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Patti Murphy

PM Mediation

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Q: We've decided to separate. We want to avoid the war our friends went through in court. Is there another option?

A: As Abe Lincoln said, Discourage litigation the nominal winner is often a real loser in fees, expenses and waste of time. I'm with Abe, especially when it comes to families in transition.

Litigation by its very nature is an adversarial system that positions parties against each other. Children often get used as pawns in a game where there are no winners. It is expensive, time consuming and often emotionally scarring. The end result is a judge imposed decision that the parties find frustrating at best and disastrous at worst.

An alternative approach is mediation, a non-adversarial process that leaves the decision-making power with the individuals. The mediator helps the participants work together and create their own solutions based on the unique needs of their family. People are more apt to adhere to agreements that they have helped craft.

In a recent CBC interview, respected family law judge and author Harvey Brownstone shared his wish that more couples mediated their divorces rather than try to find solutions in the judicial system. In his book Tug Of War, he writes, The emotional carnage resulting from family litigation, and its impact on the unfortunate children of warring parents, can not be overstated.

Is mediation the right process for you? Let's talk.

Contact Patti Murphy at PM Mediation (www.pmediation.com), patti@pmediation.com or 647-328-3167.



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Zachary Fiddes
B.ENG., O.L.S. President

Q: I'm planning on adding an addition in the new year. Do you work in the winter?

A: Yes! In some cases our job is easier due to fallen leaves and weeds that get in the way during warmer times.

While most construction won't start until the spring, there's a lot of work that can be done in the meantime. Site plans, which show the existing conditions and outline the proposed construction, are usually required for new buildings and can sometimes take a few months to be approved by the municipality so it's a good idea to get started now.

Also, if you're planning on selling this spring, get your survey updated now before you put your house on the market to avoid any delays.

As a licensed Ontario Land Surveyor I will be happy to discuss your project, help you create a timeline, and offer suggestions and recommendations about what you can do to get started.



DR. ELAYNE TANNER
Registered Social Worker

Counselling & Psychotherapy

Milton 905-854-0801
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Q: Holidays are coming and like so many, I am scurrying about trying to get things completed. The problem this year is that I have started having anxiety attacks. I am having difficulty going into malls, I am shaking and crying at home, and I often feel totally overwhelmed and I don't really think it is holiday related. What is happening to me?

A: Anxiety seems to have reached almost epidemic proportions. Winter holiday season is a time of high stress when feelings of anxiety and depression get worse. We often see the same symptoms on the final days of summer and Sunday nights before a Monday workday. The truth is, any time or location can elevate stress in anxiety sufferers.

Anxiety, a normal reaction to a stressor, is associated with feelings of fear, unease, panic and dread. It is often accompanied by sweating, shortness of breath, racing heart, crying, and sadness. The sufferers often begin to isolate themselves. They may refuse to see friends and family and frequently request a leave from work. Although the sufferer hopes that reducing outside involvement will contain the anxiety, this approach does not help. Anxiety can affect children, teens and adults but everyone can be taught to effectively manage stress.

Our bodies have what we refer to as a fight or flight response. The adrenal glands release adrenalin making the sufferer feel anxious. Anxiety, when it is contained to low levels, is a normal and healthy response. But debilitating anxiety is unnecessary. Assuming your physician has ruled any physical causes now is the time to deal with your anxiety.

Anxiety is very treatable. You do not have to suffer with it. It responds well to a number of therapeutic approaches. Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) is one method that has proven successful, as has hypnosis and deep relaxation techniques. We can try any and all of them to see which combination works best for you. There is no need to suffer the effects of anxiety attacks.

Free yourself from the stress of anxiety and enjoy your time with family and friends all year round. Do not lose sight of what is important in life. You cannot enjoy even the simplest things when you are full of stress and anxiety. We need more calm and love in this sometimes chaotic world. I wish everyone happiness, health and contentment and we will meet again in the New Year.

"HELPING YOU HELP YOURSELF"

Elayne Tanner Social Work Professional Corporation