

COMMUNICATING YOUR NEEDS

During the Process, you will have an opportunity to tell what you need the settlement of the divorce to address. This is harder than you think because it is essential that your spouse hear what you say. How you say your 'need' means everything. So when forming your needs, or some may say goals, make sure your message meets this 4 step test.

1. By the way you are saying it, is there more than one way to meet your need?
2. Is this need significant to you?
3. Is your idea on how to meet your need tangible/achievable?
4. Can the need be described as a benefit to you and not as a detriment to your spouse?

Here are some examples:

- Example for 1. Don't say: I want the house
Instead say: I need a place to live.
- Example for 2. Don't say: Give me his easy chair.
Instead say: You may have your easy chair since it is not significant to me, but is to you.
- Example for 3. Don't say: I need support for the rest of my life.
Instead say: I have financial needs to meet.
- Example for 4. Don't say: I should get more than her since I put more money into the marriage.
Instead say: I feel I have contributed significantly to the marriage, and would like that to be considered.
- Example for 3 & 4. Don't say: Make him quit drinking.
Instead say: I feel the children need positive role models. The children need to be safe both emotionally and physically.

~ Barbara Ann Bartlett ~

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