

## PREPARATION FOR A DIVORCE MEDIATION

### 1. GOALS

Make a list of what you would like to accomplish during the mediation. Your objectives can cover both material and emotional areas. Some examples are:

- "I want to negotiate child care and support."
- "I want to figure out how we can get along with each other around the children and move toward an amicable co-parenting relationship."
- "I want to come to a settlement of our financial affairs."
- "I want to clear the air about some things in the past that keep coming up for me."

### 2. "JAGGED" (HELD) FEELINGS

In light of your goals for the work together, think about what things of an emotional sort are likely to come up and prevent you from negotiating in a cooperative manner. Write them down, being as specific as you can, using examples and following this form:

When you did \_\_\_\_\_, I felt \_\_\_\_\_.  
(specific behavior) (feelings)

Some examples are:

- "Last week while you were dropping the kids off and began talking about your anger at me in their presence with a raised voice, I felt scared, and later angry."
- "When you said you'd check into the details of your pension and then didn't, I felt irritated."
- "Long ago, when you declared you would never go east to visit my family with me, I felt hurt and confused. When I think about it now, I feel very angry."

**PLEASE be careful that the words you use to describe feelings are simple and nonjudgmental.** It is not all right to say, for example, "When you said you'd check into the details of your pension and then didn't, I felt you were irresponsible and incompetent." **Irresponsible** and **incompetent** are not words that describe feelings. They are opinions, and judgmental ones at that. Interestingly, words in English for feelings devoid of judgments are scarce. **Angry, sad, hurt, and scared**, and some variations on those themes, are the safest.

Look at this part of the homework as an opportunity to get whatever is upsetting you down on paper. Bring these notes to the mediation; they are for your use in the course of the work.

### 3. OUTCOMES

Make a list of the areas you want to negotiate in the mediation. Be as specific as you can. If you have any non-negotiable demands, be sure to note them. Be prepared to bring with you any financial or legal records that bear on the issues under negotiation. If possible, email data to me in advance.



This homework is a work sheet for your use only. Please prepare it on your own, without consulting each other. It is important that each person come to the mediation with his or her independent thoughts in order so that clear agreements between different points of view can be negotiated.

Mediations commonly take three to four hours. I ask that you refrain from using alcohol or drugs before coming to a mediation, since the work requires a clear mind and maximum energy.

I often work with the assistance of an apprentice. If you have any concerns about another person's presence, please let me know before the mediation date.

Please call me if you have any questions or need any help preparing.

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