

Managing Separation and Divorce

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INTRODUCTION

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Separation and divorce are painful and difficult processes. The issues are emotional, psychological, financial, logistical and seemingly never-ending. They are certainly life-changing. Having supported numerous clients over two and a half decades through this quagmire, I have formed some strong opinions on the professionals – particularly the family lawyers – to whom clients turn for help and guidance. I've come to the conclusion that lawyers need three major attributes: a thorough and up-to-date knowledge of family law, a generous quantity of humanity and uncomplicated common sense. Surprisingly, one doesn't find that trio of qualities often enough, but I know from client feedback that Elisabeth Sneade and Diane Roome demonstrate these essentials in their everyday practice.

This book also shows that they clearly possess these vital professional qualities in spades! In chapter 1 they ask that important question "Can I do it on my own?" They succinctly demonstrate that the minefield of concerns and problems facing the client, whichever party, can be carefully and sensitively worked through a good deal more smoothly and effectively if one is aware of the questions that need asking and the issues that are likely to arise.

Using this highly practical and logical book and getting help from other professionals such as counsellors and family consultants, decent and civilised compromises can be made which will benefit the couple, the children and the extended family.

Elisabeth and Diane quite rightly stress that keeping communication channels as open as possible between the couple and working towards consensus with the 'ex'-partner will be of tremendous benefit to the individuals, their children and the wider family for years to come. Great emphasis is placed on the plethora of problems concerning finances and the needs of the changing households which, if not handled properly, can be summed up by the phrase "fail to prepare and prepare to fail".

There are so many different routes that face clients when ending their relationships that it can seem like approaching a real 'spaghetti junction': collaboration, mediation, conciliation, litigation ... and these days, increasingly, DIY divorce with self-help books and the ever expanding 'expertise' on the internet. It is absolutely worth doing serious research before deciding which route to take and this includes getting help from the right source, experienced support from the best counsellor/family consultant, advice from a knowledgeable financial specialist, and direction and intelligent legal counsel from balanced the right family lawyer. If you're worrying and wondering which way to go, might I recommend you start here.

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