



NICK DUDMAN

RUNDLEWALKER SOLICITORS
01392 209210; www.rundlewalker.com

Why did you choose to be a family lawyer?

During Articles in a large practice in Bristol I gained experience working in various legal disciplines. Undoubtedly my preference was for family work as, compared with property or commercial work, there were so many different aspects to family work and it also included plenty of contact with clients. I would say that to be a successful matrimonial lawyer you have to be part lawyer, part accountant, part amateur psychologist and part tactician. In addition, you have to be able to listen carefully to clients wishes as well as being a good negotiator. In other words, there is a wide spectrum of skills which the job demands and which ensures that working days are never dull.

What are the most rewarding aspects of your job?

I suppose perhaps the most rewarding part of the job is when a case concludes and your client departs with a positive outlook for the future and in a far better place than when they first came through my door. Another obvious, but deeply rewarding aspect in those cases where a referral to Court has to be made, is when the Court's judgement vindicates the advice that you have given throughout to your client. I have to confess that is deeply satisfying! In life we probably all seek praise from time to time so it is also very satisfying when a client leaves complimentary feedback at the conclusion of the case, whether by a feedback questionnaire or, more recently, a favourable Google review.

What do you think clients should look for in a family lawyer?

I think above all else a client should look to gain a rapport with their family lawyer. In many, if not most divorce cases, clients will be at a very low ebb given the emotionally charged nature of the whole experience. As a client you must have confidence not just in the professional ability of your lawyer but also that you feel you can get on well with them and have an understanding. Whilst professional distance has to be maintained, it is important that, as a client, you feel totally supported and that your lawyer is truly fighting your corner and is safeguarding and pursuing your interests above all else.

Why should you use a family law specialist?

I would say that the standards of service and advice given by the profession to clients has transformed over three decades; it is now absolutely essential, whether you are seeking legal advice in the family law area or any other, that you only instruct a solicitor who specialises in that field. It is also certainly worth checking that any solicitor you instruct has a number of years' experience. The legal world, and what is expected of solicitors, has moved on dramatically in 30 years and the introduction of kite marks for quality standards, for example Lexcel, has only served to enhance that evolution.

My own expertise relates to divorce and related financial settlements as well as disputes between unmarried couples. I used to also practice in the area of children law but no longer is it realistic to do both so over the last decade or more, my own specialism has focussed on the strictly matrimonial aspect and any family work related to children I pass to my colleague, Susan Jury. Both of us have had our expertise recognised; Sue is a member of the Children's Panel and I have been recognised by the Law Society's Family Law Accreditation Scheme.

If you do not use specialist solicitors then you may find, when it is too late, that the advice that you have received is not as reliable as you may have wished.