

COST DEFLATORS: HOW TO DECREASE THE NEED FOR COSTLY PROFESSIONAL INTERVENTION:

OUTLINE:

- 1. Use BIFF GUIDELINES for texts, emails and telephone conversations. Communicate effectively.**
- 2. Take notes during meetings, practice and hone the skills learned from your individual coach, in and outside of meetings.**
- 3. Become masterful at having necessary and difficult conversations.**
- 4. Parent by placing your child(ren)'s needs in the foreground.**
- 5. Be Prepared, Trustworthy and Reliable.**
- 6. Take care of your personal health, physically, mentally and emotionally.**
- 7. Be clear about what you want, without being attached to a particular outcome. Trust your collaborative attorney to help you understand what's reasonable under the law, and what's realistic given the specifics of your case.**

1. Use BIFF GUIDELINES (Bill Eddy) for emails and telephone conversations to keep them brief, business-like and “professional,” with your partner/spouse *and* your team. **B**rief, **I**nformative, **F**riendly, **F**irm (i.e. avoids cost of lengthy phone conversations and long email streams). Contempt, criticism, defensiveness, stonewalling, blaming, judgmental and provocative styles of communication *will* require *much* more professional intervention.

2. Take Notes, Practice and Hone Skills Taught during Coaching Session(s) in between meetings. Use collaborative techniques *outside* of team meetings (e.g. make requests instead of blaming; use “I-statements;” speak for yourself not your spouse/partner; avoid long-winded explanations that don’t move the process forward; listen more than you talk (!); eliminate the words “fair” and “should” from your vocabulary and understand why these are ineffective *for you*; pick your battles wisely - don’t waste \$1000’s arguing over the Zappa cd; Learn the ways you’re inclined to speak “disrespectfully” under pressure and learn/practice immediate remedies. Disrespect and an adversarial tone will provoke interpersonal messes that will require more professional help and increase your costs; Respect your spouse/partner’s boundaries and limits. Badgering or arguing a point will escalate discord and require more professional intervention to move forward; Cultivate a “benign curiosity” about the other’s view rather than being invested in “being right.”

3. Become Masterful at Having Necessary & Difficult Conversations – get help, craft and prepare for these, as needed. You will save money in the long run, and

avoid acting out or otherwise being ineffective and requiring costly professional help to clean up messes.

4. Parent by placing your child(ren)'s needs in the foreground. i.e. Use your coach and your child specialist to help you learn to acknowledge and validate your child(ren)'s experience - it is usually *very* different from your own. Learn to recognize all the subtle and obvious ways you may put your child(ren) in the middle, and avoid these. Typically each parent will have to accept more limited access to a child/children; Learn the distinct differences between your sources of grief and loss with the divorce, and your *child(ren)*'s experience of loss. They don't need to feel your pain – they already have their own.

5. Be Prepared, Trustworthy and Reliable. Understand that scheduling your team of professionals at times that also suit you is no easy task. Realistically assess the time it takes you to be *fully prepared* for such meetings when you schedule them. Avoid rescheduling meetings. Complete tasks by the deadline dates prior to meetings. Follow through on your agreements. Ensure you understand your financial report and are equipped to be realistic about your budget/cash flow. Share ALL pertinent information—*withholding* undermines your trustworthiness and blocks progress. Work collaboratively – acting in a one-sided way provokes reactivity and requires more professional intervention. Have the courage and wisdom to ask for help when you are confused or “shut down.” Mean “yes” when you say “yes,” and “no” when you say “no” – if you have trouble doing this under pressure LET YOUR COACH KNOW so s/he can be sure to help you by checking in. You become trustworthy by knowing where you're NOT trustworthy, building skills and getting support from your team.

6. Take care of your personal health physically, mentally and emotionally!

Divorce is typically traumatic and stressful so you will need to take active steps to reduce stress and related symptoms (Exercise is the single best stress-reducer). Get individual therapy (not from your coach) to help you express, release and effectively regulate your emotions when they are overwhelming. Biologically, you *literally can't think clearly* unless you're emotionally regulated. Therapy will also help you think things through that may be too overwhelming to process in a team meeting when your team is focused on moving you forward. It's very costly to try to “process deeply” when you are paying a team. Make a note and save this for therapy, Your coaches *will* help you get clear and calm so you can get to the finish line. Avoid actively abusing substances or engaging in other self-destructive behavior during your divorce or during meetings. Get help to stay sober, or you'll be handicapped, and lose credibility - both will significantly increase your costs.

7. Be clear about what you want, without being attached to a particular outcome. You are likely to get more of what you want if you can be creative and help your team consider win-win solutions that help ensure your spouse/partner gets what s/he needs/wants *as well* (versus what you “think” s/he should have). Locking into a position, refusing to budge, and/or becoming attached to a particular

outcome are tactics that will stall the process, require significant costly intervention, and limit your overall effectiveness. Ask and then trust your collaborative attorney to help you understand what's reasonable under the law, and what's realistic given the specifics of your case.

Failing to do *any* of the above, will significantly inflate the need for professional intervention from team members, and therefore increase the cost of your divorce!