

The Collaborative Divorce: Justice Without Blame
By Wendy Iglehart, LCPC

"You can't have the TV! You're the one who decided to leave." By attempting to hold the TV hostage, you may experience a sense of justice.

Tired of the blame, the other retorts back, "Why not? You still have the other one." Hence, the power struggle begins.

Separation and divorce devastates the equilibrium of your life and family. You grasp to gain control and authority. Arguments could revolve around blame for the disturbance and the cause of pain. Each of you may declare that justice be upheld with fairness and proper punishment (for example, who has the "right" to have the TV).

Many questions arise such as -- How do we communicate to our child/children? What arrangements need to be made for our child/children? What do we do about our finances? What should be the living arrangements? What are my legal rights? How do I take care of myself? A discrepancy between acceptance of the imminent divorce could impede the separation process. Your family, friends, and neighbors probably share horror stories about "divorces gone bad." How could anyone endure this anguish and hodgepodge?

There is hope. You and your family don't need to endure this alone. The Collaborative Divorce process empowers both of you while working with a team of professionals (attorneys, financial specialists, and mental health professionals), who guide you throughout the transition. The focus remains on the present situation and the future while addressing the legal, financial, and emotional components. Justice emerges when needs are met; thus the ultimate goal shifts from blame to the composition of productive choice.

A contract is signed that either one of you won't take any litigated action. With an open exchange of information, the threat of the unknown becomes removed. The team is trained to meet you *where* you are in the process. Both of you create the settlement and the co-parenting plan with the team's assistance. You determine the time-line of meetings; there's flexibility to try different ideas; you control the costs; and the agreement suits the unique needs of your family. The team continues to be available during your post-divorce life.

The Collaborative Divorce process provides a foundation for skills and a team of professionals for support during a painful time. Remember -- you and your family do not need to be an island or partake in the stories of "divorces gone bad."

Author's Bio:

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