

## **Hybrid Method**

I offer many ways to resolve disputes. In mediation, I act as a third party and can give neither spouse legal advice. In collaboration, I would represent you and give you legal advice, and your spouse will have his/her own counsel.

There is another alternative that seems to be popular with my clients. I, for lack of a better term, call it a hybrid. Realize 'hybrid' is nothing of a term of art, and is not a legal term. It is just a word I use for something I seem to uniquely offer.

**Hybrid** is when I am hired by one spouse and the other spouse has decided to be unrepresented by counsel, at least initially. Both spouses commit to full disclosure. They agree to deal in good faith with one another; in other words, to be fair, without tricking or applying undo pressure during settlement negotiations.

We begin by inviting your spouse into a meeting where I will use my collaborative skills to work towards resolution of your issues. We handle it by:

- Setting common goals and interests; by
- Letting you both be heard; by
- Giving respect to both points of view; by
- Gathering all the information you both need to make an informed decision; by
- Brainstorming the options together; and
- Letting the two of you come up with an agreement

Neither of you are ever 'locked' into any agreement until the final paperwork is done. There is always time between meetings and while the paperwork is getting drafted to contemplate your agreement.

Your spouse, at all times, has the right to consult or be represented by counsel. An attorney could be hired at any time they are feeling uncomfortable. We could then switch the process over to a collaborative divorce.

I would urge your spouse to choose a collaboratively trained attorney to advise him/her. Litigation attorneys are geared towards a process where the result is determined by a fight. Both spouses try to win as much as possible in the litigation process. This is counter to the work we do in the **hybrid** and collaborative setting.

Collaboratively trained attorneys are members of the Oklahoma Academy of Collaborative Professionals. I have a link at the bottom of each of my web pages. Or they can be found at the Professionals link at [YourDivorceChoice.com](http://YourDivorceChoice.com)

To start the Hybrid process we will schedule a meeting for you and your spouse to come in together. I call this a 3-way meeting.

At this first 3-way meeting some things we may discuss are:

1. The pros of your spouse hiring an attorney from the collaborative group, and what that process looks like.
2. My role as your attorney and what methods should be used for coming to settlement.
3. Rules of communication that we will follow so that the language is as constructive as it can be given the circumstances.
4. Each of your goals.
5. Intermediate issues which might could include:
  - a. Finances that need immediate attention
  - b. Parenting access until the next meeting
6. Discussion of timeline for filing paperwork if you feel you are ready.
7. I usually assign homework to gathered information needed for future decision-making.

**~ Barbara Ann Bartlett ~**

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