

How to Talk to Your Spouse About Divorce Mediation



a few notes about talking to your spouse about divorce mediation

How do you convince your spouse to attend a free, private consultation?

The information contained here was written by the Kelowna Divorce Mediation team to help you understand how to speak to your spouse about mediation as an option for moving forward independent of each other. At any point, please don't hesitate to pick up the phone and call us directly at 250.707.0928 to speak to a family mediator.



Setting the Stage

You know your partner best. Do not be ambiguous. Choose your words carefully and speak with clarity. They deserve to know what's on your mind.

1

Focus on the mediation discussion. The terms of your separation will come later.

It's important that you don't get bogged down in the details of the divorce at this point. Your goal is to get your spouse to agree to scheduling a private consultation for mediation.

2

Don't blame, no finger pointing.

Not pushing hot buttons can be a big challenge. Avoid words & terms that might do that. The real discussion requires you setting up the conversation.

Try an email or a text, giving them a heads up to schedule a time to talk.



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Setting the Stage

Your spouse might feel he/she is being set up. So, be patient as you work on getting them to buy in.

3

What are his/her main concerns?

Are the main concerns regarding finances or children? If so, start there. Listen but don't judge.

4

What's the best place and time?

You know your schedules best. During and right after work are probably not the best times to talk about divorce. So, choose carefully.

WIN - WIN is the goal.

Divorce may be too strong a word at this point. Perhaps use "separating" for now. Writing your thoughts down prior to the discussion can be an immense help.



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Getting Started

Here are some helpful thoughts and opening lines. Again, the goal is to schedule a private conversation with a mediator.

"This divorce has been hard on both of us and our kids. Let's stay out of court, and lawyers' offices, and do this as quick and stress-free as possible. Would you attend a mediation consultation with me?"

"Let's try to protect the assets we've worked so hard to save. Would you come with me to a free mediation consultation?"

"If we use lawyers, we could be at this for years. Would you consider attending a free mediation consultation with me to see if it is a fit for us?"

The approach is as important as the discussion.



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What NOT to Say

Negative, generalized words

"You always...", "You never...", "Every time you..." - These types of words will put your spouse in a defensive mood!

Finger-pointing

Look in the mirror first before airing a complaint. Don't play the victim game, and keep the conversation moving forward.

"You" & "I"

We all do it, but this is not the place to start sentences with "you." Speak only for yourself, not the other. Start your points with "I".

"Walk a mile in the other person's shoes..."

Don't pass judgement. Giving the other side the benefit of the doubt is important. Ask questions first.

Courts & judges don't care
about your stress & pain!

Keep the Dialogue Going

Do's

- Maintain your cool at all times.
- Listen first, listen second, talk third.
- Be empathetic.
- Be careful which battles you pick.
- Apologize if need be.
- Avoid being defensive.



Don'ts

- Hold grudges/resentments.
- Be drawn into the other's drama.
- React out of anger.
- Attack in any manner.
- Apologize, when it's unnecessary.
- Forget your **#1 Goal:**
Get your spouse to agree to attend a private consultation with a mediator with you.

Divorce is an event,
not a way of life!