

### ***Now that your divorce has turned ugly, how do I deal with my ex?***

You or your spouse has filed for divorce. You know it won't be an amicable split. It's now turned into a custody fight or a contested property division or both. What now? How do I protect myself for the battle ahead? How should I deal with my ex?

For right now, your ex is not your friend. Even if he or she is super sweet and nice to you, consider it a ploy to get you to drop your guard and give you information to use against you. You are litigants now. You may be able to bury the hatchet once this is all over, but for now, your ex is an adversary not to be trusted.

When talking to your ex on the phone or in person, always assume that you are being recorded. When meeting with your ex, always assume you are being videotaped. It's also a good idea to bring a friend with you who can testify if things don't go well. If you don't have a witness, then it's a "he said, she said" scenario and the judge just might believe the other side more than you.

If you text or email your ex, picture it blown up and broadcast in the courtroom. Is what you are writing something you want the other side and the general public to see in the middle of a courtroom? Choose your words very carefully. Keep it short and to the point. Pretend you are talking to the clerk at the local convenience store. You don't ask the clerk who he or she is sleeping with, so don't ask your ex. As for what you email or text to him or her, now is not the time to launch into a long diatribe about what your ex did wrong and how you were hurt. The more you say, the more the other side will find to use against you.

The best way you can help your lawyer is to keep your cool and not let your emotions get the better of you where you end up saying or doing something that will hurt your case. I tell my clients to polish their halo and be perfect. This is a crazy and difficult time for you and the best thing you can do is to keep it together. Take an antidepressant or anti-anxiety drug, sign up for a divorce recovery group, read books on

divorce recovery, or seek counseling. All of this will help you make the best case possible for both you and your attorney.