanisms exist for enforcing alimony and child support orders?
- In case of non-compliance, what legal remedies are available?
- Can you explain the modifiability of alimony and child support agreements, and under what conditions can modifications be sought?

Financial and Tax Considerations:

- How do financial considerations, such as the division of assets and debts, impact alimony and child support calculations?
- Can you clarify any tax implications related to alimony, child support, and other financial aspects of the divorce?

Attorney Fees and Cost-Sharing:

- What are the legal fees associated with determining alimony and child support arrangements?
- Is there an option for cost-sharing between spouses regarding legal fees in these matters?

Documentation and Agreement Clarity:

- How are agreements related to alimony and child support documented in the divorce settlement?
- What specific details should be included in these agreements to ensure clarity and avoid misunderstandings?

Mediation Options:

- If we choose mediation, how will alimony and child support matters be addressed?
- What role does the attorney play in facilitating mediation discussions on financial aspects?

Legal Language Clarifications:

- If there are legal terms or concepts that are unclear, can you provide explanations to ensure understanding of the language used in legal documents?

Review and Revision Process:

- How often should we review and possibly revise alimony and child support agreements to ensure they remain relevant?



Chapter 5

Divorcing a Difficult Spouse

Divorcing a Difficult Spouse - Red Flags

"Narcissism" is frequently discussed in the context of divorce, and regrettably, many cases involve a spouse with narcissistic tendencies. Managing a divorce with a narcissist, whether through mediation or litigation, presents challenges due to their potential for manipulative and controlling behaviors. To identify if you are dealing with a narcissist, watch out for the following red flags:

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- **Lack of Empathy:**
 - Difficulty understanding or empathizing with your emotions or perspective.
- **Manipulative Behavior:**
 - Use of manipulation, guilt-tripping, or gaslighting to control the narrative.
- **Sense of Entitlement:**
 - Belief that they are entitled to special treatment and that rules don't apply to them.
- **Grandiosity:**
 - Exaggerated sense of self-importance or superiority.
- **Constant Need for Attention:**
 - An insatiable need for attention and admiration from others.
- **Difficulty Taking Responsibility:**
 - Unwillingness to take responsibility for their actions or admit mistakes.
- **Highly Reactive to Criticism:**
 - Reacts strongly to criticism or perceived slights, often with anger or defensiveness.
- **Lack of Boundaries:**
 - Disregard for personal boundaries, including invasion of your privacy.
- **History of Impulsive Actions:**
 - Engaging in impulsive or reckless behaviors without consideration of consequences.
- **Inability to Compromise:**
 - Unwillingness to compromise or collaborate in reaching agreements.



Divorcing a Difficult Spouse - Red Flags

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- **Triangulation:**
 - Bringing in third parties or attempting to turn others against you.
- **Projection:**
 - Projecting their own flaws or negative qualities onto you.
- **Parental Alienation:**
 - Attempting to turn children against the other parent through manipulation.
- **Financial Control:**
 - Attempting to control or manipulate financial aspects of the divorce proceedings.
- **Litigious Behavior:**
 - Engaging in unnecessary legal battles, often for the sake of conflict.
- **Emotional Rollercoaster:**
 - Creating emotional chaos, switching between extreme affection and hostility.
- **Legal Maneuvering:**
 - Using legal strategies to gain advantage or exert control rather than seeking fair resolutions.
- **Vindictiveness:**
 - Displaying a vindictive attitude, seeking revenge rather than focusing on fair negotiation.



**TRUSTED RESOURCE FOR
NARCISSISTIC DIVORCE COACHING:**

Victoria McCooley
Victoria@VictoriaMcCooley.com



Divorcing a Difficult Spouse - Tips

Communicating with a “narcissistic” spouse during the divorce process can be challenging, but adopting specific strategies can help manage interactions more effectively. Here are five tips:

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1. **Set Clear Boundaries:**

- Establish and communicate clear boundaries. Clearly define what topics are off-limits and the preferred mode of communication. Stick to these boundaries consistently, focusing on maintaining a business-like, factual tone.

2. **Use Written Communication:**

- Opt for written communication whenever possible, such as emails or text messages. This creates a documented record of interactions and minimizes the potential for gaslighting or manipulation. Keep your messages concise, to the point, and focused on the necessary information.

3. **Stay Calm and Neutral:**

- Maintain emotional detachment during interactions. Narcissistic individuals may try to provoke emotional reactions. Respond with a calm and neutral demeanor, avoiding confrontation. Stick to the facts and avoid getting drawn into emotional arguments.

4. **Focus on the Business Aspect:**

- Keep conversations focused on the practical and business aspects of the divorce, such as asset division, child custody arrangements, and financial matters. Refrain from engaging in personal or emotional discussions, as narcissistic individuals may exploit such conversations for manipulation.

5. **Involve Professionals:**

- Utilize professionals, such as attorneys or mediators, as intermediaries in communication. Having a neutral third party involved can help mitigate conflicts and ensure that communication remains focused on the legal and practical aspects of the divorce.



Chapter 6

Divorce Mediation

The Cost of Divorce Litigation

Divorce litigation can incur various hidden costs beyond the more apparent legal and expert fees. It's essential for individuals going through divorce litigation to be aware of these potential hidden costs and work closely with their legal counsel to manage expenses effectively. Exploring alternative dispute resolution methods and maintaining open communication can help mitigate some of these hidden costs.

- **Extended Legal Proceedings:**
 - Prolonged court battles increase attorney fees.
- **Expert Witness Fees:**
 - Costs associated with hiring expert witnesses.
- **Court Filing Fees and Administrative Costs:**
 - Charges for various court filings and administrative tasks.
- **Discovery Expenses:**
 - Costs for depositions, interrogatories, and document requests.
- **Custody Evaluations:**
 - Expenses related to court-ordered custody evaluations.
- **Appeals and Modifications:**
 - Legal fees for appeals or post-divorce modifications.
- **Real Estate Transactions:**
 - Costs associated with selling or transferring properties.
- **Tax Consequences:**
 - Unforeseen tax implications of divorce.
- **Emotional and Health Costs:**
 - Therapy or healthcare expenses due to the emotional toll.





Divorce Options - Mediation

Divorce mediation is a process in which a neutral third party, the mediator, facilitates communication and negotiation between divorcing spouses to help them reach a mutually agreeable resolution. The goal is to collaboratively address issues such as property division, child custody, support, and alimony without the need for courtroom litigation. Mediation encourages open communication, problem-solving, and empowers the parties to make decisions about their future.

HERE ARE THE FIRST STEPS TO START DIVORCE MEDIATION:

1. Research and Understand Mediation:

- Familiarize yourself with the mediation process. Understand the benefits, potential outcomes, and how mediation differs from traditional litigation.

2. Determine Suitability for Mediation:

- Assess whether mediation is suitable for your situation. It works best when both parties are willing to negotiate, communicate openly, and are committed to finding amicable solutions.

3. Consult with Legal Counsel:

- It's advisable to consult with individual attorneys before starting mediation. While the mediator is neutral and does not provide legal advice, having your own attorney ensures you understand your rights and obligations.

4. Choose a Qualified Mediator:

- Research and choose a qualified and experienced mediator. Look for someone with a background in family law and mediation training. You may seek recommendations from legal professionals or friends who have gone through mediation.

5. Schedule an Initial Consultation:

- Contact the chosen mediator to schedule an initial consultation. During this meeting, you'll discuss the mediation process, the mediator's approach, fees, and address any questions or concerns you may have.

"Embrace the detours - the unexpected paths that lead you to a greater understanding of yourself and the world. They bring you closer to your dreams and the freedom to live life on your terms."

Divorce Options - Mediation

6. **Gather Relevant Information:**

- Start collecting relevant financial and legal information, such as income statements, asset and debt details, and any relevant legal documents. This will be essential for the mediation process.

7. **Joint or Individual Sessions:**

- Determine whether you prefer joint sessions with both parties present or if you are more comfortable with separate sessions. Some mediators offer a combination of both.

8. **Set the Agenda:**

- Identify the key issues you want to address in mediation. This could include property division, child custody arrangements, support, and any other specific concerns.

9. **Initial Mediation Session:**

- Schedule the first mediation session with the mediator. During this session, the mediator will establish ground rules, explain the process, and help set the agenda for subsequent sessions.

10. **Commit to the Process:**

- Commit to the mediation process with an open mind and a willingness to negotiate. Successful mediation requires cooperation and a focus on finding mutually agreeable solutions.

MY PROS TO MEDIATION:

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MY CONS TO MEDIATION:

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Divorce Support - Coaching

A divorce coach is a professional who provides guidance, support, and practical assistance to individuals going through the divorce process. Unlike attorneys, divorce coaches focus on the emotional and personal aspects of divorce rather than the legalities. They help individuals navigate the challenges, manage stress, and make informed decisions during this emotionally charged period.

HERE ARE WAYS IN WHICH A DIVORCE COACH CAN HELP:

- **Emotional Support:**
 - Divorce coaches offer a supportive and empathetic presence during a time of emotional upheaval. They help individuals cope with the emotional toll of divorce, providing a safe space to express feelings and process the changes.
- **Communication Skills:**
 - Coaches assist in improving communication skills, especially when dealing with a divorcing partner. They provide guidance on how to express needs and concerns effectively, fostering healthier interactions.
- **Goal Setting and Decision Making:**
 - Divorce coaches help individuals clarify their goals and priorities. By providing tools for effective decision-making, they empower clients to make choices aligned with their long-term well-being.
- **Coping Strategies:**
 - The divorce process often brings stress and uncertainty. Coaches offer coping strategies to manage emotions, reduce anxiety, and navigate the challenges of the divorce journey.
- **Parenting Guidance:**
 - For those with children, divorce coaches can provide parenting advice. They help create effective co-parenting strategies, ensuring the best interests of the children are prioritized.
- **Collaboration with Other Professionals:**
 - Divorce coaches collaborate with attorneys, mediators, and other professionals involved in the divorce process. This interdisciplinary approach ensures a comprehensive and holistic support system.



Divorce Options - Co-Parenting Coach

HERE ARE WAYS IN WHICH A DIVORCE COACH CAN HELP:

- **Financial Awareness:**
 - While not financial advisors, divorce coaches can help individuals become more financially aware. They may offer insights into budgeting, understanding financial implications, and preparing for the financial changes that often accompany divorce.
- **Empowerment and Self-Reflection:**
 - Divorce coaches empower individuals to take an active role in their divorce proceedings. They encourage self-reflection, helping clients understand their needs, values, and aspirations for the future.
- **Reducing Conflict:**
 - By fostering effective communication and conflict resolution skills, divorce coaches contribute to reducing the overall conflict in the divorce process. This can lead to a more amicable and less adversarial resolution.
- **Post-Divorce Transition:**
 - Divorce coaches assist in the post-divorce transition, helping individuals adapt to the changes and rebuild their lives. They provide ongoing support as clients navigate the challenges of a new chapter.



TRUSTED RESOURCE FOR A DIVORCE COACH WITH PARENTING SPECIALTY:

Cristin Terri
Cristine@CristinTerri.com
<https://www.cristinterri.com/>



The background of the entire page is a dense, repeating pattern of blue line-art illustrations. The designs include various types of leaves, some with prominent veins, and several different styles of flowers, including some with multiple petals and others that are more abstract or bud-like. The pattern is consistent across the entire surface.

Chapter 7

Valuation & Other Resources

Do you and your spouse own a business?

ValuationMediation.com, led by Melissa Gragg, offers financial mediation services specializing in complex business analysis during litigation and divorce proceedings. Melissa is a seasoned divorce mediator and business valuation expert, known for her testimony in court and commitment to settling matters through mediation. She collaborates with attorneys and mediators nationwide, serving as a neutral third-party provider for business valuations, pension valuations, forensic income & expense analysis, and tracing of separate assets.

With 20 years of experience as an expert witness, Melissa excels in divorce mediation, valuing business interests, pensions, and strategic planning for companies ranging from \$1-100 million. She aims for success by using negotiation strategies and preparation to encourage couples to mediate and settle cases, even in complex financial situations.

ValuationMediation.com - Independent Valuation Opinion for Divorce

- If you and your spouse own a business that sells services or products or even a holding company with real estate, we can work with BOTH of you (and attorneys) to determine the value of the business and review it with you online.
- Our process is focused on clear communications, a transparent process, the exchange of all financial documents for each spouse to review, and discussions about the business with everyone present to hear the answers.
- We work to help the couple determine how to utilize the business, cash flow and property in the most beneficial way for the couple or entire family.

Documents Request List for Business Valuation:

Business Valuation

1. Detailed five (5) years of historical, accrual-based financial statements including income statement, balance sheets and cash flow statements
2. Past five (5) years of business tax returns.
3. Most recent income statement and balance sheet for recent month - year-to-date totals.
4. Trailing twelve months (TTM): income statement as of the recent date.
5. Two-year comparison: income statement as of the recent date above 6/30 or 9/30 - compared to the same time-period in the prior year.
6. Detailed fixed asset listing and depreciation schedule for all tangible assets.
7. All ownership agreements in effect (Articles of Incorporation, operating agreements, partnership agreements, buy/sell agreements and/or preferred share agreements, etc.)

Personal Balance Sheet - Property Statement Summary (if requested)

8. Past five (5) years of personal tax returns.
9. Monthly personal bank checking and savings statements.
10. Monthly personal credit card statements.
11. Year-end statements for brokerage accounts, investments, retirement, etc. for past several years.
12. Most recent statement for all banking, mortgage, car loans, retirement, investment, 401k, pension, profit-sharing and/or financial accounts.

Documents to collect:

	Mortgage Statement	
	House Closing Documents (if recent purchase)	
	Rent Statement	
	Lease Agreement	
	Electric, Gas, Water, Sewer Bills or Statements	
	Cable or Streaming Services (List or Statement)	
	Car Loan Statements	
	Car VIN Number	
	Car Insurance Card	
	Titles to Cars or Property	
	Personal Property Tax Statements (3 years)	
	Bank Statements (past 6 months)	
	Credit Card Statements (past 6 months)	
	Cell Phone Bill and Agreement	
	Tax Returns (personal - past 3 years)	
	Wage or Payroll Statements (3 years)	
	W-2 or Year-End Report	
	Health Insurance Card	
	Insurance Bills or Statements	
	Insurance Policies	
	Employee Handbook	
	Retirement or Pension Statements	
	Brokerage Statements (401k)	
	School Tuition Statements	
	Student Loan Statements	
	Life Insurance Policy (Cash Value)	
	Credit Report	
	<i>Own a Business? (Tax Returns & MORE)</i>	

Sample Property Statement

Collins Property Statement				
(Description of asset)	TOTAL	% To Wife	MARITAL PROPERTY	
			Wife	Husband
Real Estate				
777 Las Vegas Blvd	\$ 1,777,000	100%	\$ 1,577,000	-
Mortgage	(500,000)	100%	(500,000)	-
Real Estate Total:	\$ 1,277,000		\$ 1,077,000	\$ -
Motor Vehicles, Boats, etc.				
Car	\$ 80,000	100%	80,000	-
Car Loan	(21,000)	100%	(21,000)	-
Car 2	40,000	0%	-	40,000
Car Loan 2	(21,000)	0%	-	(21,000)
Motor Vehicles Total:	\$ 78,000		\$ 59,000	\$ 19,000
Bank Accounts				
Bank Joint	300,000	50%	150,000	150,000
Bank Husband	90,000	50%	22,500	22,500
Bank Accounts Total:	\$ 390,000		\$ 172,500	\$ 172,500
Retirement Assets				
401k - Husband	\$ 400,000	50%	200,000	200,000
IRA	689,000	50%	344,500	344,500
Present Value of Pension (can pension be split?) - Wife	\$ 800,000	100%	800,000	-
Retirement Assets Total:	\$ 1,889,000		\$ 1,344,500	\$ 544,500
Closely Held Business Interests				
Business A	\$ 500,000	0%	-	500,000
Business Property Holdings	1,200,000	0%	-	1,200,000
Closely Held Business Interests Total	\$ 1,700,000		\$ -	\$ 1,700,000
Debts Not Included Above (enter as a negative number)				
Personal Loan to Parents	\$ (150,000)	50%	-	-
Credit Card Wife	(50,000)	50%	(25,000)	(25,000)
Credit Card Husband	(20,000)	50%	(10,000)	(10,000)
Debts Total:	\$ (220,000)		\$ (35,000)	\$ (35,000)
SUBTOTAL	\$ 5,114,000		\$ 2,618,000	\$ 2,401,000
Payment to Equalize Division of Property			(108,500)	108,500
TOTAL PROPERTY	\$ 5,019,000		\$ 2,509,500	\$ 2,509,500
PERCENTAGE OF PROPERTY TO EACH PARTY			50%	50%

(adjust this % as needed)

Date of Marriage 7/23/2005	
SEPARATE PROPERTY	
Wife Separate	Husband Separate
\$ 200,000	\$ -
-	-
\$ 200,000	\$ -
-	-
-	-
-	-
\$ -	\$ -
-	-
-	45,000
\$ -	\$ 45,000
-	-
-	-
\$ -	\$ -
-	-
\$ -	\$ -
(150,000)	-
-	-
-	-
\$ (150,000)	\$ -
\$ 50,000	\$ 45,000

Sample List of Expenses

Household	COST PER MONTH
Mortgage or Rent	
Real Estate Tax	
Homeowners' or Renters' Insurance	
Condo Fee	
Household Maintenance	
Utilities - Gas/Propane Heat	
Utilities - Oil Heat	
Utilities - Other	
Utilities - Electricity	
Phone	
Utilities - Water/Sewer	
Cable TV	
Internet Access	
Cleaning Service	
Lawn Service	
Snow Removal	
Trash Removal	
Household Supplies	
Painting/Wallpapering	
Furniture & Appliance	
<i>Other Household</i>	
<i>Other Household</i>	
Health and Medical	COST PER MONTH
Health Insurance	
Dental Insurance	
Disability Insurance	
Medical/Doctor	
Dental	
Drug & Prescription	
Optical	
Orthodontist	
<i>Other Health</i>	
<i>Other</i>	
Transportation	COST PER MONTH
Car Payments	
Car Insurance	
Car Gasoline/Oil	
Car Maintenance and Repair	
Car License/Stickers	
Car Other	
Tolls	
Parking	
Public/Alt. Transportation	
<i>Other Transportation</i>	

Sample Present Value of Maintenance

Present Value of Monthly Maintenance (for Negotiation of a Lump-Sum Payment)

Interest Rate	5.0%
Maintenance	\$ 5,000
Yearly Maintenance	\$ 60,000
Maintenance Reduction	\$ (1,000)

Total	\$ 487,881	\$ 390,303	\$ 292,728
Monthly Maintenance	\$ 5,000	\$ 4,000	\$ 3,000
Yearly Maintenance	\$ 60,000	\$ 48,000	\$ 36,000
Year			
1	\$ 60,000	\$ 60,000	\$ 60,000
2	58,554	118,554	46,843
3	54,422	172,976	43,537
4	51,830	224,806	41,464
5	49,362	274,168	39,490
6	47,012	321,180	37,609
7	44,773	365,953	35,818
8	42,641	408,594	34,113
9	40,610	449,204	32,488
10	\$ 38,677	\$ 487,881	\$ 30,941

The green row is the total present value for all 10 years - for each maintenance level.

The blue row shows the reduction of the maintenance by \$1,000/mo increments.

The gray columns are the cumulative totals for each year.

For example: \$219,334 is the present value of \$4,000 per month for 5 years at 5.0%.

Who do you want on your team?

Melissa Gragg, CVA, MAFF - Business Valuation Expert



Services

- Business valuations
- Pension valuations
- Personal property statement
- Income & expenses analysis
- Tracing separate asset
- Analysis of dissipation of marital assets or wasting money
- Expert witness testimony
- Joint valuation mediator - work for both people as independent unbiased expert

Contact Info

Melissa Gragg, CVA, MAFF
(314) 541-8163
www.ValuationMediation.com
Melissa@BridgeValuation.com

www.TheDivorceAllies.com

Contact Log

During this journey, you may encounter professionals or individuals going through similar challenges. This space is provided for you to compile and organize all the contacts you gather along the way.

- Name/Title:
- How did you find them:
- Contact info:
- Ways they offer support:

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Who do you want on your team?



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Cristin Terri
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Who do you want on your team?

Amy Adler CPA, CFE, CDFA - Financial Budgeting



Services

- Marital estate compilation and suggested division
- Post-divorce budget preparation
- Estate division negotiation facilitation
- Separate property tracing
- Hidden assets investigation
- Expert witness testimony
- Post-divorce consulting

Contact Info

Amy Adler CPA, CFE, CDFA
www.YourDivorceAsset.com
Amy@YourDivorceAsset.com

www.TheDivorceAllies.com

Who do you want on your team?

Victoria McCooey - Narcissistic Divorce Coach



Services

- Individual coaching
- Group coaching
- Negotiation coaching
- Group workshops

Contact Info

Victoria McCooey
www.VictoriaMcCooey.com
Victoria@VictoriaMcCooey.com

www.TheDivorceAllies.com

Who do you want on your team?

Krista Shelton, Certified Fraud Examiner



Services

- Financial fraud investigation
- Litigation support
- IRS matters
- Divorce forensic analysis

Contact Info

Krista Shelton, CFE
Former Special Agent - IRS
www.FocusedForensics.com
Krista@FocusedForensics.com

www.TheDivorceAllies.com

Who do you want on your team?

Cristin Terri - Certified Divorce Coach



Services

- Co-parenting coach
- Holistic counseling around parenting
- Individual coaching sessions
- Meditation teacher

Contact Info

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Cristine@CristinTerri.com

www.TheDivorceAllies.com

Empowering Affirmations

These affirmations are designed to empower you, uplift your spirits, and remind you of your worth and potential as you navigate through your divorce journey. Repeat them regularly and personalize them to resonate with your own experiences and aspirations. Embrace these affirmations as guiding principles that can support you in healing, growth, and embracing a fulfilling future.

- I am strong and capable of navigating through this challenging time.
- I choose to let go of what no longer serves me and embrace a brighter future.
- I am worthy of love, happiness, and fulfillment, even outside of my previous relationship.
- I trust in my ability to heal and grow from this experience.
- I am not defined by my past, but by the strength and resilience I embody today.
- I am deserving of support and compassion from myself and others.
- I release any guilt or shame I may feel and embrace forgiveness and self-acceptance.
- I am creating a life filled with joy, abundance, and opportunities for growth.
- I am in control of my own happiness and choose to focus on the positive aspects of my life.
- I am open to new beginnings and excited about the possibilities that lie ahead.
- I am worthy of love, respect, and healthy relationships.
- I embrace the freedom to rediscover and redefine myself.
- I am grateful for the lessons I have learned and the growth I am experiencing.
- I trust in the timing of my life and believe that everything is unfolding as it should.
- I release any attachment to the past and welcome new possibilities into my life.
- I choose to focus on self-care and prioritize my well-being during this time of transition.
- I have the strength and courage to face any challenges that come my way.
- I am not defined by my relationship status but by the love and light that shines from within me.
- I forgive myself for any mistakes or shortcomings and embrace the opportunity for personal growth.
- I am creating a life that aligns with my values, passions, and purpose.

Create Your Own Daily Affirmations

- I am
- I am
- I am
- I create
- I create
- I have
- I have
- I love
- I love
- I trust
- I trust
- I allow
- I allow
- I deserve
- I deserve
- I receive
- I receive
- I release
- I release
- I accept
- I am worthy.



Curious about this guide?

Introducing Elli - not an individual, but a conceptual embodiment of your future self. Elli Marketing emerges as a visionary, female-led authentic marketing firm committed to empowering small business owners by enhancing their online visibility and accessibility.

At the core of Elli Marketing's mission is a dedication to assisting entrepreneurs in transforming their expertise into both digital and tangible products. Consider Elli not just as a service but as a catalyst for translating your knowledge into impactful business outcomes.



Services

- Strategic marketing sessions
- Podcast production/editing
- Marketing consulting
- Journal or guide creation
- Video editing

Contact Info

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