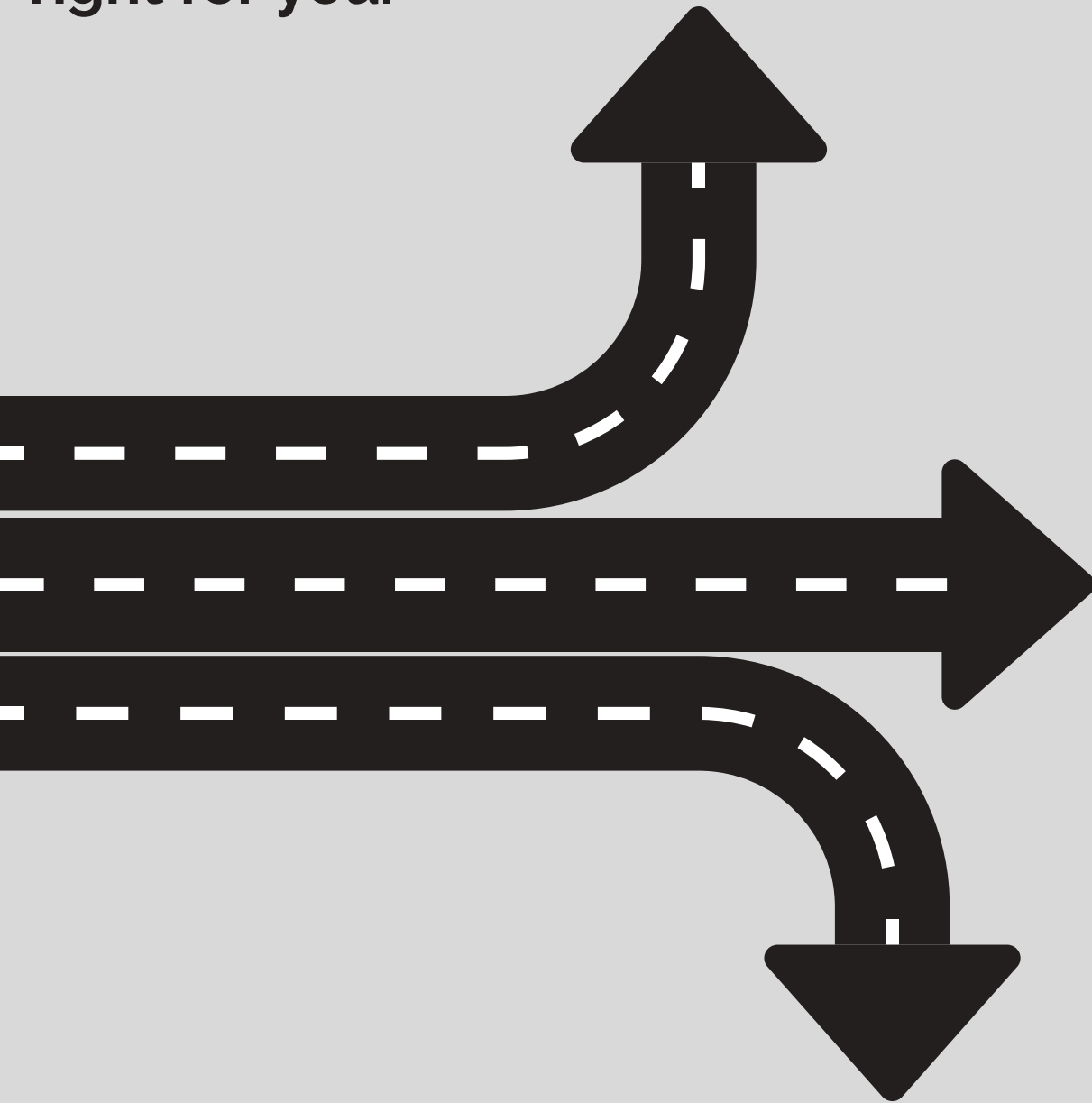


THREE WAYS TO GET DIVORCED IN CALIFORNIA

And how to know which way is
right for you.



JOHN A. BLEDSOE, JD MBA
ATTORNEY AT LAW

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	Mediation	Collaborative Divorce	Litigation
Description	One impartial expert guides both you and your ex through the process of drafting and filing a final agreement. The expert is not allowed to offer legal advice to either party. There is no professional help to guide you in your decision making process.	Both sides hire their own attorney. The attorneys counsel with and advise their own client, while also meeting together to draft a final agreement. When the final agreement is agreed upon by all sides, it is filed with the Court.	The parties cannot work together. Each hires their own representation and they go through the litigation process. The final decision or ruling is issued by a Court or Law. At times the result is very puzzling as if the Court did not understand the case.
Cost	The cheapest option. The mediator is the only person hired by both parties.	More expensive than mediation as you have to pay some attorney's fees but not nearly as costly as litigation.	The most expensive process with the most work done by attorneys. Very inefficient.
Length of Process	The fastest option.	Fast. Slower than mediation, but quicker than litigation.	The slowest process with many steps. It is typical for the litigation process to take several years.
Privacy	High level of privacy. Only the final agreement becomes public record.	High level of privacy. Only the final agreement becomes public record.	Low level of privacy. Intimate details of family life and disagreements can become public record in the form of pleadings filed with the court.
Benefits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May help long term relationship with ex since conflict is minimized. • May be easier on the children. • Cheapest & fastest route. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You have a chance to get professional help from an attorney who knows the law in your state. • Minimizes conflict and expense while also allowing for guidance and help. This benefits both parties and their children. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Best route to uncover assets and income that are being hidden by your ex. • Protective against needing to directly interact with an abusive spouse. • Best route when there are concerns about drug or

			alcohol addiction or domestic violence. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The process allows for decisions to be made even when neither side can agree.
Cautions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Usually a terrible idea. Do not mediate without an attorney. NEVER sign a mediated agreement without your own counsel reviewing it. No chance for either party to get professional advice. You may miss out on money or assets you are entitled to. May be more likely to produce a lopsided or unfair agreement. If there is an abusive dynamic in the marriage, this method offers no protection against the abuse continuing during the mediation process. May waste your money if mediation doesn't work out and you have to go another route. Allow one spouse to hide assets. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> May not uncover hidden assets or income. You will still have to directly interact with your ex spouse during meetings, which can be problematic if there are issues with abuse or addiction. If the collaboration fails and you need to pursue litigation the money spent towards collaborative divorce will have been wasted. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Slowest and most expensive way to get divorced. Highest conflict route, likely to be the most difficult for you and your children.
Decision Making	Both parties and the mediator prepare the final divorce agreement.	Both parties and their respective legal counsel prepare the final divorce agreement.	The judge issues the final order after hearing from both sides. The final order may be appealed.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

John A. Bledsoe began practicing family law in 1991. Since then, he has practiced throughout the state of California, been sworn in before the Supreme Court of the United States of America, and become an expert in divorce and family law matters.

His expertise has been recognized formally by the State Bar of California, who named him as a certified family law specialist (an elite sector of family law attorneys designated by the State Bar). He has earned the prestigious AV Preeminent Rating by Martindale-Hubbell.

Mr. Bledsoe also has a Master's of Business Administration degree in finance. He brings a special expertise to the complex financial matters found in many family law cases. He has tried several hundred family law matters and settled hundreds more. Mr. Bledsoe is the father of five daughters and a son. He has been married to his wife, Debra, for over thirty-five years.

Our firm offers a confidential initial case evaluation. Call (949) 363-5551 or go to www.justfamilylaw.com to learn more.