

## WHAT A DIVORCE COACH CAN DO FOR YOU; WELCOME TO THE OLYMPICS<sup>1</sup>

As you enter the world of Collaborative Practice, a Divorce Coach can be extremely useful to you in a number of ways. In essence, the Divorce Coach is there as your personal assistant. Although Divorce Coaches are all licensed mental health practitioners, our job is not to do traditional therapy with you. Rather, our job is to assist you in whatever way we can, to navigate the separation and/or divorce process, and to help you to create the foundation for the best post-divorce family you can possibly have.

**Imagine white-water rafting (The present).** Our job is to coach you in the skills necessary to make it through the turbulent ups and downs of the separation and divorce process.

**Imagine a marathon runner (The future).** You need to be able to continue to perform in the years ahead in order to create a safe and stable post-divorce family for you and your children. Through grade school, graduations, university, convocations, marriage, first babies and so on, your children will look to you to participate in their lives. We know that children are extremely sensitive to any conflict in a separating/divorced family and any on-going conflict that remains once all the papers are signed. We also know that strong parenting relationships are a child's greatest asset. You and your former spouse will need new skills in order to be effective co-parents in your post-divorce family. Equally, your life post-divorce will be greatly enhanced by a successful separation process.

**Imagine a baseball team (The big picture).** Families are like baseball teams in the field. As life happens (the batter hits the ball) family members have to work together to respond to events that impact the family (a grounder coming straight toward 2<sup>nd</sup> base or a fly out to left field). Your post-divorce family is like a baseball team in two separate but connected ball-diamonds side-by-side. In order to be effective you will need to be able to respond to life situations in a coordinated fashion.

**What will the legacy of your divorce be for your children?** Although it may seem that right now, your divorce is between you and your spouse, the reality is that your children will carry your divorce all of their lives. What will the legacy of your divorce be? Will your children be proud of how their parents handled a difficult situation? Or will your relationship with your former spouse be a constant stress and create tension in the midst of their most joyous occasions like graduating from high school, getting married, or having the first baby? Right now, you are creating what your children will be saying about their parents' divorce 5, 10, and 15 years down the road. Our job is to assist you to create a separation and divorce that is consistent with your highest aspirations for an honourable and safe resolution to the issues at hand and one that ensures the emotional safety of your children in the present and future.

Could it be any more difficult to train for the Olympics?

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