

# AM I PRO SE MATERIAL

*10 QUESTIONS TO ASK YOURSELF BEFORE CHOOSING  
TO SELF REPRESENT IN FAMILY COURT*

**E-guide and Mini Workbook**

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*"Not everyone can handle going up against the biased Family Court system without representation."*

TRACEY BEE



## **INTRODUCTION**

Pro se or self represented litigants face a myriad of challenges in Family Court. Family Court is a very complex institution and requires a certain level of understanding to navigate it successfully. This guide will help you decide if it's the route for you.

**"I feel like the judge goes out of his way to be extra mean to me because I am pro se. I often wonder if I'm making the best decision fighting this case on my own. The thing is I don't have any more money to pay an attorney. I already wasted \$25,000 in legal fees and still got nowhere." J.M.**

This guide is not necessarily determinative of the outcome of your case when you self represent. It is meant to be used as a tool to help you make the best decision and to consider what it entails. You can keep it handy as you progress through the process.



*"Be honest, be realistic & be prepared."*

*J.S.*

### ***1. Where is my "head"?***

You need the TRUTH. Be honest with yourself about where you are mentally & emotionally. No one will judge you but you need to look at yourself from a place of realness. Can you keep your emotions in check?

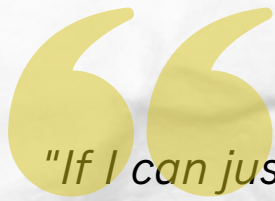
### ***2. Is my case complicated or has complex issues?***

Look at all of the facts & allegations of your case. Write them down in as much detail as possible. Writing helps you to catch the details that you might otherwise overlook. Look at the past, the present, and the possible outcomes for the future. You will know how complicated your case is by assessing all of this vital information. You also need to recognize the personalities of the parties involved, which should entail any mental or physical impairments, etc

### ***3. Do I have the time to commit to out-of-court as well as in-court tasks & appearances?***

You will need to take time to attend court hearings, appearances, etc. because Family Court cases can drag on forever. the time needed to file motions, pick up documents, serve parties with papers and so on is also time-consuming.

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*"If I can just get help with putting all of my evidence in order." K.J.*



#### **4. Am I organized enough or detail oriented?**

All the data collection & gathering, the calendaring and the organizing that is necessary to succeed as pro se is no joke. This part alone can be so extremely overwhelming that you'd want to give up. But if you start off right, using apps & other tools, then it is manageable.

#### **5. Can I speak confidently in front of strangers?**

Not everyone is at ease speaking openly in court. You need to be able to speak with vigor, at a moderate tone, with full understanding, etc. to be convincing in court. The judge has only a few minutes to decide who to believe. You need to practice if you need to improve on this.

#### **6. Can I afford to, or not to?**

Being pro se in Family Court can sometimes be used as a strategic tactic. In some states, being pro se makes you eligible to get court ordered services at the state's expense. The flip side to that is that you don't get to choose who provides those services. If you hire an attorney you have to pay those costs and the attorney's fees.

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## **7. Can I learn to do my own research?**

You will HAVE to do research when being pro se. Of course, nowadays there's so many resources that makes it a bit easier, but it can still be challenging. Join social media groups, forums, support groups, etc. to get some valuable tips on researching laws, statutes, etc.

## **8. Is there a history of abuse between me & the other party?**

This makes going up against the other party without an attorney more difficult. Particularly in situations where the other party used control and manipulation for prolonged periods, facing them in court on your own can be traumatic. Not to mention, a lot of survivors want vindication in court and that can cause you to lose sight of what's most important.

## **9. Will the other party have an attorney?**

If the answer is "yes" then you might want to hire one too. Not that it is impossible to "win" against an attorney as pro se, but unless you are confident you can go up against one you may want to reconsider.

*"The other attorney was being such a jerk. But I got a victory when the judge denied his request. Yay." J.M.*

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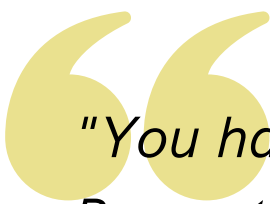
## 10. Can I live with ALL possible outcomes?

Being pro se in Family Court can sometimes be used as a strategic tactic. In some states, being pro se makes you eligible to get court-ordered services at the state's expense. The flip side to that is that you don't get to choose who provides those services. If you hire an attorney you have to pay those costs and the attorney's fees.

### **FINAL THOUGHTS:**

These are very important things to consider but there are more of course. Your state laws, procedures, resources available for pro se litigants should all be considered as well. Also, if Child Protective Services is a part of your case then you might want to have a lawyer assist in some capacity at least.

Explore options available to you at  
**[www.TheDivorceSolutionist.com](http://www.TheDivorceSolutionist.com)**



*"You have the power to protect your peace.  
Be gentle with yourself."*

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## **CONCLUSION**

Representing yourself in Family Court is not something that works for everyone but should you go this route, just know that there are options. With the influx of coaching services, limited scope attorney services, and a la carte, you can do it.

**Please note that this booklet was designed using data, statistics and information accessible to the creator. The questions are based on all of these, plus experience.**

The attached Workbook is intended to assist you in writing down the most important details as you work through each section. It is advisable to keep a detailed journal of all relevant events, interactions, exchanges, etc. in addition to the details written here.

# WORKSHEET

**Write down all your thoughts concerning your case. Be as detailed as possible to help you narrow down what's most important. For example, the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities to improve or things that might pose a threat.**

**Write out your concerns about your current situation. Be honest about things that you're afraid of making a problem for your case. You can do this at any phase of your case.**

1

2

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4

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# WORKSHEET

Write down all the information you found by doing your research on every relevant topic or issue. Again, it is important be as detailed as possible.



Write your questions about the law, the court process, etc .  
You can do this at any phase of your case.

1



2



3



4



5



# WORKSHEET

Write out your ideas for how you will present your case based on what you discovered and the research you've conducted. What's your plan?



**Write your questions about things you think might create an issue for your plan.** You can do this at any phase of your case.

1



2



3



4



5



# WORKSHEET

What's your backup plan?



**Write out your questions or ideas on how you implement your backup plan.**

You can do this at any phase of your case.

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