

FORGING FAMILIES, BUILDING LEGACIES

YOUR TRUSTED LAWYERS IN FAMILY LAW



NEWSROOM

SPEAK OUT

Professional lawyer-mediator and collaborative lawyer RAJAN CHETTIAR explores the importance of communication and understanding within a lawyer-client relationship.

Divorce proceedings are often fraught with emotion. It wasn't until I became involved in my own divorce proceedings that I truly understood the client's position. A family law practitioner is not only a lawyer, they become a confidante, walking the last part of the client's journey through marriage with them. The client often emotionally exposes his most vulnerable self to the lawyer and the lawyer needs to understand the personal traits of his client - his background, his marriage, and the problems associated with it. This helps to build a good professional relationship - yet the relationship is also intimate.

Someone once said to me, "When you really care it shows, and when you pretend to care it also shows." A family lawyer is a professional with a heart. In my view, a divorce lawyer needs to be empathetic, caring and supportive. He must have a genuine desire to help others. Counselling and people management skills are certainly useful qualities in a divorce lawyer. For me compassion, my love for people and a deep desire to help them, motivates me in my family law practice.

The client often has many endless fears, which should be immediately addressed to ease emotional discomfort. This usually takes the form of various telephone calls, SMS messages and emails - even after office hours and on weekends. Marital problems typically arise during the evenings and weekends, and clients like to have ready access to their lawyer. Often divorce lawyers have to serve their clients beyond the call of duty. My clients have all my contact numbers and are encouraged to call me at any time. To the client, their matter is the important case his lawyer is handling. If your lawyer does not have the time, patience or seem interested, you will only feel frustrated and angry, and may take your case to another lawyer. The process of building trust within a lawyer-client relationship then begins all over again.

Age and life experience often enable a lawyer to help their client effectively. I am also a divorcee and I do not hesitate to share my life lessons with my clients. At the same time, I also apply any lessons learned from my clients to my own marriage. After all, marriage is often the most significant life-long relationship in a person's life, it needs to be nurtured and any hiccups should be promptly attended to.

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