

A Prayer Amidst the Challenges of a Litigated Divorce

(e.g. when one partner refuses or mediation/collaborative divorce options aren't possible . . .)

MY DUTY and WELL-BEING REQUIRE THAT I ENGAGE BOTH: 1) MY INTENTIONS & 2) MY OBLIGATORY RELIANCE ON LAWYERS AND THE LAW:

1. MY DELIBERATE INTENTIONS, WHICH ARE TO . . .

- Bring closure and free us both, with love and respect; To move on and welcome the next phase of my life with open arms;
- BLESS him/her and myself - May we go forth and prosper, May we be healthy, safe and content, and May we model the way to Love and to Let Go, while sharing generously with our children and grandchildren;
- Be Free, to release and let go of any desire to punish, blame or gouge (barring the occasional hostile fantasy, as long as it makes me laugh *at myself*);
- Surrender to Divine Order/ Love running *my* show. Remember, I have no control over his/her responses.
- Breathe – let go of all ego attachments (e.g. avoid becoming attached to any idea of specific results, outcomes); The only predictability here is the seamless stream of comings and goings, of events, issues, disagreements and negotiations that will pass by and keep endlessly coming for the rest of our lives, because we share children. The divorce will only produce a piece of paper.
- Remember that what my Once-Beloved thinks of me is no longer my business. This isn't personal, regardless of how it *feels*. Feelings are *not* facts.
- Once I've exhausted all options for persuading him/her to embrace a kinder way to divorce, Accept it if s/he will not pursue a process that secures a more respectful way, resolution and future, where we could dance easily at our children's weddings with joy, and include any future partners graciously. Accept it, while standing for the possibility of something kinder.
- Acknowledge my ability to know and love him/her still, to enumerate all that was/is worthy in him/her for our ___ years of love.
- Stay present to the energy drain and damage that comes from staying attached to outcomes, ideas about "what's fair,," etc. Stay present to what such stances cost me and those around me, so that I'm hungry to let go and reclaim my Energy (e.g. Chinese finger-puzzle analogy – if you tug, your fingers stay trapped; if you relax, you can remove your fingers).
- Know what *is* my business: To be a witness of myself; To be aware and ensure that what I think, do and say towards others is *free of harm*; When there is or may be harm, seek to repair it. Aim to be honorable and mature.
- Pray that the lawyers and judge involved allow themselves to be Guided by Wisdom & Love as they engage *the spirit* of the law.
- Be full to overflowing with gratitude, for whatever is *and* whatever isn't. Accept what's so. When reality upsets or displeases me, "choose" it, own whatever is so. Not because I necessarily control reality but solely because "choosing" the reality is the only powerful (versus helpless victim) place to stand under the circumstances. Accept. Observe my monkey mind. Laugh. Especially at my self.

AND

2. MY OBLIGATORY RELIANCE ON LAWYERS and THE LAW . . .

- In this realm, there is only what is just and equitable in the *eyes of the law* regarding the children's well-being, the division of assets, etc.; Stop fantasizing about the satisfaction of getting my "pound of flesh" – vengeful justice is toxic to *me*, and irrelevant *in the eyes of family law*
- Remember the *legal process is impersonal by nature* (e.g. Was there an agreement for X, Y, Z? Is there a legal precedent for that?). How *this* particular, very-human judge interprets the "facts" according to the law is a crapshoot, no matter how smart and capable my lawyer is.
- It is my responsibility to discern, interview and choose an attorney to protect me who is not only smart, strategic, fearless and capable, but also honorable and respectful, rather than provocative and gratuitously insulting in his/her approach. An attorney's righteous indignation may feel good to me in the moment, but it also indicates s/he'll rack up our bills to focus on being "right" and "winning," while kicking up needless ill will that risks sabotaging the endgame. I also want an attorney that can recognize and respectfully tell me to knock it off when my distrust and fear are coloring my judgment.

- I paid to interview a number of lawyers to avoid the terrible cost of switching midstream. I trust this one is wise enough to figure out how to settle this sooner rather than later, if that's at all possible. S/he's mature and ethical enough to avoid racking up bills that get me nowhere. I am grateful s/he's experienced and strategic as well as wise. I hired someone trained and experienced in mediation as well as in collaborative divorce, even though I'm stuck litigating. If there's a kinder way, s/he'll know how it's done. So, listen to reason, ask questions when you need to, and then do what s/he says.
- Remember: The law and this adversarial legal process have nothing to do with me. They are not personal. *Decisions are only about legal precedence (and a judge's biases, if we go to court), not greed.*
- Litigation won't be because of me or depend on me. As my former spouse pursues this course, I am obligated to defend myself. *How I defend myself to myself and in speaking with others is my responsibility* (i.e. if I am full of negative judgments about him and paint myself as the wronged victim, there will be no growth and no freedom for me).
- Remember *the divorce* is just a transaction. *The relationship was/is* a completely separate thing. *Confusing the two just creates more confusion and pain.*
- Accept and embrace that I was unable to enroll him/her in an alternative to this adversarial court system, these judges and lawyers. Let go and let the Divine, and whoever is sitting on the bench do what will be done;
- Let the lawyers find the middle path, while I keep my eye on building the skills and strengths I'll need for the long run; Accept that we need their guidance, and, that *lawyers and judges filter all our words and actions to one another*, typically without regard to what's noblest in who we are. It's just a job.
- Faye Dunaway in Chinatown: "I don't get angry. My lawyer does." It's none of my business.
- Maharishi: "See the job. Do the job. *Stay out of the misery.*" The courtroom is not my realm: Follow my lawyer's lead and advice.
- My mantra: "All is well. One thing at a time. Anything is possible."