

Craine Mediation
31874 Northwestern Highway
Farmington Hills, MI 48334

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Mediation is a “private, informal Dispute resolution process in which a neutral third person, the mediator, helps disputing parties to reach an agreement.” The process can be voluntary or court ordered.

There are many benefits to mediation including that it keeps participants in control of the outcome. Mediation usually saves time and money.

At CRAINE MEDIATION our goal is to help you resolve your disputes with dignity, in a way that is fair and equitable to all participants.

CRAINE MEDIATION provides the following mediation services:

- ❖ Mediation at all stages of the divorce process, including after the divorce is final.
- ❖ Mediation of grandparent visitation issues.
- ❖ Mediation of pre-nuptial agreements
- ❖ Mediation of elder care issues including making recommendations of resources, etc.
- ❖ Mediation of family business disputes.
- ❖ Mediation of civil matters including employer-employee disputes, insurance claims, etc. These services are provided by Ellen’s associate, Martin S. Rostker, MSA and trained civil mediator.

CRAINE MEDIATION can be reached at 248-539-3850. Also, please visit our new website at www.crainemediation.com.

All of our mediators are professionals with degrees in law, business, mental health, etc. or some combination.

Other services provided by CRAINE MEDIATION include:

Marriage and Family Counseling

Human Resource Consulting

SCAO approved Domestic Violence Screening Protocol Training for Mediators and Advanced Domestic Violence Training for Mediators

Co-Parenting Effectiveness Education for Parents

Parenting Coordination

Effective parenting includes . . .

Showing children love, concern, and respect at all times.

Giving children a safe place to live and play.

Helping children express all their feelings appropriately and listening to what they say.

Giving children appropriate choices when possible. *

Having reasonable rules that are understood by all.

Being responsible and teaching children to be responsible.

Spending time with children.

Setting an example by what we say and do.

Working with our schools and communities to make them better for children.

Asking them for help when we need it.

Thank you to the Women's Resource Center newsletter in Petoskey.

**See the article in the Spring/Summer 2006 newsletter related to children and chores posted on our website:
www.crainmediation.com*

HAVING TROUBLE CO-PARENTING EFFECTIVELY OR KNOW SOMEONE WHO IS?

FREE one (1) hour introductory workshop on co-parenting effectiveness education with Ellen Craine, JD, LMSW, ACSW, Divorce and Family Mediator and Co-Parenting Effectiveness Educator.

Wednesday evening, August 30 from 7– 8 p.m.

For more information or to reserve your spot, call 248-539-3850. Please pass this information to those who need it if it does not apply to you.

WHAT IS PARENTING COORDINATION ?

According to the Guidelines for Parenting Coordination developed by The Association for Family and Conciliation Courts (AFCC) Task Force on Parenting Coordination,

“Parenting coordination is a child-focused alternative dispute resolution process in which a mental health or legal professional with mediation training and experience assists high conflict parents to implement their parenting plan by facilitating the resolution of their disputes in a timely manner, educating parents about children’s needs, and with prior approval of the parties and/or the court, making decisions with the scope of the court order or appointment contract.

(Parenting Coordination continued from previous page)

The overall objective of parenting coordination is to assist high conflict parents implement their parenting plan, to monitor compliance with the details of the plan, to resolve conflict regarding their children and the parenting plan in a timely manner, and to protect and sustain safe, healthy and meaningful parent-child relationships. Parenting coordination is a quasi-legal, mental health, alternative dispute resolution (ADR) process that combines assessment, education, case management, conflict management and sometimes decision-making functions.”

For more information about Parenting Coordination contact CRAINE MEDIATION at 248-539-3850 or the guidelines for parenting coordination visit www.afccnet.org.

WHAT DO LOSS AND GRIEF HAVE TO DO WITH DIVORCE AND EFFECTIVE CO-PARENTING?

By: Ellen M. Craine, JD, LMSW, ACSW

Divorce is a loss. Some have even compared the loss of divorce to that of the death of a spouse. Some may even argue this point and say they wish that their spouse would die instead of leaving them due to a divorce. Either way, loss of a spouse due to death or divorce, is painful. With loss, comes grief. Simply put, grief is the emotions that one goes through following a loss. However, what is grief and how does it impact the divorce process? Furthermore, how do these adult loss and grief issues impact one's ability to co-parent effectively?

First, let's talk about the “losses” that are part of a divorce. The following losses are all part of a divorce to name a few: loss of companionship, loss of financial security, loss of sexual relationship, loss of time with children, loss of an extended family, loss of status as a married person, loss of self-esteem, loss of friends, etc. All the while, one has to continue to deal with the other related to separating property, dividing assets, dividing debt, and figuring out parenting time. The reality is that you have to find a way to communicate with the other person; and even be civil with the other person, in order to “finalize the divorce”. And, even when the divorce is final in legal terms, the grief process is still happening and the divorce is not “final” from an emotional perspective. Then, add to the picture the day-to-day dealings with the other person around parenting issues.

The remainder of this article will talk about what grief is and how it can interfere in the divorce process and in effective co-parenting.

The Stages of Grief

The reaction to loss is called grief. According to Elisabeth Kubler-Ross, who is best known for her work with dying patients and their families, there are five (5) stages to the grieving process. These stages are: denial, bargaining, anger, depression, and acceptance. These stages are extremely applicable to work with divorcing and divorced parents; divorcing persons in general; and those parents who were never married, had a child and the relationship dissolved. Each of the stages will be discussed briefly below.

Loss and Grief in Divorce and Effective Co-parenting (Continued from page 3 of this newsletter)

Denial is when someone believes, in spite of all evidence to the contrary, that the relationship can still be saved; that the other person is going to “come around” and want to reconcile. The person still knows that the other has asked for a divorce or separation, on the other hand there is disbelief that it could really happen.

Bargaining is when someone says “If only . . . then he/she would not be ending the relationship.”

Anger is pure mad: “How could you do this to or family?” Very frequently, when there is anger, the communication cannot happen and neither can an amicable resolution. Angry people result in high-conflict divorces that take time and usually large amounts of money. In the end, nobody “wins” and everyone is miserable. If there are children involved, they suffer the most because their parents’ anger usually results in the children being put in the middle and being used as pawns in the adult battle. It is important to keep in mind that underneath anger there is usually unresolved hurt. If the hurt can be effectively worked through, the anger can get resolved quicker and a healthier resolution to the divorce is more likely.

Depression is sadness about the loss. Some sadness is of course normal and expected. Persistent sadness, or depression, that does not get resolved during the divorce process can result in one person feeling like the victim because they really do not have the strength to make informed decisions. The depressed person can feel paralyzed and unable to say what they want. However, if you find that you are sad more days than not,

most of every day for two weeks or more and that sadness interferes with your life in some way, you probably need to talk with someone professionally about it. When the depression can be lifted, the person can be more actively involved in the divorce process and make more informed choices about the things that will affect their future.

Acceptance means that a person has come to terms that the divorce or separation will or has happened. However, a person can still experience the other stages for some time to come.

A person will go through the stages in a logical order for who they are and what their life experiences have been in relationship to losses. It is typical for the grieving process to last at least one year. It can last longer if someone gets stuck in a cycle of anger, bargaining, and denial. If you feel that you are stuck in the grieving process (angry all the time; sadness that interferes in your job, daily living, or relationships with family and friends) then it is important to consult with a therapist to help you work through your emotions so that you can facilitate an appropriate resolution to the issues in your divorce or separation.

Loss, Grief, and Effective Co-Parenting

Your spouse has asked for a divorce and there are children involved. The request has come as a surprise. You cannot believe what you are hearing since you do not recall any clues (denial). Once the dust settles, you may feel sad, angry, hurt or be thinking “If only . . .” or all of these things may be happening.

It is difficult to think about having an effective relationship with your children’s other parent when you are hurt or angry. There is a tendency to feel that you are the only one that can parent your children

Loss and Grief in Divorce and Effective Co-parenting (Continued from page 4 of this newsletter)

effectively. After all, this would not be happening but for the other parent. Add to that the fact that you can't seem to agree on even the simplest of things.

The reality is that emotions are most likely getting in the way. I have two children of my own and it is a very emotional experience raising them. On top of the regular emotions of raising children, add your emotions related to the divorce. There is a tendency to "hold on" to children even tighter. Children often become caught in the middle of the adult battle because it is easier to do that than to address the real issues. It isn't really easier though, because when you fight over children, they know it. Furthermore, it usually results in adjustment issues for the children and that tends to translate into adult issues and a cycle continues.

So, how do you co-parent effectively with all of these emotions? What follows are some basic suggestions:

1. Always make decisions about the children with the other parent away from the children. Once the decision is made, especially if it is a major one: school, moving, religion, what activities they will participate in, etc. jointly share the decision with your children. If you do not feel you can do this at this time, get into counseling to address the emotional issues that are getting in the way.
2. Always discuss situations with your co-parent calmly and with impartiality. When you do it from your position, your co-parent is more likely not to really hear you and to defend from his/her position. What this means is that you should always say things from the standpoint of

this is what I observed, or heard, or so and so told me. Then ask for their perspective. The next step would be to generate options for resolution.

3. Always remember that children have a right to have a positive relationship with both parents and all family members on both sides. It is each parent's job to encourage that.
4. Always remember that children are children. It is important to keep adult issues away from them (your co-parent's affair, money matters, etc.).
5. If you and your co-parent are not able to do these things, then it is important to seek a qualified mediator to help you work through some of these issues.

Remember that you and your co-parent gave life to your children. It is both of your responsibilities to raise them. You do not have to agree on every little detail, but you do need to provide consistency with the major details. Learn to respect the other parent as the other parent and even differences that exist. Each parent has strengths that they bring to the parenting relationship and children need all the strengths you can give them.

SUGGESTED READING LIST ON EFFECTIVE CO-PARENTING

For Adults:

***Necessary Losses: The Loves, Illusions, Dependencies, and Impossible Expectations That All of Us Have.** By Judith Viorst. Jan 1998. \$15.00

***Crazy Times: Surviving Divorce and Building a New Life** by Abigail Trafford. Dec. 1992. \$14.00

***The Good Divorce** by Constance R. Ahrons. Jan. 1995. \$14.00

***The Co-Parenting Survival Guide: Letting Go of Conflict after a Difficult Divorce** by Elizabeth Thayer Ph.D., Jeffery Zimmerman Ph.D. July 2001. \$14.95

***Cooperative parenting and divorce: A parent guide to effective co-parenting** by Susan Boyan. \$23.94

* This symbol signifies a book that can be found on bordersstores.com, the website of Borders Bookstores. Other books are also available on-line and at your local library.

Many of these books are also available to borrow, or for purchase at CRAINE MEDIATION. Call 248-539-3850 to see what is available.

RESOURCE LIST

Need to update your mediation agreement?

Contact **Ellen Craine**, JD, LMSW, ACSW at **CRAINE MEDIATION**
248-539-3850

Need to do estate planning?

Contact **Kathryn Sussman**,
Attorney at Law
248-489-8600

Need financial advice?

Contact **Robin Sessel** at Merrill Lynch
248-737-6817

Contact **Lyle Wohlberg** at Telemus
Capital
248-827-1800

Contact **Paul Stenborg** at
248-377-4144

Need a therapist for you or your children?

Contact **Marci Israel**, MSW, CSW
248-762-920

Contact **Nancy Levin**, Ph.D.
248-433-3244

Need more referrals?

Contact **CRAINE MEDIATION AT**
248-539-3850

If you like the information provided in this newsletter and would like to receive the next one, please call CRAINE MEDIATION at 248-539-3850 or send an email to emcraine@crainemediation.com Ideas for future newsletters would be greatly appreciated!

This newsletter is printed on recycled paper.