



WATEROUS HOLDEN AMEY HITCHON^{LLP}
LAWYERS

WHY YOU SHOULD HIRE A FAMILY LAW LAWYER

By: Andrew A. Nicholls



“A person who represents themselves in court has a fool for a client.”

This saying may be a bit harsh but it speaks volumes about the challenges the average person will face if he or she attempts to represent themselves in our court system. A lawyer would not attempt to perform his or her own root canal or knee replacement surgery and it is just as risky (at least financially!) for you to represent yourself in court.

For those of you who still need convincing I offer four important reasons why you should hire a family law lawyer:

1) You're Not Yourself. The end of a marriage and the separation of a family unit are traumatic and life-changing events. You should not have to go through this difficult time on your own. Your lawyer will work hard to make sure that you receive a fair division of the family assets, obtain the necessary level of financial support and preserve your rights as a parent. It is not an exaggeration to say that your future well-being depends on obtaining the settlement you deserve. You should focus on your children and your emotional well-being and let your lawyer handle the legal stuff.

2) It May Be Cheaper Than You Think. We have all heard the horror stories about people being “taken to the cleaners” by their lawyers. The reality today is that the vast majority of family law lawyers recommend a “settlement-first” approach to their clients. You may be surprised at how affordable it can be for your lawyer to negotiate an out of court settlement on your behalf. If you meet with a lawyer who recommends starting a court battle against your former spouse, without first presenting the idea of a settlement, you should find a new lawyer.

3) You Don't Know The Law. Many people consider themselves to be family law experts because they have spent hours researching family law on the internet. Google will not prepare

you for what lies ahead. Your family law lawyer went to law school, has gained experience through practising law and understands the system and all of its complex rules. You have a much better chance of obtaining your desired outcome with a lawyer in your corner.

4) He/She Is Not Looking Out For You Anymore. Even after a separation many people still give their former spouse the benefit of the doubt when it comes to being truthful about the value of their assets and their income. People decide that they do not want to hire lawyers or professionals to value their family assets because they do not want to spend money. They say things like “we are going to do this on our own” and “we don’t need lawyers”. This can be a very short-sighted approach and a very costly one in the end. For example, some employment pensions are worth between \$500,000 and \$1,000,000. Pensions are often the most valuable family asset and its value is to be divided between separating spouses. If you sign an agreement waiving your right to share in this valuable asset, you could be short-changing yourself to the tune of a few hundred thousand dollars.

Don’t “play the fool”. **Hire a lawyer.**