

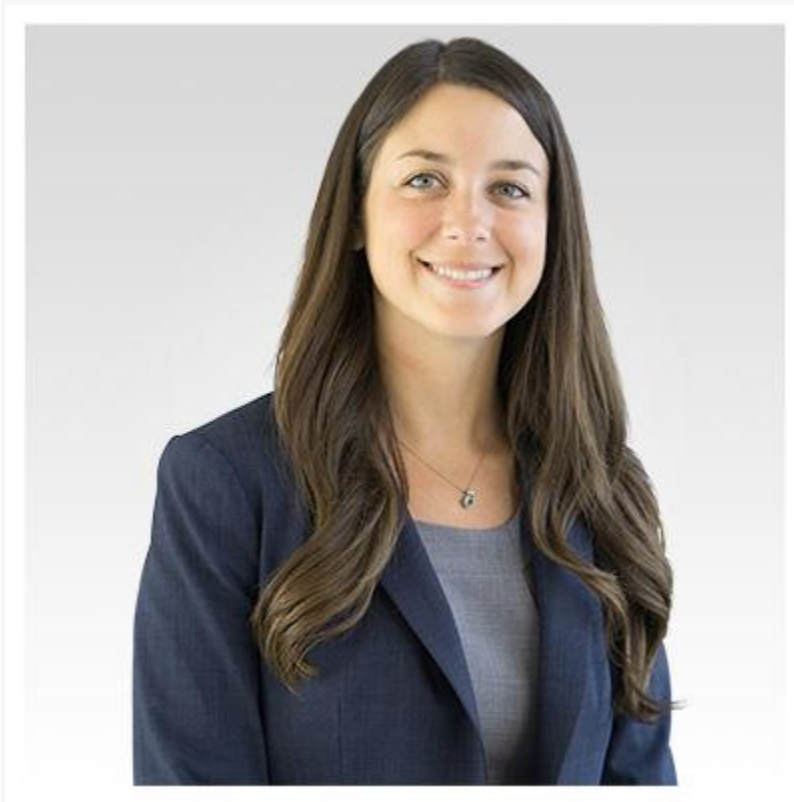
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How A Mediation Coach Can Help Your Divorce

February 28, 2020 | By Nicole K. Levy

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Mediator Nicole K. Levy explores the many ways that a mediation coach can assist in a divorce.



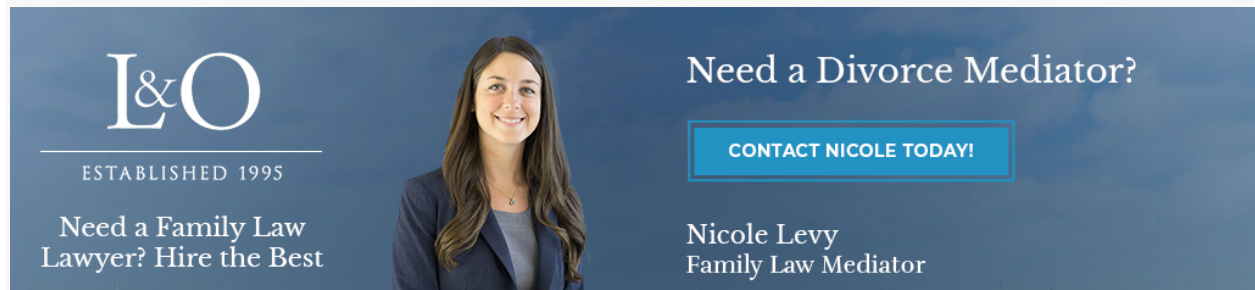
The first [divorce mediation](#) session can be nerve-wracking. First-time mediation participants often feel unsure about how the mediation process will unfold, including questions about the structure of the process, the role of the mediator and how their spouse will react. Spouses sometimes enter mediation with almost no preparation, materials or plan for how to proceed. Participants are often vaguely aware that it may be helpful to bring a [list of their income, assets and expenses](#) to the first session. However, every case is different.

Sometimes the spouses live together, making access to joint tax returns, bills and financial documents easy to obtain. In contrast, a separated spouse may have very little access to historical financial records. A [mediation coach](#) can help reduce your stress by customizing your mediation preparation based on the specific facts and circumstances surrounding your life and impending divorce. Coaches also serve as an important resource if parties encounter a significant roadblock during mediation, such as your spouse withholding some of the financial information that you are freely providing, or simply a bottleneck in the divorce negotiation. If your [spouse has hired a mediation coach](#), you might consider doing the same. Or you may consider retaining a coach to give yourself an advantage in the [upcoming negotiation](#) with your spouse.

A Coach Can Help You Gather Information to Prepare for Your Mediation Session

Most [mediation coaches](#) are family law attorneys who are also experienced mediators. The mediation coach role draws on both skillsets. It is the mediation coach's job to guide you through the divorce mediation process, although the coach generally does not attend mediation sessions (although [exceptions exist](#)). Most participants meet with their coach to prepare before mediation sessions, as well as after sessions to debrief, react to new information and plan next steps. Your mediator is required to view your case impartially, without favoritism for either spouse. Your coach's job is to work for you, advancing only your interests. Because mediation coaches are mediators and divorce lawyers themselves, they bring an intimate knowledge of both the mediation and litigation processes. Coaches understand the ways that divorcing spouses can help – or hurt – themselves, leading to a smoother or more complicated mediation. Coaches can advise clients regarding the type of financial information that divorce mediators want to see at the initial session. Coaches know where to find financial information and present. Moreover, coaches know how to analyze and react to the financial data provided by the other spouse. Spouses participating in mediation

who feel stress about the unknown process ahead should consider hiring a mediation coach to guide them through the first few steps of the process. A mediation coach can tell an uncertain spouse what information and documents will be useful, as well as how the negotiation process is likely to unfold.



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Nicole Levy
Family Law Mediator

Mediation Coaches Can Assist Throughout the Process

The utility of mediation coaches is not limited to the beginning of the process. Mediation coaches have a role to play throughout the mediation, from analyzing the financial records of the other spouse to reviewing any proposed agreements. While you and your spouse may wish to avoid litigation, that does not prevent you from requesting more information on certain issues; however, you need to know what to ask for and how to ask. A mediation coach can direct you towards the documents you need, assist in your negotiation tactics and strategies and explain what might happen if the [mediation breaks down](#). One of the most important [differences between litigation and mediation](#) is the absence of formal discovery in mediation. In litigated divorces, lawyers make extensive document requests that are overseen by the court to ensure the other party complies with disclosure requests. In mediated divorces, on the other hand, much of the information is voluntarily provided by the spouse who has it. If your mediation includes a [financial expert](#), your mediation coach can help leverage the expert's role in your favor. Similarly, if your mediation includes [complex legal issues](#), or financial issues such as [tax concerns](#), your coach can help you navigate the complexities of the case. It is not uncommon in a mediated divorce for one spouse to fail to disclose an important piece of information. Whether the spouse is hiding it on

purpose or simply forgot to mention it, it often falls on the other spouse to identify the missing document or information and seek disclosure through the mediator. A mediation coach helps a spouse analyze the disclosures made throughout the process, identify missing items, and formulate an approach for requesting missing records without undermining the mediation process. Last, a coach will likely review any draft agreement prepared by a mediator. Mediation coaches understand that the mediation process requires compromise on both sides of the divorce, but also recognize that they are hired to protect your individual interests alone. A coach can explain to you what you may be giving up, what you may be entitled to, or what may need to be modified to ensure your agreement is reasonable, fair, enforceable and clear for a judge. **Schedule a mediation with [Nicole K. Levy](#) today at (781) 253-2049 or send [her an email](#).**

Nicole is a divorce mediator and mediation coach for South Shore Divorce Mediation, with offices in Hingham, Massachusetts and East Sandwich, Massachusetts. She is also a collaborative law attorney Senior Associate Attorney for Lynch & Owens, P.C., where she specializes in divorce and family law issues. Nicole is a statutory mediator under [M.G.L. Ch. 233, s. 23C](#) and a proud member of the Massachusetts Council on Family Mediation. To read more from Nicole, check out her [content on the Lynch & Owens blog](#).

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