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Amy Smith, Esq.

PARTNER, WEINBERG, KAPLAN & SMITH, P.A.

Fighting for what matters most for families

Amy Smith, Esq., has always known that people need someone in their corner.

“For me, law is a profession that lets me make a difference in people’s lives,” says Smith, a family law attorney and partner at Weinberg, Kaplan & Smith. “Law is a way for me to fight for people who can’t fight for themselves.”

Smith entered the field as a prosecutor, where she spent 5 years gaining trial experience in domestic violence, drug cases, robberies and other criminal proceedings. It was an intense, fast-paced specialty, she says, and one that gave her a lot of jury experience at a young age. Those moments in the courtroom taught her tactics and skills that give her an edge as a family law attorney.

“I have the background and experience to step up for my clients in a different way,” she says. “I know how to be quick on my feet, and I’m comfortable with confrontation.”

But, she says, she also knows how to figure out what is actually worth fighting for. Even in high-stakes situations, she learned to detach herself from the situation and analyze the information.

“I’m not the type of family lawyer who takes on the persona of my clients,” says Smith. “Just because it’s my job to fight for my client doesn’t mean I always have to take their side. I always say, ‘You’re not paying me to be your friend. You’re paying for my legal expertise to help you through this in the best way for yourself and for your family.’”

Honesty is her priority. As she sees it, if her clients cannot trust her to have the tough conversations when they are wrong, they can’t trust her to know when they are right and it is time to step up and fight hard for what they deserve.

“I always approach cases knowing that people going through divorces are good people going through a really bad time, and that may make them act or think in ways they wouldn’t normally,” says Smith.

When she is able to get them to focus on what really matters, she is able to find solutions that represent their values and needs, not their anger.

“As a lawyer, you have to understand the reality of the emotional toll divorce takes on people while still being able to step back and keep things objective,” she says. “When you get too much in the weeds with a client, you’re ultimately doing them a disservice.”

What makes her so effective, Smith says, is that she approaches her clients’ interests with objectivity but also with compassion. Her goal is to establish trust so her clients feel like they always have

someone on their side.

The greatest reward, she says, is not when the case concludes. It is years later, when she runs into former clients in a completely new context.

“When you see a client at the beginning, they’re a totally different person than by the end, even if they don’t realize it,” says Smith. “While going through the hurt and emotions, it’s so hard for them to see a time when they can rebuild and be happy. But then you see them years later, and they’re remarried, happy and living a life they could never have imagined the first day they walked into your office. That’s the most rewarding feeling.” ■

The 3 worst mistakes you can make in a divorce proceeding.

Involving the kids.

Putting kids in the middle of your divorce proceeding is the worst pitfall you can get into, says Amy Smith, Esq., partner at Weinberg, Kaplan & Smith. “You never want to tell your kids specific details of the divorce or talk poorly of the other parent. They have the right to love both parents. Let them make their own decisions later on, when they’re adults.”

Not discussing the divorce with your spouse ahead of time.

If you can do so safely, meet your spouse for a cup of coffee, or with the aid of a therapist, to calmly discuss the divorce. “So much time, money and frustration can be saved just by communicating,” says Smith, who encourages willing couples to go through mediation and find creative solutions throughout this process.

Fighting for the wrong things.

When it is time to split assets, it is best to know what really matters. “I had a client years ago, and we fought over a \$35 step stool,” says Smith, noting that the time she spends on small items adds up. “What are you spending versus what are you getting?” Don’t let pride get in the way of reality, she says.



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