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Are there any better ways to divorce than going to court?

‘Splitting up can be an emotional roller coaster but there are two excellent alternatives to battling it out in court,’ says Rob Parker, solicitor and collaborative lawyer at Phillips ‘both of which can be cheaper and help couples to stay in control of their futures instead of leaving decisions to a judge in a courtroom.

Mediation involves you and your former spouse or partner in having confidential sessions with a trained mediator who will help both of you identify all the issues that need to be resolved, discuss the options and reach a settlement that is acceptable to both parties. The trained mediator helps you limit the conflict so that you can discuss things sensibly and make the right decisions over your own lives. It’s a voluntary process and you must both agree on solutions, or there is no agreement. At the end of the process a detailed summary of the proposals reached will be prepared, which you can then have made into a legally binding agreement or court order.

The other great alternative is called **collaborative law** and this differs from mediation in that you and your former spouse each have your own specially trained collaborative law solicitor by your side and you meet together in four-way meetings. You can then talk things over face-to-face instead of conducting negotiations remotely by letter or phone. Solicitors trained in collaborative law adopt a conciliatory rather than confrontational approach. It’s more amicable, especially important if you have children and you need an on-going relationship afterwards. It will help your children to cope better with your separation if they see that you are working things out together.

Both **mediation** and **collaborative law** can be cheaper and quicker because they are not driven by a timetable imposed by the court. They can help resolve issues such as arrangements for parents to each spend time with their children, property issues, what the financial arrangements are going to be and even the process of a divorce itself. But beyond that’ concludes Rob ‘they can reduce the emotional cost on couples and their children and most importantly the key decisions you make about your future are yours – they are not imposed on you by the courts.’

You can call Rob Parker on 01256 854676 or email at: rparker@phillips-law.co.uk

Visit Phillips’ website for more information at: www.phillips-law.co.uk

For more information about local collaborative lawyers visit: www.resolution.org.uk/northhantspod.

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