

Divorce Your Way
Powerfully Prepared
Questions to Ask Attorneys



Introduction to Questions to Ask Attorneys

As you prepare for divorce, selecting an attorney who is right for you is of critical importance. If you haven't been through a divorce, been in court, or worked with an attorney the experience is new and uncomfortable. It is wise to seek representation regardless of which side you are on. How your divorce will be handled has a lasting impact on your life.

You'll want to interview a minimum of 3 attorneys before making a decision. Research the attorney, their firm, fees, working styles, and how you pay. If your family has a business, or there are special needs children make sure the firm you select is familiar with these types of situations.

After you've interviewed attorneys, checked them out online and have decided on which one is right for you, have that attorney draw up a fee contract. Pay the retainer after both parties have signed the contract.

There are three areas that are of concern when you're hiring a divorce attorney

- Attorney experience
- How your relationship will work
- Fee & payment structures

Questions to ask a divorce attorney about their experience

How long have you practiced, and how many cases have you handled?

Do you have a philosophy about divorce that underscores your practice?

How many cases do you settle out of court?

What process do you work in (mediation, collaborative, litigation)? Which do you prefer and why?

How would another lawyer describe your style and approach to getting to a settlement?

How would your clients describe your style and approach to getting to settlement?

Do you know my spouse or their attorney?

What is your familiarity with local family court officials?

How will our relationship work?

How will we work together? Phone, in person, video conferences?

What is your typical response time for phone calls and email?

Will I have your cell phone number?

If I need to reach you, what is the best time of day?

Will I actually be working with you, or with an associate?

Who will respond to my emails?

How would I as a client get a question answered without an appointment with you?

Are there others in the firm who would be familiar with my case and could answer questions when you are not available?

What is your preferred method of communicating questions?

How can I best prepare for meetings that will be most cost effective for me?

How will our relationship work?

What is your role in effectuating the settlement?

Before charting a particular course, do you perform a corresponding evaluation of "the other side"?

Will I receive copies of documents filed with the court, all communication with my spouse's attorney and any other documents related to my case?

Will I be kept informed of all developments in my case?

Will you ask my opinion before planning a strategy?

Fees for Services

Will you do either/or unbundled legal services versus retainer only?

How much is your retainer?

When will I receive retainer updates?

What is your hourly rate?

What is the hourly rate of associates that may work on my case?

What are all of the transactions for which I will be billed?
(Copies, filings)

Will I be billed for emails?

How do you prefer payment? Credit cards, checks, etc?