



Which Path Am I On?

Whether you are just opening the door to your divorce or have already made your way down the path a bit, the following questions will help you assess your approach and provide insight to your choices and the options available to you.

- 1. Do you have an understanding of why divorce is on the table?**
 - a. Yes, I gave this considerable thought and time before making this decision.
 - b. All I know is I am unhappy, or my spouse is unhappy.
 - c. No! I don't get this at all. I just want it all to go away.

- 2. Have you investigated your contribution to the breakdown of your marriage?**
 - a. Yes, it is hard to admit but I have worked with a professional to own up to my contribution.
 - b. All I know is I want a divorce and I want to initiate the process.
 - c. No, who helps me do that?

- 3. Since the moment the subject of divorce was initiated, has the person who initiated the divorce given the other person some time to catch up?**
 - a. Yes, we have agreed to work with a professional together and to take some time to process what is happening.
 - b. No, the initiating spouse is interested in moving forward immediately.
 - c. I really don't know. I am completely dazed. It's chaos. I don't know what is next.

- 4. Do you understand your legal options within the divorce process itself?**
 - a. Sure, I have done research and have professional help to guide me through.
 - b. I'm expecting to learn what I need to know as I go along.
 - c. I don't have a clue, and don't know where to turn.

- 5. Which of the following best describes your understanding of your financial situation pre- and post-divorce?**
 - a. I have met with a financial professional and I have a clear picture of the financial implications of divorce.
 - b. We/I will figure it out; I am not paying anyone to tell me how to spend my money.
 - c. My spouse always handled the finances; I don't have any access to our accounts.

- 6. Have you met with attorneys or mediators?**
 - a. I am meeting with a number of different attorneys to make sure I find the right one.
 - b. Yes, I've already paid the retainer for my attorney.
 - c. No, I haven't started down this road yet.

- 7. Your legal representation is best described as:**
 - a. Working for what is fair and reasonable – striving for the best possible outcome for my family.
 - b. Extremely aggressive, shark like, going for all I want.
 - c. I don't know what my attorney's approach is / I don't have an attorney yet.

- 8. Which of the following describes you and your spouse's communication thus far?**
- We seem to be communicating well, despite the situation / circumstance.
 - I have no intention of communicating unless through my attorney.
 - Our communications are so upsetting I avoid at all costs.
- 9. What is your ultimate goal for an outcome from your current situation?**
- The best possible outcome for my family.
 - I want to battle for as much as I can get.
 - I am so overwhelmed, I can't see beyond today.
- 10. If you have children: What will co-parenting look like while in the midst of divorce?**
- This is a challenge but we agree we need to make this as least difficult as possible for our children.
 - We already don't see eye-to-eye on parenting issues. I expect one of us will be judging the other.
 - With all this emotion, how am I going to be able to be a good parent?
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If you have answered mostly:

A's: *You are taking the Problem Solving Path and on your way to divorcing well!* Stick to your plan as best you can. Understand that occasionally you will become vulnerable to the emotions of divorce and may slip off your problem-solving path. Those are common pitfalls that everyone succumbs to along the way. *The key is to be aware* of when you have taken a wrong turn and adjust your mindset to return back on the straight and less bumpy way. Those questions that you responded to with a B or C indicate where those pitfalls may be hidden.

B's: *Only you can choose your path.* Make note that this approach is often called the Flame Thrower Approach. Divorce hits so many hot buttons and can create deep-rooted resentment that it can unintentionally lead to a full on battle approach. This approach is the most costly – emotionally, physically and financially – for all involved. With that in mind, you may want to consider some of the ideas presented in the A responses. **It is NEVER too late to move to a more Problem Solving Approach.** Your heart, wallet and children will ALL benefit from the effort and courage you show.

C's: Divorce is unlike anything else you experience in life. It is centered on loss, even if you are the one that wants out. It is very easy to fall onto this Distracted by Emotions path. There are many divorce related professionals available who can help guide you through various parts of the process including family counselors, financial advisors and legal counsel. **A divorce coach is uniquely trained to guide you through the entire process** and can refer you to other traditional, highly qualified and specialized divorce professionals as you strive to keep on the problem solving path.

So what does this all mean?

It is important to understand that the choices you make (or that you avoid making) will impact the time, energy and money you dedicate to your divorce.

The more your path wanders and weaves with flame-throwing and emotional distraction, the more expensive your divorce will be, sapping money, time and energy from you and your life.

However, if you can forge a path with a problem-solving approach, your divorce will be less expensive financially and emotionally. No path is easy or fast, but this shorter, straighter path can get you to the end of the process sooner, leaving less destruction in your wake.

***“Always take the high road.
The benefits may not be immediate, but they are inevitable.”
– J.J. Goldwag***

Now what?

Your next step can depend on many things.
Please contact me to discuss any questions you may have.

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