

## Collaborative Divorce

Karen C. Koehmstedt is trained in collaborative divorce. Collaborative divorce is a process by which the parties control the dissolution of their marriage privately – with special considerations for the needs of their children and each other. The parties of a collaborative divorce commit at the outset to resolving issues through a series of meetings. At the meetings, the attorneys help the parties obtain the necessary information and apply it to their situation. The parties remain focused on making good parenting plans and informed decisions about property and/or debt division. Collaborative divorce saves heartache, emotional stress, and money.

Collaborative divorce leaves the parties empowered by the future, not devastated by the prospect of it. It seeks to keep parent/child relationships intact for the benefit of future graduations, weddings, grandchildren, and other celebratory events. When preserving a marriage is not possible, collaborative divorce is a more compassionate alternative than traditional litigation.

In our jurisdiction, there are at least four mandatory court hearings the parties must attend in order to obtain a divorce. There are several other optional court hearings where the parties probably should attend court. In collaborative divorce the parties should not have to go to court at all.