

MAJOR CONSIDERATIONS IN CHOOSING A DIVORCE LAWYER

By Eva M. DeFranco

Trust: This is the most important. If you do not have the confidence and trust in your attorney, you should not hire him or her.

Find an attorney whose personality, style and goals are compatible with yours. Even among the best family lawyers, not every attorney is best for every client, or every type of case.

Your attorney should be up front with you from the first meeting about the merits of your case, and should be very clear about what you can expect. Your attorney should keep you on the right side of the case and the court, and should be clear with you about all strengths and weaknesses in your case. An effective family lawyer will make sure your expectations are in line with reality, and will not simply tell you what you want to hear. Also, keep in mind that your attorney does not have a crystal ball, and cannot guarantee a particular outcome, but should give you a range of possibilities based on experience along with a cost vs. benefit analysis of any particular scenario.

Consider hiring an attorney that focuses primarily on family law/divorce. Family law is a highly specialized area.

Be cautious of a family attorney that describes themselves as “aggressive”. This is a marketing buzzword, and there is a difference between an effective, zealous advocate, and a disrespectful, unprofessional, and/or abusive lawyer.

Be clear about the fee, and always ask for a written fee agreement. Family attorneys typically charge by an hourly rate. If paying hourly, ask for an estimate of time depending on how far the case goes.