



» **Does the mediation process speed up a divorce?**

In a traditional adversarial model, it can easily take more than a year to resolve the case. In mediation, most people are done within two to three months. I can also say that most mediated cases take three or four sessions, each session usually lasting two to three hours.

» **What should a client prepare for?**

Understand the mediator's role. The mediator is not a marriage counselor, a therapist, or your best friend. By the time a couple gets to me, they've pretty much accepted the idea that the marriage can't be saved. Be realistic about how the issues are going to be resolved. One of the most insidious problems in divorce is, when you're married, you have kids, you're saving for retirement and college—there is a lot of uncertainty. When people get divorced, they suddenly set a goal to be secure. It's an unattainable goal.

» **What if you're too angry to sit in the same room with your spouse?**

It's asking a lot of people to say, "Well, just let the anger go." Put it aside so we can do our work. If your goal is to end up with the best settlement possible, focus on what your life is going to look like postdivorce. But if your goal is revenge, you'll be disappointed, because even divorce litigation is not in the business of punishing people.

» **How about the couples who suspect each other of having assets squirreled away?**

In the vast majority of cases, there are no secrets. People may be uninformed, but that doesn't mean they can't get the information they need. If a party asks to see tax documents, I then turn to the spouse and ask, "Do you have them?" Usually the answer is yes. There's no point in trying to hide anything, since the asking party has a legal right to it.

» **Is mediation right for everyone?** Try it first. If mediation does work, you will have saved a lot of time, money, grief. Why write checks for five-figure retainers and start down the litigation road unless there is no other choice? ■

Split Ends

Parting is rarely sweet sorrow. Divorce mediator **Franklin R. Garfield** on ensuring a peaceful resolution

YOU RECITED YOUR VOWS and thought it would last forever, but it didn't. Now the last thing you want is a messy divorce with two costly lawyers squaring off until the end. A mediator can offer a civilized alternative. With three decades of practice in family law, Franklin R. Garfield brings contesting spouses together to help them settle their lives apart. Whether the couples were married a short time—or a long while. For a shared \$3,500 retainer and an hourly rate of \$525, Garfield moderates decisions big and small, from spousal support and parenting plans to who goes home with the family dog. // **JIYEON YOO**

**Buzz
Cut**



America's next top mouse: Speedy Gonzales—the cartoon rodent with the thick accent and giant sombrero—will star in a spring line of tanks, sweats, and hoodies from L.A.-based Two Door. Was the company concerned that the quick-footed Looney Tune might offend? Cofounder Heather McAvoy says that market research indicates otherwise: "Latin Americans absolutely love him!" Just don't expect Speedy's less *rápido* cousin, Slowpoke Rodriguez, on racks soon. // **DIKLA KADOSH**