

DEVELOPING YOUR GOALS AND INTERESTS

In Mediation and in the Collaborative Process we ask clients to identify what is important, significant, meaningful and beneficial for them as they move forward in their lives, during and post divorce. We find that when clients are deeply rooted in their core needs and values, and understand the needs of their spouse, they are able to access more creativity and openness in identifying possible solutions to the issues that need to be resolved in the divorce. Additionally understanding what is core to each vision of an effective co-parenting relationship aids in the formation and definition of the ongoing co-parenting relationship. In the Collaborative Process we take the time to identify, cull and understand whatever information is needed for each client to be ready to make decisions that will impact the futures of themselves and their children. Part of the information gathering phase includes the process of identifying goals and interests and sharing them with each other and the team, so that we have as much information as possible to help you create solutions that will be durable and satisfactory to you in the long term. To that end, it is useful to think about goals and interests in the following categories:

- For the collaborative divorce process
- For your children and for your co-parenting relationship
- For yourself
- For your spouse

When thinking about this, try to separate out a goal or interest from a strategy to meet the goal. An example of a strategy might be -- "I need to get the family home" If someone suggested this as a goal, we would ask what need would be met by getting the house? The answer might be "It would provide consistency for the children", or "I need to own real estate to feel financially stable", or "It is important to me to be able to leave the family home to my children". These responses indicate that very different needs would be met by the strategy of obtaining the family home. If we look at the goals of "providing consistency for the children", or "being financially stable" or "providing inherited wealth to my children" you can see that there might be different ways to reach those goals, other than retaining the family home. We want to keep the point of view as wide as possible and not prematurely narrow the focus and get stuck on a particular way to solve a particular issue.

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