

# **The Divorce Agreement Newsletter**

Wednesday, December 28, 2016

**“It’s what you learn after you know it all that counts”**

This quote is from John Wooden, the legendary UCLA basketball coach. It’s a quote that every professional should refer to from time to time as a core tenet of understanding their skills, knowledge and experience.

The world of professionals of different backgrounds who assist clients in matters of divorce is full of lawyers, financial advisors and mental health professionals who “know it all.” I’ve been there! I mark 2008 as the year when I believed I had the most complete comprehension of divorce law and mediation. I distinctly remember the week in early 2009 when I took the training to become certified for collaborative practice. I was convinced that I knew far more than any of my instructors. After all, wasn’t I one of the most experienced divorce mediators in America?!

As I look back on this time in my professional life, I now realize that since that time I have figured out so much of what I presently consider the most important elements of my professional skills and knowledge. It’s a true joy to be able to see connections that I couldn’t make even a decade ago. But wait a minute - does this mean that now I finally know it all? Hardly! The re-conceptualizing keeps on coming. So instead of thinking of myself as a living encyclopedia of divorce mediation, I realize that mastering this complex professional field is a lifetime task that no one can ever fully complete. Knowing that I don’t know it all is part of what keeps my mind alert and open to new ideas at age 83. I feel sad when I see someone half my age who seems to have closed down on this vital journey.

The beauty of being a professional involved with divorce issues is that there are so many different ways to focus on what is relevant to any given set of issues. It’s a field that takes you through a wide swath of human experience in some of the most important aspects of life. To understand divorce, one also needs to understand marriage. To appreciate the personal financial aspects of marriage, one also needs some business background. Dealing with parents requires knowledge of the stages of childhood development and the studies of children of divorce. There are relationship issues of many different kinds. Family systems theory can be useful. We are working in a constantly changing multi-dimensional discipline. If our professional field never stands still, then we as professionals have to be aware of all the various ways in which the ground keeps shifting.