

I. How to find a lawyer:

The most simple advice is to ask around and collect recommendations. If you do not know someone who has personally gotten a divorce you can join your town (or surrounding towns) facebook groups or local Mom or Dad groups. It is most beneficial if your attorney primarily works in your county.

After collecting recommendations the next step would be to look up education, number of years in practice and success rate.

The next step is to look up online reviews and take note of anything that you may want to address in meeting with the attorney.

Lastly, choose three attorneys to meet with. Call their offices and ask the following questions:

1. What is the attorney's consultation fee
2. What is their hourly rate
3. What are their associate's hourly rates
4. Is there a different rate for trials

II. Preparing for your meeting:

Below you will find a list of questions that will help you learn more about the attorney. The initial meeting is an interview on both sides.

While you will be assessing if the attorney is right for you, the attorney will also be feeling you out. In the end if it feels like a fit, great! But if it doesn't feel right from the start I strongly recommend moving forward to the next candidate on your list.

Here are a few things to remember when scheduling and attending your meeting:

1. Show up at least five minutes early. You are paying for their time and you want to make the most out of it. You will be paying for the full hour even if you are late.
2. Come with questions and something to take notes with
3. Put your best foot forward: remember, you are also being interviewed and you want to be taken seriously as a client. Wear business casual - business dress clothes.

III. 42 Questions When Interviewing Your Divorce Lawyer

Most attorneys charge an initial consultation fee. It is important that you are mindful of the time when entering the lawyers office. Please arrive 5-10 minutes ahead of schedule. Have your list of questions handy. While it is important to feel out the attorney personally, it's important to not waste your time with "getting to know you" type questions.

It's helpful to sum up your case in a few paragraphs and focus on the facts and not the emotions of the case. While emotions run high, using your time with your attorney to talk about them will not be the best use of your money.

Interview questions to ask a lawyer:

- Are you a specific divorce attorney or do you handle other parts of the law?
- Which counties do you work in? Important because of judges, nuances in county laws, familiarity with other attorneys
- How long does it take you to return phone calls?
- How do I get a hold of you in an emergency?
- What are your hours of availability?

- What is your typical case load and how do you handle overwhelm?
- Will anyone else in your office be working on my case?
- How many associates do you have and what is their experience level?
- How many cases have you represented that are similar to mine?
- How many divorce cases have you worked on that went to trial?
- Do you consider your strengths in trial or in negotiation?
- How many of your cases have involved child custody, child and alimony support, business evaluations, cash business evaluations, large financial settlements or any other specifics pertaining to your specific set of circumstances
- Based on what you know about my case, how long do you think it will take for me to get divorced?
- Are there attorneys that you work really well with?
- Are there attorneys you don't typically work well with?
- Do you know the attorney my spouse has hired? What is your objective opinion?
- Specific
- Do you have a preference around child custody?
- What is your philosophy surrounding divorce?
- How do you feel about the mediation process?
- What is your opinion of the collaborative divorce process?
- How well do you navigate contentious divorces?
- How big is your law firm?
- How often will we touch base regarding the developments in my divorce?

Questions about division of marital assets:

- What is your philosophy on the division of assets?
- How quickly can we divide the assets?

- How would you approach the financial division if my spouse were to wipe the accounts?
- What safeguards will you put in place to assure that my assets are not being moved around and hidden?
- Have you successfully recovered finances that were wiped from accounts? How quickly can you help me access my money?

Questions about attorneys fees:

- Can you please give me an estimate of what a typical divorce with you costs?
- What are some of the ways that you keep my costs low?
- What is your retainer fee?
- Is your trial fee structure different from your hourly rate?
- What is your hourly rate?
- What is your associate's hourly rate?
- How will I be notified of how my money is being used? (Frequency and communication style)
- Do I receive a copy of the billing arrangements in our agreement? (this is a must)
- What happens when the retainer is used up?
- What happens if I get behind on bills?
- Can you collect fees from my spouse?
- Am I being billed for copies of all relevant docs?
- What extra fees should I expect?

Post meeting check in:

- How did you feel in the presence of this attorney?

- When they spoke did you feel confident in their answers?
- Were they aggressive?
- Did you feel they were too passive?
- Did you feel they were level headed?
- Were they caring and genuinely interested in your case?
- Were they helpful in answering questions and having you understand the process?

Last steps:

Make the decision! You've now met with and interviewed three attorneys:

- Which attorney feels most aligned to your goals?
- Which attorney feels invested in your case and your well being?
- Who feels right to invest in?