

*Steps to Take*

# AFTER YOU DECIDE TO DIVORCE



**Milena Christopher**

Attorney at Law

512-858-9779 | [www.christopherlawfirm.com](http://www.christopherlawfirm.com)

# WELCOME

Like many attorneys, I have spent many of my years in practice as a litigator – fighting it out in court. Although my experiences in court have been very successful, I have discovered over the years that there are better methods of resolving legal matters. Oftentimes the result is very close to your best case scenarios in court, and if a case can be resolved relatively amicably, it saves the client time, money and aggravation – definitely worth it!

I was one of the first attorneys to jump on the mediation bandwagon, back in the early 90's, when it was a brand new method of resolving disputes. Having a Master's Degree in Psychology-Counseling as well as a law degree, mediation was a natural for me. I saw this as an opportunity to help my clients resolve disputes with less trauma and drama. I have since resolved hundreds of disputes through mediation, as either the mediator, or as an attorney on one side of the table.

To this day, my first effort in resolving each case is to do so amicably, if at all possible. My staff works diligently to ensure that the opposing side or opposing counsel is approached with an outstretched hand, rather than a fist. Of course, there are always times when we have no choice but to “take the gloves off” and fight it out, which we are ever ready to do. But at all times, we work according to what is best for the client in the long run.

The vast majority of our cases are resolved without having to go to court to fight things out. Especially when there are children, we work hard to ensure that there is the least amount of disruption to their lives. Alternative Dispute Resolution methods, such as Mediation and Collaborative Law, can help ease such tension between the two of you, ultimately making life easier for your children.

Our firm is known for being:

- **Compassionate** to our clients,
- **Attentive** to our cases,
- **Responsive** to your questions and concerns, and
- **Experienced** in working to provide the best resolution possible in your particular case.

We **CARE**. Thank you for giving us the opportunity to care for you in your legal matter.



## **Milena Christopher**

Attorney at Law  
The Law Office of Milena Christopher

3975 Highway 290 East  
Dripping Springs, Texas 78620  
Phone: 512-858-9779  
Fax: 512-829-4543  
Email: [milena@christopherlawfirm.com](mailto:milena@christopherlawfirm.com)  
[www.christopherlawfirm.com](http://www.christopherlawfirm.com)

**Milena Christopher**  
Attorney at Law

512-858-9779 | [www.christopherlawfirm.com](http://www.christopherlawfirm.com)

## Steps to Take

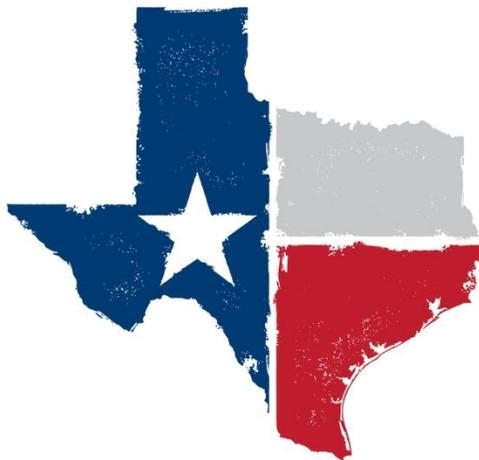
# AFTER YOU DECIDE TO DIVORCE

Divorce is a difficult decision for any couple and sometimes, spouses delay their decision because they are unsure of the next step. Divorce is a process, and getting from point A to point B can be extremely stressful for a family. Occasionally, a couple capable of reaching an amicable split find themselves at odds and battling their marriage out in court because they failed to realize there were other more peaceful options.

It is possible to end your marriage without going to court and there is a way to transition from marriage to divorce in a civil, respectful manner. Not only are the alternatives easier on the couple, they also make the process easier for children in the family and anyone else affected by the end of the marriage. Reaching a divorce settlement without going to court requires a bit of care and some planning, but there is no reason why the end of a marriage must pit spouses against one another armed with attorneys and malice intentions. Instead, couples can end their marriage as a team, making it easier to co-parent and make other important decisions about the future together once their marriage is over.

## What are the steps to take toward a peaceful divorce once your decision is made to end your marriage?

- 1). In order to file for divorce in Texas, at least one spouse must have been a resident of the state for at least six months and domiciled in their county for at least 90 days. Providing these requirements are met, either spouse is eligible to legally request a divorce in Texas. He or she can file in the state at the appropriate Family District Court, located closest to his or her residence.



**At least 1 spouse must have been a resident of the state of Texas for at least 6 months.**

**Milena Christopher**  
Attorney at Law

512-858-9779 | [www.christopherlawfirm.com](http://www.christopherlawfirm.com)

## Steps to Take

# AFTER YOU DECIDE TO DIVORCE

**2).** Filing for divorce requires a great deal of paperwork. The paperwork load varies based on whether or not a couple has minor children and whether or not either spouse is contesting the divorce. There might also be additional paperwork if there are issues involving division of property, financial support requests, or issues with the personal safety of either spouse. Your attorney can assist you in putting together the correct documents you will need to proceed.



**3).** Ensure the paperwork is filled out correctly or it could delay your case. If you are unsure about anything, talk to your attorney about your questions. Remember, an attorney can answer questions and assist you with the divorce process, even if you have no intention of taking your divorce to court or battling your spouse on any of the issues at hand. Once the paperwork is completed, your attorney can then submit them to the Clerk's office with your filing fee.



**4).** Once the paperwork is submitted, your spouse must be served with notice of your divorce filing. Service is usually presented in person but under certain circumstances, may be presented by mail or by publication. However, if you are both interested in moving forward without argument or delay, then the spouse who would ordinarily be served can sign a Waiver of Service of Citation, acknowledging that he or she has been noticed of the divorce filing.



# Steps to Take

## AFTER YOU DECIDE TO DIVORCE

- 5).** Hearings are required when there are issues of contention, whether on a temporary basis or for final resolution. Hearings are often scheduled to settle issues related to child custody, property division and spousal support.

It is also possible to negotiate a settlement through mediation or collaborative law. These alternatives give control to the couple and allow them to compromise and make decisions about their divorce.



In a hearing, each spouse must convince the court that his or her argument is best and follow the decision the court levies once it has heard both arguments.



However, in mediation or collaborative divorce, couples discuss their issues with the assistance of a mediator or other third-party facilitator and the court will typically agree to it, as long as the settlement is legal and in the child(ren)'s (if any) best interest.

Divorcing couples often prefer mediation or the collaborative method because it puts them in control of their circumstances and allows them to determine what is best in their situation. It is especially beneficial when a couple has children because the children's parents are making decisions instead of the court.

Divorce in Texas takes a minimum of 60 days to finalize. If matters are contested, it can take much longer. Whether you choose to settle your divorce with the assistance of the court or you do so through mediation or a collaborative process, a judge will need to sign your divorce decree. If all matters are settled, this can be done 61 days from the date of the filing of the Petition for Divorce. Once the decree is signed, you are officially considered divorced.

# Steps to Take AFTER YOU DECIDE TO DIVORCE

## Finding Support during Divorce

Though divorce can be a complicated process, especially when you choose to have no personal legal representation, it is possible to reduce the stress associated with divorce. Couples that divorce with C.A.R.E. are often able to move through the process quickly and efficiently, and without damaging their family in the process.

**C.A.R.E.** stands for **Compassionate, Attentive, Responsive, and Experienced** and it is what you get when you work with Milena Christopher and her staff at the Law Office of Milena Christopher. Milena Christopher offers over 20 years of experience in family law. She is a leader in collaborative law and mediation, and believes both processes offer many benefits to individuals and families going through divorce. Her firm handles a range of family law matters including divorce, child custody and support, visitation, simple wills and probate.

Milena is well-qualified to help clients with sensitive family issues and her caring and considerate demeanor offers a calming presence in the lives of her family law clients. With a master's degree in psychology counseling in addition to her law degree, Milena is ideally suited for handling family law matters.

Prior to moving to Texas, Milena prosecuted sex crimes and child abuse cases for the State of Florida, and her first law firm handled child support cases throughout Broward County. She became an early proponent of mediation and other forms of alternative dispute resolution, and today is known as a champion of both mediation and collaborative law, the newest form of ADR. She has earned the designation of Advanced Credentialed Mediator by the Texas Mediator Credentialing Association (TMCA) and is also the Vice President of the Hill Country Collaborative Law Group (HCCLG) and on the Advisory Board of the Central Texas Dispute Resolution Center. She has also been a featured speaker on numerous legal issues, including Family Law, for various groups throughout her local area.

If you would like to know more about filing for divorce in Texas or you believe a collaborative or mediated divorce is right for you, contact Milena Christopher at 512.858.9779 or by email at [milena@christopherlawfirm.com](mailto:milena@christopherlawfirm.com).

## Download Ebook

<https://toi.infusionsoft.com/app/form/milena-christopher-ebook>

**Milena Christopher**  
Attorney at Law

512-858-9779 | [www.christopherlawfirm.com](http://www.christopherlawfirm.com)