

## OurDivorceAgreement.com: A Review

After working in the area of family mediation for over five years, I decided to try the new interactive, web-based divorce program, OurDivorceAgreement.com, with some new clients. We accessed the program and found the login process as simple as promised. The fee of \$149 per couple was more than reasonable. There is also a Service Provider Multi-Use Discount that allows for the purchase of each case at a cost as low as \$25 per case for 50 or more cases.

The opening screen, which lays out the three steps of the program, allowed me to give my introductory spiel about what the process of mediation and divorce entails. The steps provided an excellent tool for guiding us and kept us on task where I am often inclined to get off course. The ability to mark any issues as “undecided” also kept us from getting hung up in those places that we might otherwise belabor for hours. My clients and I were able to move through the program using the step-by-step guidelines provided, without a single hitch. I found that as we jointly worked through the steps, we were able to discuss each issue in more depth. As we read the various options and studied the specific language of each (especially related to the child issues), we were able to explore more alternatives and address the specifics of the issues more thoroughly.

While the child issues covered everything from religious decisions to week-to-week visitation and custody,

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the financial issues were equally as comprehensive. In addition to addressing the basic assets such as real estate, securities and cars, the program included the details that are often forgotten, such as country club memberships, frequent flyer miles, lottery winnings and even the logistics regarding the family pets! Perusing each screen is categorically a checklist for the clients, mediator and/or lawyer.

Even though we were unable to resolve each issue at this first meeting, we moved on to Step 2, which allows the clients to print out the financial summary (asset and liability statement), a financial disclosure statement for each party, a draft of the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) and a summary of the areas of disagreement. We reviewed the MOU together, discussed the areas of disagreement and made a date to return to address these issues. I personally had a satisfying sense of closure at the end of our meeting. Normally, I provide my clients with a

list of items that we have left unsettled and attempt to provide them with a brief MOU before leaving, or in the next few days. Using OurDivorceAgreement.com streamlined the process for us and enabled me to provide this valuable information to the clients immediately at the end of the session.

After a few more meetings, we were able to resolve all the issues. By copying and pasting the draft MOU into Microsoft Word, we were able to make the desired specific changes with little effort. We ended up with a thorough, well-written document with little effort on my part in the actual writing of it. We also had each client’s financial disclosure statements ready for attorney review. The process of the writing of the MOU and the preparation of the financial disclosures happened within minutes of finalizing the issues—a real time and money savings for everyone involved.

Finally, Step 3 of the program guides the clients to take their agreement to their separate attorneys for review, advice, and guidance. They are an essential piece of the divorce process.

For this program to work, both parties need to be committed to the process and need to be financially informed. The few technical problems that I noted were quickly and efficiently addressed by Mr. Stein, long-time mediator and founder of OurDivorceAgreement.com, who

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continued to support me via e-mail. All in all, this is the best one of these type programs I have seen yet. It makes what can otherwise be an extraordinarily rocky road, a little less so.

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