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**Unbundled Divorce: Getting just the right amount of legal help.**

February 5, 2018[Ron Ousky](http://www.ousky.com/our-collaborative-divorce-team/ron-ousky/)[Blog Post](http://www.ousky.com/category/blog-post/), [Collaborative Divorce](http://www.ousky.com/category/collaborative-divorce/), [Collaborative Law](http://www.ousky.com/category/collaborative-law/), [Ron Ousky](http://www.ousky.com/category/ron-ousky/)

There is a “new” way of going through divorce that puts clients in charge.  It’s called “Unbundled Legal Service” and it means that the clients get to have legal advice without having the lawyers take over the full case.  This allows clients to get legal advice, and whatever else they truly want, without having to pay lawyers to do things they could do themselves.

The word “unbundled” may seem like a strange phrase if you did not realize there was a bundle in the first place.  Most clients do not realize that, when they retain a divorce lawyer in the traditional model, the lawyer is authorized (sometimes even required) to engage in the full range of services, from information gathering, to responding to all relevant communications, to reviewing all documents related to the case.

Unbundling lets the client choose which things the lawyer will do for them; and which things they will do for themselves. This provides an opportunity to have more control over cost and, sometimes, acrimony. Lawyers charge high hourly rates. When they are providing important legal advice or analyzing complex issues, these hourly rates can be a very wise investment. The decisions you make during your divorce can impact your finances by tens of thousands of dollars and, helping you make important decisions regarding your children may be priceless. On the other hand, paying your lawyer to wait at the courthouse, or drive downtown, or gather your bank records, does not make economic sense.

In addition to helping clients save some of their resources for themselves, unbundling can free up funds for clients to spend on other important resources, such as a child specialist to help them co-parent their children, a financial expert to help them make good financial decisions, a coach to help them with communication, or a therapist to help them adjust to the emotional impact of the divorce.

While unbundling of legal services is being heralded as a brave new trend, it is, in many ways, a throwback to an old idea; the attorney as “legal counsel” – a concept that was much more common in earlier days.  It is only recently, in the more adversarial climate of the past century, that the notion of lawyer as “hired gun” has become widespread. Frustration with both the acrimony and expense of the adversarial approach have caused many divorcing people to forego getting legal advice altogether.  Unbundling, or the renewal of attorneys as legal counsel, is allowing people to have the best of both worlds; sound advice combined with control over cost and acrimony.

Unbundled divorce has many different variations.   One popular form of unbundled divorce is called Collaborative Divorce, where clients choose to have the lawyers focus solely on settlement.  Because 97% of all cases settle, hiring lawyers to focus only on settlement helps clients make sure that their legal fees are spent on things that matter to their future.  To learn more about Collaborative Divorce go to [www.collaborativelaw.org](http://www.collaborativelaw.org/) and [www.ousky.com](http://www.ousky.com/).