



**ARE YOU CONSIDERING DIVORCE MEDIATION?**

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## Peace Talks Mediation Services

Our mediation team of attorneys and therapists will help you resolve your divorce or custody issues in a sane, sensible and fair way at a reasonable cost.

## COMPARISON OF THE AVERAGE COST OF DIVORCE FEES

Think: do you really want to spend your children's college education account, your vacation money, and the full value of your home on your divorce? Consider mediation as a lower-cost, lower-stress alternative:

Mediation	Litigation*	Life Beyond Divorce	Savings by Using Mediation Instead of Litigation	Time Value of Money (Savings) Over 20 Years**	Total Savings by Using Mediation
2 sessions at 3 hours each, \$475 per hour*** plus preparation of paperwork and consultation with independent attorneys to review settlement options: \$5100	Low conflict divorce, with some negotiation but uncontested final judgment. Both spouses have attorneys who charge \$475 per hour: \$20,000	Trip to Hawaii for two, two weeks, all-inclusive package including room with a view: \$5000	\$14,900	\$26,671	\$26,671 Enough for almost 7 trips to Hawaii
3 sessions, paperwork, consultation with attorneys to review options: \$7500	Limited contested divorce case, no children, trial on common financial issues: \$65,000	1976 Rolls Royce Silver Shadow classic automobile, fully refurbished: \$15,000	\$58,000	\$91,682	\$91,682 Enough for 6 classic Rolls Royce cars
5 sessions, paperwork, consultation with attorneys to review options: \$9000	Contested divorce case which settles right before trial date: \$95,000	Undergraduate education, 4 years in-state tuition, California State University: \$19,000	\$86,000	\$154,469	\$154,469 Enough to send 8 children to CSU for an undergrad college education
6 sessions, paperwork, consultation with attorneys to review options: \$10,000	Fully contested custody case which proceeds to trial: \$175,000	Law School education, 3 years' tuition, Southwestern Law School, Los Angeles, California: \$85,000	\$165,000	\$165,000	\$320,496 Enough to send 4 people to law school and buy each a Rolls Royce
8 sessions, paperwork, consultation with attorneys to review options: \$12,000	Fully contested custody and financial issues case involving child custody evaluators and forensic valuation experts for business, pensions, etc.: \$250,000	4 bedroom, 2 bath home with water view, Ft. Lauderdale, Florida: \$225,000	\$238,000	\$538,976	\$538,976 Enough for 2 houses in Ft. Lauderdale with enough left over to send a child to college and law school.

\* Think we've exaggerated the costs of litigation? Consider this quote from one of Los Angeles' top family law judges made at the Beverly Hills Bar Association meeting in September 2002: "By the time we see [divorce] cases in court, most people have spent all of their community assets on the divorce itself. By that time, we're just dividing debts and allocating attorney's fees."

\*\* For this calculation, we've used a 4% simple interest rate and subtracted the cost of mediation from the cost of litigation. This figure represents the amount of money you'd save by mediating your divorce instead of litigating, and how much that savings would be worth if you invested it at 4% interest for 20 years.

\*\*\* Our fees change from time to time, so please call us for current rates. Keep in mind that even with an increase in our fees, the cost of mediation is still a fraction of the cost of litigation.

## COMMONLY ASKED QUESTIONS:

### What is Divorce Mediation?

Divorce Mediation is a way to resolve your divorce or custody dispute which lets you keep full control of the outcome. The only people making decisions are those involved in the dispute, unlike litigation or arbitration where a judge or an arbitrator makes the final decision.

Family Law Mediation typically consists of 2-3 joint meetings between spouses (or parents, if you are not married) which last 3-4 hours each. During those meetings, you and your spouse discuss the issues which need to be resolved in your case. The mediators are there to facilitate the discussion, assist with communication, provide information and make suggestions. The mediators use their specialized training to assist each of you to resolve your differences in a way that's fair and in the best interests of your family.

### Why mediation?

Mediation is the most practical and healthy choice to make when facing a divorce. It helps you avoid the stress of litigation, saves you time and money, and helps you put the unpleasantness of divorce behind you as quickly and peacefully as possible. Mediated agreements are reached in an informed, thoughtful and thorough way. As a result, they're tailored to your individual and family circumstances, unlike a typical court judgment. With mediation, your family can heal and move past the difficulties of divorce with the peace of mind that you've handled things the best way possible for everyone involved.

### Why is mediation cheaper than litigation?

Mediation is cheaper because it's faster and more direct. People come to mediation willing to try to work on the issues and get their situation resolved. That willingness translates into a less expensive divorce. Rather than speaking through lawyers, you speak with each other (with the mediators' help, of course) about your goals and issues. Even if lawyers are involved in your mediation, they're working on resolving your case during the mediation sessions, not spending hours and hours in court waiting for the judge to be available. Consequently, mediation fees are typically much lower than in a case which goes to court.

Mediation also moves faster than court litigation. On average, Peace Talks clients resolve their cases with our help in 4 to 10 hours spread over 2-3 appointments.

### What if we can't even talk? How can we mediate?

If you are willing to try to learn to talk to each other, then it's worthwhile to try mediation. We've been professionally trained to help people like you to build agreements and communicate better with each other. We're convinced that everyone who wants to reach an agreement and who is ready to reach an agreement will reach an agreement in mediation. If you're willing to try, we can make sure your agreement happens.

## LOS ANGELES FAMILY COURT OR PEACE TALKS MEDIATION? YOU DECIDE.



At the courthouse, this is where you will wait until your case is called. Now imagine 150 other people waiting at the same time. When you arrive at Peace Talks, this is where you will be greeted. There's no receptionist at the courthouse, and there are certainly no upholstered chairs!



At the courthouse, this is the conference facility where you will talk to your lawyer and make some of the most important decisions of your life. Now imagine 35 other people in this room doing the same thing.



Peace Talks mediations take place in a private office, where you'll have plenty of time to consider the important decisions you'll need to make. We're also fully equipped with a client lending library, wireless computer support, telephones and even a private room if you need to take a break. You'll never feel pressured to make a snap decision because mediation is tailored to your needs, not the court's calendar.



## WHAT PEOPLE ARE SAYING ABOUT PEACE TALKS MEDIATION.....

"Divorce isn't easy, but Diana made it as painless as possible. Her suggestions were really helpful, and we reached an agreement that made sense for us. I was afraid that my rights wouldn't be protected in mediation, but Diana made sure my side got heard and that the discussion was fair. I got a good settlement, at about 1/5 the price that the litigators I spoke to quoted."

*Nadine M., mediation participant*

"Mediation gave both me and my wife peace of mind. We worked out an interim financial and parenting plan before we filed for divorce, and it was tailor-made for us and our kids."

*Al W., mediation participant*

"Mediation was much less stressful than court. I wish we'd found this alternative before spending so much money and time in litigation. We were able to settle our whole case in 6 hours and avoid a custody evaluation and forensic accountant."

*Yvette G., mediation participant*

"Our case wasn't complicated, and we appreciated Peace Talks' "one-stop-shop". They did the papers, parenting plan, and financial settlement for us. Divorce is scary, but they returned all of our calls, answered our questions, and got our documents done quickly. With our busy schedules, that meant a lot."

*Christopher B., mediation participant*

"I know that when I send a client to Peace Talks that they'll cover all of the details. It's a pleasure to represent someone who's mediating with Peace Talks because I'm always welcome in the mediation room and my clients are treated respectfully."

*Attorney Noah Eisenhandler*

"I first became an admirer of Diana Mercer's book, and I provide it to all of my clients. Then I became an admirer of Diana's mediation talents. She is skilled, cares a great deal about her clients, and follow through until every "i" is dotted and every "t" is crossed."

*Heidi S. Tuffias, Attorney at Law*

# PROS AND CONS OF DIVORCE COURT vs. DIVORCE MEDIATION

## Divorce Court

- Lengthy & time consuming
- Judges have little time to hear the details of your divorce case, often less than 5 minutes, since judges schedule 20-30 cases per day
- Scheduling conflicts between courts and litigants can cause expensive delays
- You may only get a minute or two to testify about your case, if you get to testify at all
- Unpredictable outcomes
- You may have to make decisions about your divorce settlement in a split second in a crowded hallway
- No confidentiality—all court files are public records. Soon, they will be available online
- Costly—each hour your lawyer spends waiting, you pay, even if no progress is made on your case
- Stressful
- Courts by their adversarial nature encourage combat, which is not conducive to a healthy family life after the legal divorce proceedings are over

## Divorce Mediation

- You determine the schedule and issues
- You control the mediation cost, which is usually about 75% less than the cost of a litigated divorce case
- You make the decisions in mediation that you'll be living with, not a judge
- You have the flexibility in mediation to take time to consider how a decision will affect your family long term. You can try out agreements before you sign the final Divorce Agreement
- Mediation is confidential
- You control the outcome in mediation, and because of this, agreements made in mediation typically work better than those negotiated in the courthouse hallway minutes before a divorce trial
- You can always go to court if mediation doesn't work
- Cost-effective
- Faster
- Less stressful
- Healthier for you and your family, since part of mediation is learning to communicate better, which is especially important when children are involved

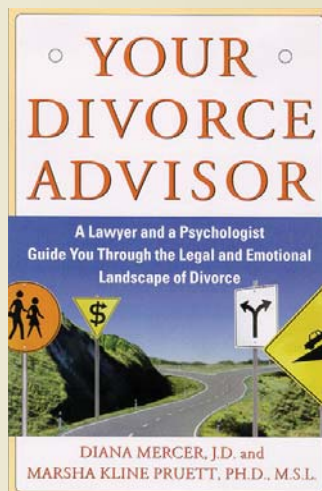
Peace Talks Mediation Services is dedicated to providing a constructive, forward-thinking and peaceful ending to relationships. Marriages may end, but families endure. We provide a confidential, efficient and impartial atmosphere to help people resolve conflict and to create solutions with integrity and dignity for everyone concerned.



Diana Mercer, Esq. is an Attorney-Mediator and the founder of Peace Talks Mediation Services in Los Angeles, California. After practicing as a top divorce litigator, she now devotes her practice solely to mediation. Outgoing and down-to-earth, she makes clients and attorneys feel at ease in solving family and divorce disputes. She is the co-author of *Your Divorce Advisor: A Lawyer and a Psychologist Guide You Through the Legal and*

*Emotional Landscape of Divorce* (Fireside 2001). Dedicated to continuing her mediation education, she is both a student and advanced mediation trainer. Diana has received over 250 hours of specialized, professional family law mediation training, and she's an Advanced Practitioner Member of the Association for Conflict Resolution.

Diana is a graduate of Indiana University School of Law, where she received the American Jurisprudence Award for Excellence. Diana has been an attorney since 1988, and is admitted to practice law in California, New York, Connecticut, Pennsylvania and before the Supreme Court of the United States.



## YOUR DIVORCE ADVISOR

A Lawyer and a Psychologist Guide You Through the Legal and Emotional Landscape of Divorce, (Fireside 2001)

\$14.00, 364 pages,  
ISBN # 0.684.870681  
A Fireside Original

“A gem of a guidebook that empowers divorcing adults to take control of their own divorce—legally, financially, and emotionally.”

—Janet Johnston, Ph.D., Executive Director,  
Judith Wallerstein Center for  
the Family in Transition.

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