

New York Divorce and Family Law Blog

[What Should a Client Expect From His Divorce Attorney?](#)

Posted by [Daniel Clement](#) on November 11, 2010

You are going through divorce- you retain an attorney and at the end of the day you have a visceral reaction-you either love or hate your divorce attorney. While a good attorney could use his legal knowledge and skills to get you a better settlement, the facts of your case largely determine the outcome of your case. So why then, do clients have such extreme reactions to their lawyers?

In large measure, the client's satisfaction with his legal representation is directly related to his expectations from the attorney-client relationship. So what can the client expect of his attorney?

[Cathy Meyer](#) in her article [Are You Expecting Too Much From Your Divorce Attorney?](#) identifies five things clients should minimally expect from their attorneys:

1. Regular Communication.. Responsiveness is crucial. More complaints are lodged against attorneys with disciplinary boards for not returning phone calls than any other reason.

In my office, it is the practice to attempt to return calls and answer client emails the day they are received . Divorce is emotionally charged. It can be nerve wracking and gut wrenching. Your attorney should expeditiously answer your questions and address your concerns in a timely manner.

2. Full Disclosure. Your attorney should be willing to discuss in full with you what is happening in your case and what they expect to happen in the future. A good divorce attorney will suggest strategies for your case; explain the discovery process, negotiation on your behalf, and have your back should you go to divorce court.

Client's should receive copies of all letters, emails and legal documents. When the communication involves a client's substantive rights, the client should have an opportunity to review the final product before it goes out.

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3. Due Process. It is your divorce attorney's responsibility to make sure you are treated fairly by the court during your divorce.
4. Availability. Appointments with your divorce attorney are an opportunity for you to gauge where you are in the divorce process and the direction your case is heading. If you have a divorce attorney who cancels or rushes you through appointments, you have a bad divorce attorney.
5. Basic Courtesy and Civility.

Little things matter. It costs nothing to be courteous and polite. While the adage “the customer is always right” be not be 100% accurate in a divorce case, the client is always entitled to respect and common courtesy. When differences of opinion arise on how an issue should be handled, the client is entitled to a reasoned, but polite explanation. It is seldom productive to be rude, derisive or hostile

In the end, the client should expect the attorney to counsel and to communicate a strategy and an analysis of the relevant facts and law to enable the client to make informed decisions about their case.