

Examples of Common Goals and Interests in Divorce Cases

GOALS AND INTERESTS RELATING TO CHILDREN

Because the presence of children (particularly minor children) has a significant impact on the goals and interests in the divorce, we have separated this section into two categories, depending on whether the goals relate to the needs of children.

If you have children, it may be relatively easy to think about some general things that you want for your children. Here are some examples to consider.

General goals relating to the general well-being of your children

- I want our children to be well-adjusted.
- I want our children to be happy.
- I want our children to feel good about themselves.

Goals relating to providing consistent parenting care

- I want my spouse and me to provide consistent care for our children.
- I want my spouse and me to have consistent discipline, expectations, consequences, curfews, chores, bedtimes, etc.
- I want my spouse and me to have the same parenting rules in both houses.
- I want my spouse and me to support each other in our parenting decisions.

Goals relating to parenting skills

- I want to develop better parenting skills.
- I want my spouse to develop better parenting skills.
- I want to have a better understanding of what children need when going through a divorce.

Goals relating to the allocation of parenting time

- I want our children to have meaningful contact with both parents.
- I do not want to be away from the children for more than four days at a time.

Goals relating to decision making

- I want to participate in major decisions affecting the lives of our children.

Goals relating to keeping the children free from conflict

- I want our children to be free from the conflict in the divorce.
- I do not want our children to believe they have to report to one parent about the other parent.
- I want to avoid having financial issues spill over to our parenting.
- I do not want our children to feel that they have to do anything to reject either parent.
- I want our children to feel comfortable talking about whether they enjoyed their time at both parents' homes.

Goals relating to the relationship the children will have with other adults

- I want our children to have appropriate relationships with new partners or stepparents.
- I want to make sure new adults are not introduced into the lives of the children until the children are ready.

Goals relating to flexibility in scheduling

- I want to have enough flexibility in the parenting schedule so that we can adjust the schedule to meet the needs of the children.
- I want to be able to move the residence of the minor children.

Goals relating to stability

- I want the parenting schedule to provide stability for the children.
- I want the parenting schedule to be predictable.
- I want to make sure each parent honors the agreed-upon schedule.
- I want the children to live near both parents.
- I want the children to be able to stay in their current school district.

Goals relating to communication with the other parent

- I want to be able to communicate effectively with the other parent regarding changes in schedule, updates on health, school, activities, consistent parenting rules, etc.
- I want to develop better communication skills.
- I want both parents to have access to information relating to school, medical issues, etc.
- I want to have regularly scheduled communication.
- I want both parents to honor ground rules for respectful communication.

Goals relating to communication with the children

- I want both parents to be able to communicate regularly with each child by phone and e-mail.
- I want all communication around our children to be respectful.
- I do not want our children to hear negative things about one parent from the other parent.

Goals relating to child care

- I want to minimize outside child care.
- I want to maintain high-quality child care.
- I want both parents to share in child-care decisions.

Goals relating to religion or spirituality

- I want our children to be raised in their current religion.
- I want our children to regularly attend religious services.
- I want both parents involved in the religious activities of our children.

Goals relating to medical care/physical health

- I want our children to have a good diet.
- I want our children to get adequate exercise.
- I want both parents to have full access to good medical/dental care.
- I want both parents to be able to attend medical appointments.
- I want both parents to share care of our children when they are sick.

Goals relating to education

- I want our children to be able to continue with their current schooling.
- I want both parents to participate in their school conferences/activities.
- I want our children to attend _____ school.
- I want our children to maintain their current grades.
- I want our children to attend college.
- I want both parents to support the same educational goals.
- I want both parents to participate in our children's homework.

Goals relating to activities, music lessons, sports, etc.

- I want our children to remain in their current activities.
- I want both parents to agree on the future activities for our children and to support those activities.

Goals relating to vacations

- I want both parents to be able to take vacations with our children.

Goals relating to cultural heritage

- I want to make sure our children are raised according to their cultural heritage.

Goals relating to children's general financial issues

- I want our children to maintain their predivorce lifestyle in both homes.
- I want our children to be financially responsible.
- I want to make sure we set aside money to provide for college.
- I want to have an agreement about how we will pay for college for our children.

Goals relating to child-expense sharing

- I want both parents to share in the children's expenses based on their incomes.
- I want to find a way of sharing expenses that is easy to manage.

GOALS AND INTERESTS THAT DO NOT INVOLVE CHILDREN

Financial goals

- I want to be able to maintain my current lifestyle.
- I want to be able to own a home similar to the home we lived in during the marriage.
- I want to maintain a lifestyle that is equal to the lifestyle that my spouse will live.
- I want to be able to retire at age ____.
- I do not want to have to work outside the home until _____.
- I do not want to have to work full time until _____.
- I do not want to have to work outside the home at any time in the future.
- I want to be able to start a new career.
- I want to be able to pursue a career that I enjoy.
- I do not want to have to work overtime.
- I want to have more free time.
- I want to get out of debt.
- I want to learn how to live within my means.
- I want to learn how to manage money.
- I want to know how to budget.
- I want to understand investment.
- I want to learn skills for staying out of debt.
- I want my spouse to learn how to live within his/her means.
- I want my spouse to learn to manage money.
- I want to keep the costs of the divorce down.
- I want to be able to restore my credit.
- I want to reduce our tax obligation.
- I want a financial settlement that will last (is durable).

Vocational goals

- I want to become more educated.
- I want to learn a skill.
- I want to be able to choose the work I do.
- I want to be able to change careers at some point.

Personal/emotional goals

- I want to resolve the divorce issues with dignity.
- I want to keep our divorce issues private.
- I want to maintain a respectful relationship with my ex-spouse.
- I want to be treated fairly.
- I want to treat my spouse fairly.
- I want to become more stable emotionally.
- I want my spouse to become more stable emotionally.
- I want to know that I have a safety valve (insurance).
- I want to maintain a good relationship with my in-laws in the future.
- I want to maintain a good relationship with our mutual friends.
- I want to make up for the mistakes I have made.
- I want to atone for the harm I have caused.

- I want to be able to trust my ex-spouse more.
- I want my ex-spouse to be more trusting of me.
- I want to maintain sobriety (recover from addiction).
- I want my spouse to maintain sobriety (recover from addiction).
- I want to develop a better way to hand my anger/sadness/fear.
- I want my spouse to develop a better way to hand my anger/sadness/fear.
- I want to save this marriage.
- I want to know that we made our best effort to save the marriage.
- I want him/her to know how much s/he hurt me.
- I want him/her to apologize for what s/he has done.
- I want to do the honorable thing.
- I want to settle this matter in a way that is consistent with my religious or spiritual values.
- I want a religious annulment/Gett to void the marriage.
- I don't want him/her to live with his new girlfriend/boyfriend.
- I want to listen better.
- I want to express myself better.
- I want to be less sad (depressed).
- I want to be less angry.
- I want to be less frightened.
- I want to be less compulsive.
- I want to work on an addiction issue.
- I want closure.
- I want to be able to start healing.
- I want to be generous.
- I want my spouse to acknowledge that I have been generous.

Goals relating to the pace of the process

- I want to get done soon.
- I want to slow down the process.

Reprinted from The Collaborative Way to Divorce by Stuart G. Webb and Ronald D. Ousky