

Helpful Article #4: “Why Two Heads ARE Better Than One”

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It’s probably safe to say that most people realize how stressful marital separation and divorce is for those going through it. That’s so whether you are the wife, husband, mother, father, child, or even extended family members like grandma and grandpa. I have often seen how stress has impacted the physical and emotional well being of my divorce mediation clients. Clients have also asked me how do I, as a mediator, cope with the stress of the divorce mediation process. The answer is “better these days” since I now work jointly with a colleague practicing co-mediation (as co-mediators). She is Harriet Gerber, Esq. and we have been working together together since 2005.

Being in the unique position of having practiced divorce mediation alone in the past and presently with a fellow mediator, I am able to share with prospective clients what I view as the benefits of their working with co-mediators. For one thing, I suspect that the stress factor that any mediator experiences working alone is significantly reduced when there are two mediators conducting the sessions. The expertise, in my opinion, that each brings to the process engenders additional confidence in them, which leads to better assisting clients in reaching fair and balanced agreements. Clients can perceive that confidence and profit when co-mediators share the substantive areas being addressed in a session. The gain, I believe, is not only from two heads being better than one, but also from my sense that those two heads are even more levelheaded, because the support of each minimizes the stress which can accompany our work. In turn, this allows the co-mediators to focus their energies upon the clients and achieving the mediation goals of the clients.

Another added benefit for our clients is that they have both a male and female mediator at each session. There were always two men and one woman in the office when I practiced mediation alone. Today, in contrast, we get positive feedback from clients about the “gender balance” that is now an integral part of our co-mediation practice.

Prospective clients should also be aware that co-mediators are able to reflect off one another immediately after and prior to each session. This feedback helps them in their preparedness for the next session and, I believe, better assures the thoroughness of each agreement.

While there are several more benefits I have found to co-mediation, I will end this piece by noting that I have derived both personal and professional satisfaction from working with a co-mediator. I believe it has enhanced my listening skills and heightened my sensitivities to the needs and goals of my clients. **WHY CHOOSE A SINGLE MEDIATOR WHEN YOU COULD HAVE TWO?** Consider working with us as your co-mediators. It could be to your benefit.