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Today's Business: Changing attorneys mid-divorce

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Attorney Kevin Brown
Contributed photo

Divorce is an emotionally charged process that can be compounded when your lawyer does not meet your expectations.

In Connecticut, where the stakes in divorce cases can often be high due to substantial assets and complex custody issues, choosing the right attorney at the outset is crucial. It is equally important that the client remains comfortable with his or her attorney as the divorce process unfolds.

Circumstances may arise where changing attorneys becomes a necessary step to safeguard one's interests and ensure a favorable outcome. Here are some practical and shareable tips for those considering such a change.

The first step is to recognize the signs that a change is needed. If your attorney does not answer your calls or emails or otherwise leaves you out of the loop on the status of your case, that may well be a reason to seek alternate representation. Another significant indicator is the lack of progress; if your case is stalling without reasonable explanation, it might be time to look elsewhere. It is critical that a client is comfortable that his or her attorney is dedicating the necessary time and attention to the case. Additionally, if you feel your attorney's strategy does not align with your goals or if you experience any ethical concerns, these are valid reasons to seek new representation.

Once you have decided to change attorneys, thorough research is crucial. A recommendation from a trusted friend or family member who had a positive experience with an attorney is extremely valuable. You should also look for attorneys who specialize in family law and have experience handling cases similar to yours. Check their credentials, read client reviews, and consider their standing in professional associations. Consulting with more than one attorney before making a decision gives you a comparative perspective and helps ensure that your new attorney aligns better with your needs.

Changing attorneys involves certain financial and legal implications. There may be costs associated with transferring files, and your new attorney will need to learn about you, your case, and everything that has happened to that point.

To facilitate a smooth transition, proper communication with your current attorney is essential. Notify them in writing about your decision to change counsel and ensure you settle any outstanding fees, and that you obtain a refund of unused retainer balance. Your new attorney may want to coordinate directly with your current attorney to obtain copies of all case files, or you can manage this process yourself. Facilitating this transfer will help prevent delays as your new attorney gets up to speed.

When you engage a new attorney, setting clear expectations from the outset is crucial. Discuss your goals for the divorce, any concerns about how your current attorney handled the case, and your expectations regarding communication and case strategy.

As you transition to a new attorney, maintaining open lines of communication is key. Regular updates and being proactive in your case management can help keep the divorce process moving smoothly and can prevent the feeling of being

out of control that often accompanies such legal battles.

Throughout the divorce process, and especially during the transition between attorneys, keep thorough documentation of all communications and decisions. This recordkeeping can be invaluable in maintaining continuity and understanding between all parties involved.

Changing divorce attorneys is not a decision to be made lightly, but it can be necessary to align your legal representation with your personal and legal needs. By understanding the practical steps involved in making this change in Connecticut, you can ensure the decision is as informed and seamless as possible. The goal is to feel supported and confident in your representation as you navigate the challenging waters of divorce. With the right attorney, you can focus on moving forward toward a positive new chapter in your life.

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