



## **What Do We Make?** By Steve McDonough, Esq.

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I was watching television earlier tonight - on Valentine's night as a matter of fact - and saw a commercial for BMW automobiles. It was a fairly long spot during the Olympics, right after I decided that I will never try skiing moguls. I don't even think I would want to walk on them. The announcer on the commercial mentioned that of course BMW makes cars, but what they really make is **joy**. The ad showed lots of pictures of happy people in BMWs. I thought it was a good commercial, and then wondered as a divorce lawyer and mediator, what do we make at my firm?

I do not think the answer is that far off from BMW's own conclusion.

Most people who walk through our office doors are not happy. Clients are usually under a great deal of stress, and may feel as though their entire world is crashing down around them due to a divorce or continuing divorce-related conflict in the form of modifications or contempt hearings. Some folks have been in unsatisfying or even unhealthy relationships for years. Some people prefer to stay married, and are devastated their spouse has been unfaithful and/or wants to end the marriage. I understand that I am not usually seeing people at the best time of their lives. This of course is why many non-family law attorneys ask "Why do you want to do that?!" when I tell them my firm is limited to domestic

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relations.

Back to the commercial.

***So, just is it that we make at The Divorce Collaborative LLC?***

I suppose we make a number of things. We may make people frustrated at times when they have to collect a lot of financial documents, or we may unfortunately add to the stress of an opposing spouse during a litigated case, although that is certainly not the intention. We make some people relieved when their case is over and they are pleased with the end result and the process.

Most importantly, what I really think we make is ***opportunity***. The opportunity for a fresh start, whether emotionally, spiritually, or financially. The opportunity for parents to connect with children in new, sometimes better ways. By offering the options of mediation and collaborative divorce and not only divorce litigation, we make opportunities for couples to select a respectful and dignified divorce process, isolate children from conflict, and prepare for a new beginning.

Today, on Valentine's Day, and every day, we help people transition out of relationships that are not satisfying or supporting, and provide the opportunity for a loving – and hopefully lasting – relationship for the years ahead. A relationship that encourages an individual to flourish and enjoy the magic that only a committed, loving relationship may bestow upon us.

That sounds a lot like joy to me.

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