

IS COLLABORATIVE LAW FOR ME? *

One of the issues identified by professionals who have studied Collaborative Practice is that its proponents tend to “oversell” the process- to promise clients something quick, easy and inexpensive that they will not have to work hard to achieve. The truth is that Collaborative cases are as easy or hard, as quick or as slow, and as cost effective or as financially devastating as the clients make them. The key is for you to realize, from the outset, that you, the client, are in charge of the process and the outcome. The following survey, suggested by Stuart Webb and Ronald Ousky in *The Collaborative Way to Divorce* (Hudson Street Press, 2006), could help you begin to understand your role as an active agent in the Collaborative process, exercising your self-awareness, autonomy, judgment and decision-making from the start.

Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with these statements using the following numbering system:

- 1 strongly disagree
- 2 disagree
- 3 neutral (or doesn't apply)
- 4 agree
- 5 strongly agree

1. My ability to achieve a successful outcome in the divorce primarily will depend on the decisions I make during the process.
2. In order to achieve my most important goals, I am willing to let go of some smaller, short-term issues, even though it may be very hard to do so.
3. I am capable of making the emotional commitment necessary to achieve the best possible outcome.
4. I am not afraid of or intimidated by my spouse.
5. I am willing to try to see things from my spouse's point of view in order to help achieve the best possible outcome.
6. I believe it is possible for my spouse and me to restore enough trust in each other to achieve a successful outcome.
7. I am willing to commit myself fully to resolving the issues through the Collaborative process by working toward common interests rather than simply arguing in favor of my positions.
8. It is important to me that my spouse and I maintain a respectful and effective relationship after th divorce.
9. I have accepted the fact that this divorce is going to happen.
10. I believe that it is very important that our children maintain a strong, healthy relationship with both parents.

Add up your score. If your score is:

Score >30 likely that Collaborative Divorce is a good fit (more so > 40)

Score 20-30 borderline

Score <20 likely that Collaborative Divorce will be too frustrating

Circumstances such as abuse, addiction & untreated mental illnesses should be considered, regardless of score.

* Adapted from *Collaborative Review*, Vol. 9, Issue 2 (Summer, 2007)