PeacefulSplit®

NO COURTROOM BATTLE REQUIRED

Divorcing Peacefully

It Really Does Happen

A Practical Guide to a More Peaceful Divorce in Florida

Eric B. Epstein, Esq., LMFT

Florida Supreme Court Certified Family Mediator
Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist
Attorney at Law

PROTECT WHAT MATTERS MOST

FOCUS ON YOUR FUTURE

RESPECTFUL COMMUNICATION

DIVORCE MEDIATION GUIDE

A Personal Note

If you're reading this guide, you and your spouse may be facing one of the most difficult decisions of your lives. First, I'm sorry you're going through this.

Very few people get married expecting to research divorce one day. Yet here you are, trying to understand your options and determine the best path forward for yourself, your family, and your future.

Over more than 30 years of working with people in conflict, I've learned that divorces often become difficult not only because of the legal issues but also because two hurting people must make important decisions while carrying years of emotion into every conversation.

The legal, financial, and parenting decisions matter. But the process you choose and how those conversations unfold can make an enormous difference. That's why I created PeacefulSplit®.

My goal is not to help one spouse "win." It is to help couples reach practical, thoughtful agreements they can both accept so they can move forward with greater certainty, dignity, and peace of mind. Whether you choose PeacefulSplit® or another mediator, I hope this guide helps you understand mediation and make the right decision for your family.

Warm regards,

Eric B. Epstein

Eric B. Epstein, Esq., LMFT
Florida Supreme Court Certified Family Mediator
Attorney at Law
Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist

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A Different Way to Divorce

When most people hear the words “We’re getting divorced,” they picture conflict: arguments, courtrooms, lawyers, stress, financial uncertainty, and sometimes even a long, expensive legal battle. For many couples, that picture becomes a reality, but it doesn’t have to.

If you and your spouse are both willing to work toward a resolution, divorce mediation offers another path. It keeps you in control of the decisions rather than having a judge make them.

> Let’s be clear: peaceful does not mean painless.

Divorce is emotionally difficult, even when two people genuinely want the best for each other. Ending a marriage often brings grief, disappointment, uncertainty, and difficult decisions regarding finances, children, and the future.

Mediation cannot eliminate those emotions, but it can reduce unnecessary conflict, uncertainty, delays, and expenses. Rather than positioning spouses as opponents, mediation encourages productive discussions focused on solving problems together.

Instead of asking, “How do I win?” the conversation shifts to “How do we reach an agreement we can both live with?” That shift changes everything.

The PeacefulSplit® Difference

- One neutral professional guiding both spouses.
- A structured process for resolving financial and parenting issues.
- Personalized settlement documents reflecting your agreements.
- One predictable $2,500 flat fee.
- In-person mediation in Coral Springs or online across Florida.

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Neutral Means Neutral

One of the biggest misconceptions about mediation is that the mediator decides who's right. That isn't my role. I don't represent either spouse or take sides.
I treat both spouses and their concerns with equal respect.

My role is to help both spouses communicate productively, explore options, and negotiate agreements they both voluntarily accept.

Every important decision remains yours. When child support applies, it is calculated under Florida law using the state's child support guidelines.

Every important decision remains yours.

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Traditional Divorce vs. PeacefulSplit®

There is no single divorce process that is right for every couple. Some situations require litigation and individual legal representation. But for couples willing to negotiate in good faith, mediation can offer a less adversarial and more predictable alternative.

Traditional Divorce	PeacefulSplit® Mediation
Separate attorneys	One neutral mediator
Court schedules largely control the timeline	Greater flexibility in scheduling
Attorneys advocate for individual clients	Mediator acts as a neutral facilitator
Legal fees often increase by the hour	Predictable $2,500 flat fee
A judge decides unresolved issues	You make your own decisions
Often adversarial	Designed for productive negotiation

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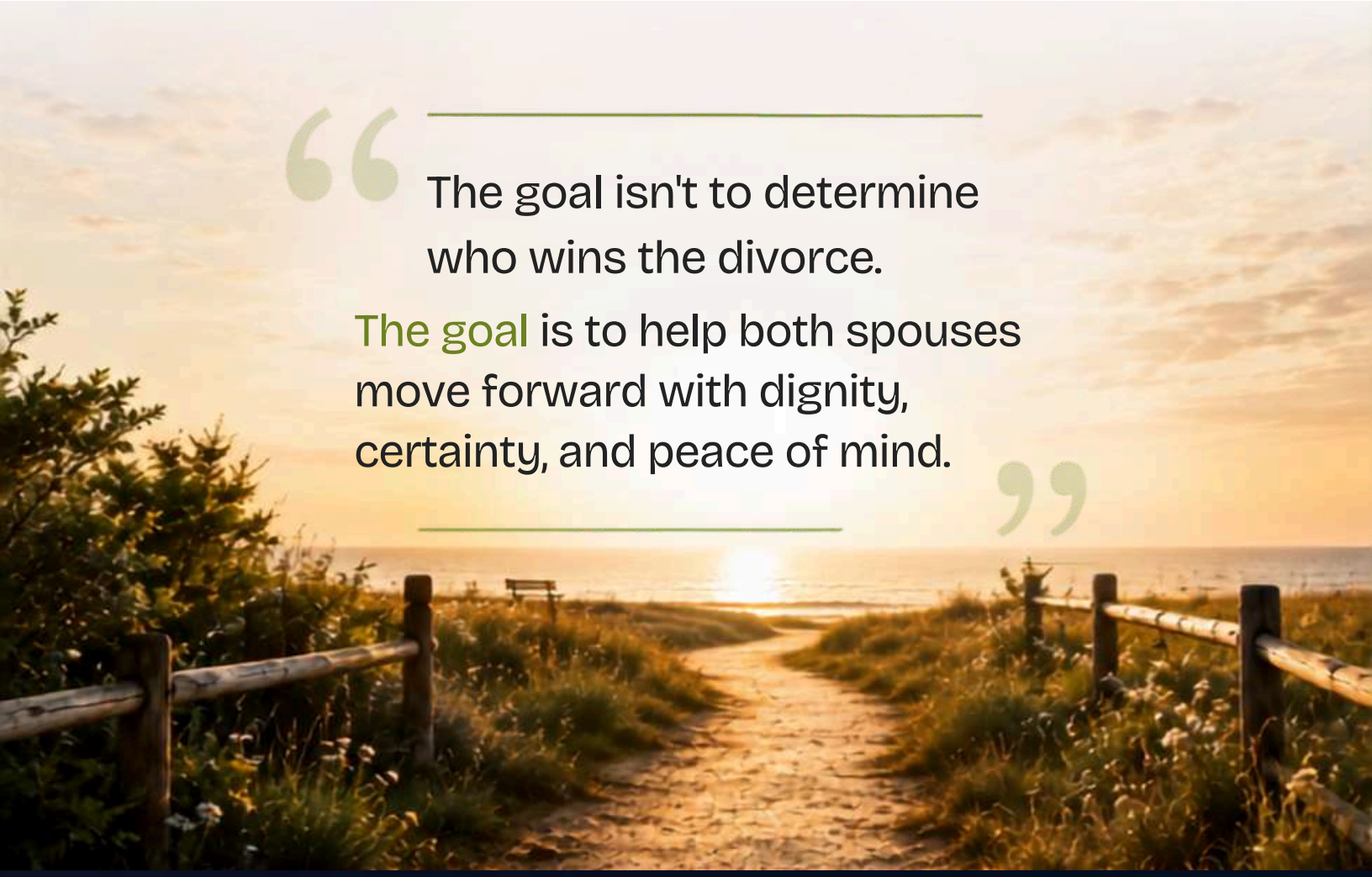
The Biggest Difference Is Control

Uncertainty is one of the biggest causes of distress during divorce. How long will litigation take? What will the final cost be? How will the judge rule if the case goes to trial? Mediation reduces much of that uncertainty.

It allows the two people who know their family best to participate directly in creating solutions that work for them. Neither spouse can be forced to accept a proposal. Every agreement is voluntary, and every decision is made together. For many couples, that sense of control is one of the greatest benefits of the process.



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Is PeacefulSplit® Right for You?

Not every couple is a good candidate for mediation. Some divorces involve circumstances that require immediate court involvement or individual legal representation. In those situations, mediation may not be the appropriate first step.

But many couples aren't looking for a fight. They're simply looking for a practical way to end their marriage respectfully, make informed decisions, and avoid unnecessary conflict. If that sounds like you, mediation may be worth considering.

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PeacefulSplit® May Be a Good Fit If...

- You want to avoid a contested divorce.
- You're willing to participate voluntarily and in good faith.
- You prefer to make your own decisions rather than leave them to a judge.
- You're willing to discuss finances and parenting openly.
- You recognize that disagreements may exist but are open to negotiation.
- You believe an experienced, neutral professional could help guide the discussion.
- You value predictable costs and a structured process.

You don't have to agree on everything before mediation begins. A willingness to participate, communicate, and work toward resolution is what matters.

When Mediation May Not Be Appropriate

- There are safety concerns
- There is unaddressed domestic violence
- Power imbalances prevent meaningful participation
- There is intentional concealment of financial information
- Urgent matters require immediate court orders

The decision to mediate should always be based on what's best for your family's unique circumstances.

Choosing mediation also doesn't prevent either spouse from consulting independent attorneys, financial advisors, accountants, tax professionals, or other experts whenever additional advice is needed.

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How the PeacefulSplit® Process Works

One of the biggest reasons people hesitate to begin mediation is simple: they don't know what to expect. The process is far more straightforward than most couples imagine. Here's how it works.

1

STEP ONE

Getting Started

The process begins when both spouses decide to pursue mediation. Before the first session, each spouse reviews and signs the mediation engagement agreement, which explains my role as a neutral mediator and outlines the process. Once that is complete, we will schedule the first mediation session.

That's it: no courtroom battles, litigation deadlines, or legal gamesmanship. Just a scheduled conversation with a clear purpose.

2

STEP TWO

Preparing for Mediation

Preparation helps make mediation more effective. Before we meet, each spouse completes a financial information worksheet summarizing joint and individual assets and debts. If minor children are involved, each parent also provides the income information required to calculate child support. The more complete the information, the more productive our discussions become.

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3

STEP THREE

The Mediation Sessions

Most first mediation sessions last three hours or less. Many couples resolve everything in that first meeting, while others need additional sessions. Every marriage and every divorce is different.

My role isn't to rush the process but to keep it productive. We'll work through each issue one at a time, discussing possible solutions until both spouses are comfortable with the decisions. No one is pressured into agreeing, and both spouses have the opportunity to ask questions. The pace is set by the couple's needs, not by the courtroom calendar.

4

STEP FOUR

Preparing Your Settlement Documents

Once agreements are reached, I prepare the settlement documents reflecting those decisions. Both spouses can review the drafts and request mutually agreed-upon revisions before the documents are finalized.

5

STEP FIVE

Finalizing the Divorce

After the settlement documents are approved, signed, and notarized, the final step is to complete and submit the required court forms for an uncontested divorce. Once the paperwork is filed, the court reviews the documents and, if everything is in order, enters the Final Judgment of Dissolution of Marriage.

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What Makes the Process Different?

Mediation is not about sitting in a room and trying to convince the other spouse to give in. It is a structured conversation in which each issue is addressed thoughtfully, one at a time.

Some agreements come quickly. Others require creativity, time, or the opportunity for each person to feel heard. My responsibility is to keep the discussion respectful, organized, and moving toward resolution.

Based on my experience, approximately 60% of PeacefulSplit® couples reach a full agreement during their first three-hour mediation session. Other couples need additional sessions because every family and every divorce is different.

The goal isn't to finish quickly. The goal is to finish well.

Based on my experience, approximately 60% of PeacefulSplit® couples reach a full agreement during their first three-hour mediation session.

Other couples need additional sessions because every family and every divorce is different.

When couples leave mediation with agreements they both believe are fair and workable, they've created something that often serves them better than having someone else make those decisions for them.

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What Happens During Mediation?

By this point, you may be thinking, "What will we discuss during mediation?" The answer depends on your family.

Every marriage is different, so every mediation is different. Some couples have complex financial or parenting issues, while others simply want a fair, efficient way to divide what they've built together.

The mediation process focuses on the issues that matter to your family—not a one-size-fits-all checklist.

Financial Issues Commonly Addressed

Depending on your circumstances, mediation may include discussions about:

- The marital home and other real estate
- Bank accounts
- Investment accounts
- Vehicles, boats, and other personal property
- Businesses or professional practices
- Retirement accounts, pensions, 401(k)s, and IRA divisions
- Credit cards, loans, and other debts
- Health insurance
- Tax-related issues
- Alimony, when requested
- Any other financial issues important to your family

Some of these conversations are straightforward, while others require more discussion. My role is to organize those conversations so each issue can be addressed thoughtfully rather than reactively.

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Parenting Issues

When children are involved, divorce ends the marriage, but it does not end the parenting relationship.

One of the greatest benefits of mediation is that it allows parents to create a Parenting Plan that reflects their children's needs instead of having those decisions imposed by a court.

Topics commonly discussed include:

- Parental responsibility
- Decision-making
- Time-sharing schedules
- Holidays
- School breaks
- Vacations and travel
- Healthcare
- Education
- Extracurricular activities
- Camps
- Child support
- Future communication between parents

> The goal isn't merely to complete a Parenting Plan. It is to create an arrangement that sets clear expectations for both parents and provides their children with stability and consistency.

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You Don't Have to Agree on Everything

One of the biggest misconceptions about mediation is that couples must agree on every issue before they begin. That isn't true. In fact, most couples enter mediation because they disagree, and that's perfectly normal.

The purpose of mediation is to help you work through those disagreements in a structured, respectful way. Sometimes agreements come quickly, while others take time or are reached one issue at a time. A disagreement over one issue doesn't erase the progress you've made on the others. Whenever possible, the goal is to preserve agreements already reached while continuing to work toward resolving the remaining issues. No one is pressured to accept a proposal simply to finish mediation.

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What If Our Finances Are Complicated?

Many people assume that mediation only works for couples with simple finances. That isn't the case. Over the years, I've helped couples work through situations involving:

- Multiple homes
- Rental properties
- Businesses
- Professional practices
- Retirement accounts
- Investments
- Significant assets
- Significant debts

Complex finances don't necessarily prevent successful mediation. What matters is that both spouses participate honestly and provide the information needed to make informed decisions.

If additional financial documents are needed, they should be exchanged before final decisions are made. Either spouse may also consult an attorney, CPA, financial advisor, tax professional, or another expert before signing the settlement agreement.

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What Documents Will I Prepare?

Once you've reached an agreement, I'll prepare the documents that reflect those decisions.

Depending on your family's situation, the documents might include:

- A personalized Mediated Marital Settlement Agreement
- A customized Parenting Plan
- Child Support Guidelines and related exhibits

I prepare personalized documents that accurately reflect the agreements you and your spouse reach during mediation. Each spouse has the opportunity to review the documents carefully before they're finalized.

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What Happens After Mediation?

Once the spouses approve the agreements, they sign and notarize them. The final step is to file for an uncontested divorce.

As a neutral mediator, I do not represent either spouse in court or prepare the court's required procedural forms. Most couples complete those forms themselves. If you would like assistance, I can provide the contact information for an independent attorney colleague who prepares those forms for my clients for a separate fee.

Sign & Notarize → File Court Forms → Final Judgment

After the paperwork is filed, the court reviews the documents and, if everything is in order, enters the Final Judgment of Dissolution of Marriage.

For many couples, that's the moment they realize something significant: they didn't simply "get divorced." They worked together to make the decisions that shaped their future instead of leaving those decisions to someone else.

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> The best mediated agreements aren't the ones where someone wins. They're the ones both spouses believe they can live with as they begin the next chapter of their lives.

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What Makes Eric Unique?

If you've researched divorce mediation, you've likely noticed that many mediators appear similar on the surface. They talk about reducing conflict, explain that mediation is less expensive than litigation, and promise to help couples reach an agreement.

What actually makes one mediator different from another? The answer lies in their experience, professional background, and approach to mediation.

More Than Mediation

I've often said that divorce mediation isn't just about dividing assets or filling out paperwork. It's about helping two people make important decisions during a stressful transition.

The legal and financial issues are important. But if communication breaks down, even relatively simple issues can become difficult to resolve. That's why I believe effective mediation requires more than understanding the Florida divorce process.

It requires understanding people.

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Three Professions.
One Purpose.

I bring experience from three professions to the mediation process. Each contributes something different. Together, they help me guide difficult conversations while maintaining one clearly defined role: a neutral mediator.

Florida Supreme Court Certified Family Mediator

As a mediator, I don't decide who's right or wrong or represent either spouse. My role is to guide productive discussions, identify options, and help both spouses reach agreements they voluntarily accept.

Attorney at Law

For more than thirty years, I've negotiated settlements, drafted agreements, and helped clients resolve disputes. That experience helps me identify issues couples may not have considered and prepare detailed settlement documents that accurately reflect their agreements.

Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist

Divorce involves more than finances. It can involve grief, fear, uncertainty, parenting challenges, communication, and unresolved emotions. My clinical training helps me recognize these dynamics and keep difficult conversations productive.

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The PeacefulSplit® Philosophy

My goal is not for either spouse to leave believing they received everything they wanted. Very few negotiated agreements work that way. Instead, I want each person to feel they were treated fairly and to be able to say honestly, "I didn't get everything I wanted, but I can live with this agreement."

> **I call this the "Both/And" approach.**
>
> It moves the conversation away from "either I win or you win" and toward an agreement both spouses believe is fair enough to move forward.

People are more willing to consider compromise when they know their concerns have been heard and understood. Feeling heard does not mean getting everything you want; it means knowing your concerns were considered before decisions were made.

That is what successful mediation looks like: not victory or defeat, but an agreement that allows both people to move forward.

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What Couples Say

At this point, you've learned about the mediation process and my approach to helping couples navigate divorce. But the most meaningful opinions aren't mine. They're the words of people who've experienced the process firsthand.

I'm grateful that so many couples have taken the time to share their experiences after mediation. Here are a few of their comments.

★★★★★

"Mr. Eric accomplished what felt impossible. In just a few sessions, he guided my soon-to-be ex-wife and me to an agreement. He is extremely professional, skilled at navigating complex situations, and brought clarity to a challenging process..."

★★★★★

"Eric was incredibly helpful, knowledgeable, and professional throughout our mediation process. If you're going through an amicable divorce and are looking for a mediator who is fair, compassionate, and experienced, I highly recommend Eric's services."

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"After learning that his credentials as an attorney included wearing the hat of a professional family therapist, we were impressed. I knew someone with that mixed background would offer us a kinder and gentler experience than perhaps your typical lawyer could provide...and he definitely did. Thank you, Eric!"

"Our finding PeacefulSplit Divorce Mediation was truly a blessing for us. Eric Epstein was a calm and reassuring presence during our mediation. He explained the process thoroughly and compassionately. I highly recommend couples consider PeacefulSplit to mediate their divorce"

"Eric puts his heart and soul into his work to help people move through life changing experiences ... [He] is plain and simple – a good human being that cares about people ... [I]f you found Eric Epstein at Peaceful Split Divorce Mediation, you found a great person to work with."

READ MORE 5-STAR REVIEWS

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Why a Flat Fee Makes Sense

One of the first questions couples ask me is whether a flat fee offers better value than hiring a mediator who charges by the hour. As a licensed attorney for more than thirty years, I've experienced both approaches firsthand. Like many attorneys, I spent years billing clients by the hour. Over time, I noticed something unrelated to the legal work itself: hourly billing creates uncertainty.

Clients naturally wonder:

- "Should I ask another question?"
- "How much will this phone call cost?"
- "Is another hour of discussion worth another bill?"

> Those concerns are understandable, but during a divorce, they add another source of stress at a time when couples already have plenty to manage. That's one of the reasons I chose a different approach for PeacefulSplit®.

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One Price.
No Watching the Clock.

PeacefulSplit® is offered for one predictable flat fee of $2,500. That means you can focus on reaching thoughtful agreements rather than worrying about whether another mediation-related conversation, email, or mutually agreed-upon revision will increase the cost. I don't want couples watching the clock. I want them focused on making sound decisions.

Sometimes the best solution takes an extra thirty minutes to discuss. Sometimes a settlement document needs another revision because both spouses have agreed to a change. Sometimes people have questions after a mediation session. Under an hourly billing model, each of those interactions often increases the cost. With a flat fee, they don't.

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What the Flat Fee Includes

ONE PRICE.
NO SURPRISES.

Your $2,500 flat fee includes:

- Up to 10 hours of mediation sessions
- Mediation of financial issues necessary to reach a divorce settlement
- Mediation of parenting and child-related issues, when applicable
- Preparation of your Mediated Marital Settlement Agreement
- Preparation of your Parenting Plan, when applicable
- Child Support Guidelines and related exhibits, when applicable
- Mediation-related telephone calls, emails, and text messages
- Mutually agreed-upon revisions during the document review process

My goal is for you to focus on reaching agreements rather than on calculating hourly costs.

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What's Not Included

As with every professional service, there are a few items outside the scope of mediation.
The $2,500 flat fee covers the mediation services and settlement documents listed above but does not include the following third-party or court-related expenses:

- Court filing/statutory clerk fees (paid directly to the county)
- Optional preparation/filing of court-required procedural forms by an outside attorney or document service
- Mandatory parent education course fees (when minor children are involved)
- Outside professional fees (QDRO/pension drafters, CPAs, real estate appraisers)
- Deed preparation or title transfer services

There are no hidden charges in the mediation fee.

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Predictability Matters

Divorce already brings enough uncertainty. You may be wondering where you'll live, how parenting schedules will be managed, or what your financial future will look like. I don't believe the cost of mediation should become another unknown.

A predictable fee allows both spouses to participate fully in the process without wondering whether every conversation will increase the bill. In my experience, that is one less thing for couples to worry about and one more reason they can focus on what matters.

Click to watch

Want to learn more about why I chose this pricing model? Watch my short video explaining the philosophy behind PeacefulSplit's flat-fee approach.

peacefulsplit.com/divorce-mediation-cost/

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Frequently Asked Questions

By now, you likely have a clear understanding of how mediation works and whether it may be the right fit for your family. Below are answers to several of the questions I'm most often asked.

Do Both of Us Have to Agree to Mediate?

Yes. Mediation is voluntary and requires both spouses to agree to participate. I mediate only when both spouses feel safe and comfortable participating in a joint session. When mediation occurs via Zoom, each spouse may participate from a separate location.

Can Mediation Work If We're Angry?

Absolutely. Many couples enter mediation feeling hurt, frustrated, disappointed, or uncertain about the future. Those emotions are normal.

My background as a Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist helps me create an environment where productive conversations can occur despite those emotions. Many couples are surprised by how different a structured mediation discussion feels from conversations at home.

What If We Can't Agree on Everything?

Mediation isn't an all-or-nothing process. My goal is to help you resolve every issue, but sometimes one or two disputes remain.

The agreements you've reached may still save considerable time, expense, and stress, while the court can decide any remaining issues. No one is expected to accept an agreement simply to finish mediation.

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Can We Mediate If We Have Significant Assets?

Yes. I have worked with many couples whose marital estates included businesses, multiple properties, retirement accounts, investments, professional practices, and substantial debt.

Complex finances do not necessarily prevent successful mediation. What matters most is that both spouses provide complete financial information, participate honestly, and remain open to considering solutions. Either spouse may also consult an accountant, financial advisor, tax professional, appraiser, or independent attorney when specialized guidance would be helpful.

What If We Hired Lawyers?

PeacefulSplit® is designed for couples who negotiate directly with one another, without attorney representation during mediation sessions. You may always consult independent counsel outside our sessions for legal advice.

If either spouse retains an attorney to represent them directly in the proceedings, PeacefulSplit® mediation will conclude. If both later choose to proceed unrepresented, we can evaluate whether resuming mediation is appropriate.

How Does the PeacefulSplit® Process Prioritize Our Children's Needs?

When children are involved, I help parents prioritize their children's best interests while addressing parental responsibility, decision-making, time-sharing, holidays, child support, healthcare, education, extracurricular activities, and other important issues.

We can also address practical concerns that standardized court forms may not fully anticipate. The goal is a Parenting Plan that provides clear expectations for both parents and stability for their children.

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How Long Does the Process Take, and How Long Are the Sessions?

The timeline depends on scheduling, the complexity of the issues, and how quickly necessary information is exchanged. Most couples have their first session within a few weeks of deciding to proceed.

I schedule sessions in three-hour blocks. Based on my experience, about 60% of PeacefulSplit® couples reach a full agreement during their first session, even when children are involved. Others need additional sessions depending on the issues involved.

Once the issues are resolved, I prepare the appropriate settlement documents. The remaining timeline depends on how quickly the documents are reviewed and on court processing times, which vary by county and judge.

Where Are the Mediation Sessions Held?

I conduct sessions in my Coral Springs office or via Zoom. For video sessions, you can each log in remotely from different locations. This flexibility allows me to serve couples across Florida.

Still Have Questions?

Every divorce is unique, and no guide can answer every question that may be relevant to your family's circumstances. That's why I've created an extensive online FAQ library covering dozens of additional topics.

Visit: https://peacefulsplit.com/divorce-mediation-faq/

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Before You Choose Any Divorce Mediator...

Choosing a divorce mediator is an important decision. Mediators come from different professional backgrounds. Some are attorneys, some are mental health professionals, and others bring different forms of conflict resolution experience. My background combines three distinct professional roles: Florida Supreme Court Certified Family Mediator, attorney, and Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist.

Some prepare the settlement documents, while others do not. Some charge by the hour. PeacefulSplit® offers a single, predictable flat fee.

That's why I encourage every couple, not just those considering PeacefulSplit®, to ask thoughtful questions before choosing who will guide them through one of the most significant transitions in their lives.

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To help you do so, I've created a free resource:

Questions Every Couple Should Ask Before Choosing a Divorce Mediator

This checklist will help you compare mediators, understand what their services include, and identify questions many couples do not realize they should ask. Whether you ultimately choose PeacefulSplit® or another mediator, I hope it helps you make a more informed choice.

Download your free checklist at:

https://peacefulsplit.com/divorce-mediation-checklist/

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My Final Thoughts

If you've made it this far, thank you. Downloading a guide like this usually means you're facing an unexpected decision.

The couples I've worked with have had very different families, assets, and levels of agreement. What they shared was a desire for a fair process, respectful communication, clear information, and the opportunity to move forward with dignity.

Whether you work with another qualified mediator or with me, choose a process that helps you make informed decisions you can live with long after the legal paperwork is done.

I sincerely wish you and your family the very best as you begin the next chapter of your lives.

Warm regards,

Eric B. Epstein, Esq., LMFT

Eric B. Epstein

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Disclaimer

This guide provides general educational information about divorce mediation and the PeacefulSplit® process. It is not legal advice and should not be used as a substitute for individualized legal, financial, tax, or mental health advice. Reading this guide does not create an attorney-client or mediator-client relationship. PeacefulSplit® mediation begins only after both spouses sign a formal engagement agreement.

Eric B. Epstein serves as a neutral mediator in PeacefulSplit® mediations and does not represent either spouse as an attorney. Court procedures, filing requirements, fees, and applicable laws may change over time. Individuals should consult the appropriate professionals regarding their specific circumstances before making legal or financial decisions.

The specific services, terms, and exclusions applicable to PeacefulSplit® are contained in the mediation engagement agreement signed by both spouses. If anything in this guide differs from that agreement, the engagement agreement controls.

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PeacefulSplit®

Ready to Talk?

If you'd like to learn more about whether PeacefulSplit® may be right for your situation, I'd be happy to discuss it. There's no pressure or obligation. It's simply a chance to have your questions answered and learn more about how the mediation process works.

Call or Text:
954-272-8292

Email:
eric@peacefulsplit.com

Website:
www.PeacefulSplit.com

Flat-Fee Divorce Mediation:
$2,500

Available throughout Florida via Zoom
or in person in Coral Springs.

Eric B. Epstein, Esq., LMFT