**Why Choose Mediation?**

Mediation is a businesslike, future-oriented, sensible and thoughtful way to settle disputes. It is all about having a good process, a system that has worked for thousands of people each year.

Mediation almost always hurts less, takes less time, focuses on the best interests of the children, increases the odds of getting along when the dust settles, and it tends to cost less, as well.

With a mediator, you are both in the same room, using one person who helps you communicate respectfully. You both work toward a solution and can use outside resources, as needed. You tend to do better when you realize you can achieve solutions together, even when feelings come up.

**Less Expensive:**

* Since the process takes less time, it is cheaper.
* Since you are using one person instead of two, it is cheaper.
* Since you are encouraged to work together for the benefit of your children, it is cheaper and less antagonistic, and you retain control of the outcome.
* $250 per couple per hour, not $250 per person per hour

**How do I protect myself?**

At the end of this process, you have the opportunity to have an attorney review your agreement, should you have any misgivings whatsoever. Come back to mediation, if needed.

At any time, you may consult with an expert – tax, legal or other and bring that information to the table for discussion.

When both parties agree, the agreement then gets sent to the judge who reviews it and you get notified when you are divorced.

**Let’s be honest and direct with each other:**

It is difficult if you separate and divorce; it is likewise difficult to stay together.

It is painful to take it to court and it is painful to do it yourself. Each option has a tradeoff- a benefit and a drawback. Mediation tends to be the cheapest, least acrimonious option.

Mediation is a competent, protected process where parties are still protected legally.

From: <http://www.nolo.com/legal-encyclopedia/divorce-mediation-basics-36180.html>

Mediation is a multi-stage process designed to get results.

It is less formal than a trial or arbitration, but there are distinct stages to the mediation process.

Mediation is one of the most frequently used methods of negotiating a divorce settlement. In divorce mediation, you and your spouse -- or, in some cases, the two of you and your respective lawyers -- hire a neutral third party, called a mediator, to meet with you in an effort to discuss and resolve the issues in your divorce.

The mediator *doesn't make decisions for you*, but serves as a facilitator to help you and your spouse figure out what's best

The couple communicates to each other, in the same room, instead of through an attorney, increasing the likelihood of clear communication and a better relationship after the divorce. The role of the mediator is to guide the process and ensure an even playing field, which greatly reduces stress.

Topics covered in a Divorce Mediation- Separation/Divorce Agreement: parenting responsibilities, time and money arrangements, tax concerns, property, retirement money, budgeting