

## **How You Can Help your Attorney with Your Case.**

**By Nancy M. Perry**

Sure you've hired an attorney to advise you and help you through your divorce maze, should you sit back and let her do all the work? Absolutely not. It's very important for you to take an active role in your case. That doesn't mean you have to start practicing law, but there's several things you can do to help your attorney with your case.

First, tell the truth. The reason there is the attorney/client privilege is to encourage clients to fully disclose all aspects of their case. Your attorney needs to know the bad facts as well as the good facts. If your attorney knows the bad facts, then she can do damage control to minimize it. Being blindsided in the middle of a court hearing does not help your case. Write a brief, bullet-point, summary of the facts of your case as you see it and give it to your attorney.

Next, get help if you need it. If your divorce is making you crazy where you are crying, not sleeping, drinking too much, and acting out, you're not helping your case. Your attorney needs you more than ever to be able to focus on your case. Find a good counselor who specializes in divorce recovery. Join a divorce recovery group. Anti-depressants and anti-anxiety medications are so common these days, it won't be fatal to your case if you take them. You can always stop once your case is over. And judges and parties understand that divorce can so stressful that you may need some help.

Third, listen to your attorney. Right now, this is a very emotional time for you and most likely you are not thinking straight. All you can see right now is the trees. Your attorney can see the forest and knows where you need to go. It's imperative for you to listen and follow your attorney's advice. If you don't understand why she's advising a certain course of action, tell her and ask her to explain it. Because this is such an emotional time in any person's life, you have to trust your attorney and let her do your thinking for you. Too many times I've seen cases go awry because the client refused to heed their attorney's advice. Let her do her job, that's why you're paying her.

And lastly, put on your junior paralegal hat. There are many things you can do rather than pay your attorney's paralegal to do it. By helping with the workload, it will not only keep you involved in your case, but it will save you money. The best example is preparing discovery responses and marital asset inventories. You should gather the documents, copy and organize them and have them ready to go to the paralegal well before the due date. This will save the paralegal a lot of time rather than you handing over a pile of mixed up papers and expecting her to sort through them and make heads or tails of them. Also, spreadsheets are a great way to list and organize the marital assets.