



The Rational Viewpoint – November 26, 2009

by Bryn C. Hirsch

The break-up of a relationship will almost always be a traumatic and emotionally charged event. This is doubly so when there are children involved. The first few months can be a complete fog for many people. It is in this early stage of a break-up when people are most vulnerable to making bad decisions. Parties who feel guilty about the break-up may give away everything in an attempt to alleviate that guilt. Parties who are angry can make irrational requests which create more conflict, prolong the situation, and drive up the costs.

In the early stages of a relationship breakdown it is of paramount importance to consider the practical short and long term consequences to your actions. Is it really worthwhile to have a bare-knuckled legal battle over the family lawn ornaments? In the heat of the moment those lawn ornaments may seem pretty important to you. A year later when you are staring at them in your apartment's storage closet you might wonder if it was really the most prudent decision. In my mind, it is in this early stage of the break-up where a lawyer is often most useful.

For all of the knowledge, skill, and resources a lawyer brings to the table, possibly his or her most valuable tool in the early stages of a relationship breakdown is their ability to analyze a situation from a rational and unemotional point of view. They will help the client identify the truly important issues and work towards resolving those issues.

For the above reasons, it is generally a good idea to sit down with a lawyer and discuss the circumstances of your relationship breakdown. Even if you decide not to retain the lawyer, or cannot afford to do so, or never even had the intention to do so, you will leave the meeting with a clearer idea of what the real issues are and how you should be moving forward on those issues. It may even save you some space in your apartment's storage closet.