THE LAW OFFICE OF DAWN A. NEE, LLC

**Family Law News**

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Active Families feel good, feel life.

**Office News**

* Our Westminster location moved! New address is 77 East Main Street, Westminster!
* Please welcome our new staff! Amanda is the new paralegal and is completing her degree at Stevenson University. Alecia is our summer intern and is a law student at the University of Baltimore School of Law.
* We provide full family related services for: prenuptial, divorce, custody, visitation, support, contempt, enforcement, and settlement options, step adoptions, etc
* Did you know that I also prepare simple wills, power of attorney, and advance health directives? GET A SUMMER DISCOUNT!

**Legislative Update**

The most significant new law is HB 438/SB 241- The Civil Marriage Protection Act. If this bill passes referendum in November, it will bring a major change to the practice of family law in Maryland. Another, important development this year is the absence of the debate over a joint custody presumption bill. The “Groner Commission,” resulted in complete overhauls of the martial property and alimony schemes in Maryland Law. This is only a few of bills introduced that related in some way to the practice of family law in Maryland. For more information on bills, or other family law related bills, please consult the General Assembly’s excellent website at <http://Mlis.state.md.us/>

**Striving For Balance in Your Life, Career**

**By: Lisa Caplin**

Balancing your life does not happen automatically. Life is fluid, so therefore balance is fluid, and we need to be flexible to achieve and maintain it.

Since life changes constantly, it is important to look at your life and determine what is important to you, what you can control, and what you value. Openly recognizing that balance takes effort and is an ongoing process can reduce your frustration and help determine what you can control and change. Creating and maintain a balanced life is a conscious decision. You can start by asking:

* Do you successfully schedule time in your day to do things you want?
* Can you participate in meaningful activities with family/friends without feeling anxious or talking about work?
* Do you participate in activities without gnawing feeling that you have work to complete?
* Start by sitting down and writing your goals. What helps you focus on what you want to accomplish.
* Examine your values: ask yourself what are your values; what is most important to you?
* Recognize that imbalance is sometimes inevitable
* Sometimes your job and other responsibilities will need to come first.

**Thinking About Mediation?**

John Bickerman notes the growing dissatisfaction with the mediation process in his recent article *Adapting Mediation to What Users Want*. He encourages mediation as a positive alternative to litigation, however he also recognizes that some mediators are unable to address “concrete logistical issues” and that the mediation process does not always meet the expectations of clients. Bickerman makes a few suggestions to get the most out of mediation. He stresses that you **choose a style of mediation that works best for you!**

Being aware that there are various approaches to mediation before choosing a mediator will help you to get what you want out of the mediation process. Here are a few different styles of mediation:

* **Facilitative Mediation**

A facilitative mediator guides parties through the process, but leaves the decision making to you. The mediator:

* Asks questions to get the process going
* Makes sure each side is able to express their concerns and interests
* Holds joint sessions with all parties involved
* Makes sure parties come to an agreeable solution that each side is happy with and that is based on a common understanding
* **Evaluative Approach**

An evaluative mediator will evaluate arguments from the perspective of a judge or jury The mediator:

* Focuses on legal rights, rather than interests or needs
* Weighs the costs and benefits of a legal resolution versus settlement via mediation
* Often has a direct influence on the outcome of the mediation
* Holds separate meetings with parties in order to generate a settlement agreement
* **The Analytical Approach**

A mediator who takes an analytical approach combines various styles of mediation to come up with a process that works best for you. The mediator:

* Adjusts the process to your circumstances
* Gives concrete legal advice and will play “devil’s advocate” if need be, while also acting as a facilitator between the parties
* Takes time before mediation to plan a workable agenda that details the negotiation process
* Above all the mediation process is meant to assist you! Being able to effectively communicate your expectations will lead to better results and a more agreeable solution.



(Source: <http://www.mediate.com/articles/zumeta.cfm>)

“ I have suffered from being misunderstood, but I would have suffered a hell of a lot more if I had been understood.”- Clarence Darrow

“ The first half of our lives are ruined by our parents and the second half by our children.” – Clarence Darrow

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