

QUESTION:

My wife and I no longer wish to remain married, what should we do first?

ANSWER:

My first advice to you is to ask yourselves – “Is the marriage really over or will counseling help?” If either one of you is not sure that the marriage is really over, you owe it to yourselves to seek counseling for your sake and for the children’s sake.

Before either of you leave the matrimonial home or separate while under the same roof (yes, that is possible but not recommended if you have a volatile situation), you should book an initial consultation with a family law lawyer to find out about your rights and obligations. This is usually a one hour appointment when the lawyer will determine your particular situation and provide you with an overview of what the issues are.

During the initial consultation, the lawyer will discuss the various options for resolving the issues. The options are: litigation (going to court), mediation, preparation of a separation agreement and using the collaborative process (parties need to explore this latter alternative).

Individuals try to avoid legal costs, especially in these economic times. However, doing this without independent legal advice is not recommended because the implications could be more costly in the long run.

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