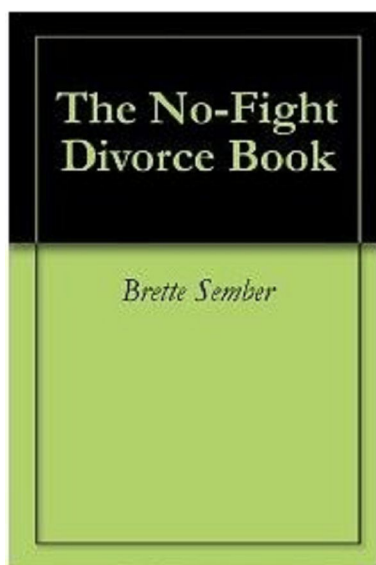


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How to have a happy divorce, part 2

by Alisa on [September 28, 2011](#)



In my last post, you [learned about mediation](#) from former attorney Brette Sember. Today Brette has graciously allowed us to read a free excerpt from her book [The No-Fight Divorce Book](#). Here's the excerpt from a section about getting in the right mindset for mediation:

When you begin mediation, things will move more smoothly for you if you have the right outlook.

Try to have the following attitudes during mediation:

- **Patience.** You might be ready to move forward and get this divorce over with; however, it is important that you do things carefully and in a cautious and reasoned manner. Rash decisions are often not the best. Your mediator has a reason for everything he or she does and says. You are paying your mediator to guide you through this process, so let him or her do this.
- **Flexibility.** Be ready to consider options and approaches you have not considered or to reconsider options that you have already rejected. Be willing to compromise.
- **Hopefulness.** When you are going through a divorce, it is easy to feel that you will never get past it, never recover, and never get your life back together again. You can and you will. If you are pessimistic, this attitude

will drag the entire process down. Know that mediation is the path to a new life.

- **Open-mindedness.** Many divorcing spouses have set opinions about each other. In mediation you must move beyond these. Listen to what your spouse says, and give real consideration to his or her suggestions. If you can understand your spouse's point of view, it will help you formulate an alternative that might be acceptable to both of you.

- **Restraint.** Don't fly off the handle when you're upset. Instead, focus on communicating.

Ground Rules

When you begin your first session, your mediator will probably explain the basic ground rules that will be in place during the sessions. These often include:

Do not swear.

Do not shout or raise your voice.

Do not interrupt.

Be considerate of what the other person has to say.

Arrive on time.

Do not leave midsession.

Let the mediator and other spouse know in advance if you must cancel or reschedule a session.

Turn off cell phones or pagers while in the session.

Complete all homework assignments.

Discuss things in mediation before taking action.

Agree not to file papers in the divorce or pursue the court case while mediation is ongoing. (Note that some mediators include this in their written mediation agreement.)

Words That Work Promises to Make to Yourself About Mediation

I will not expect immediate results and will wait to see where the process takes me.

I will be ready to consider new options and avenues and will try not to become rigid.

I will assume that mediation can work for us.

I will give my spouse's suggestions real consideration and will not jump to conclusions.

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Go to Brette's site BretteSember.com to learn more about the [No-Fight Divorce Book](#).

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Susan [September 29, 2011 at 8:46 am](#)

These sound like good ground rules for marital or relationship counseling, too, especially the parts about keeping an open mind and not expecting immediate results.

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[Learn more about Alisa's book](#), the story of how she went from wishing her husband dead to falling back in love.

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