

## Family Law in Everyday Language

Martha Metzner knows family law, not just because she is a barrister and solicitor, but because she was once “on the other side of the desk” dealing with her own divorce. She used her passion for learning in her favour, winning her case in the Supreme Court of Canada and making legal history for success in self-representation.

Martha funneled that determination into law school, was called to the bar in 2004, and now works to empower others to move forward, past their own family law cases to become stronger on the other side.

“It’s quite a story,” Martha said of her journey. “And because of it, I know how frustrating it can be to not understand the fees, processes, and length of time things can take.”

“I’m a user-friendly lawyer,” she noted. “Terri (Romegioli, her legal assistant with more than 30 years experience) and I are the only people in the office, so you know who is managing your file.”

Martha didn’t pursue her law career until it became obvious it was meant to be. She had sold real estate and was a stay-at-home mom with three children until her difficult divorce proceedings began.

“It ran for seven weeks, which, in 1993, was pretty long,” Martha said. “I saw the process, I began to understand how it worked and when it was apparent I was running out of money, I ended up acting on my own.”

Before she’d ever gone to law school, Martha was defending her case in the Supreme Court of Canada. She was successful. Through dogmatic determination, a desire to understand the law and the new statute, and a need to put the ordeal behind her,

Martha represented herself better than imagined. She had read and interpreted the Child Support Guidelines. She had also met with those who drafted the regulations in order to ensure she thoroughly understood the principles on which they were founded.

At age 50, she went to law school.

“I didn’t understand the technology,” she admitted. “Learning about email, typing and the internet, I had to teach myself.”

In time she set up her own practice and began helping clients have a say as to how their personal conflicts were resolved. Martha encourages many clients to do some of the work on their own – whether to save money or simply because they will benefit from the experience.

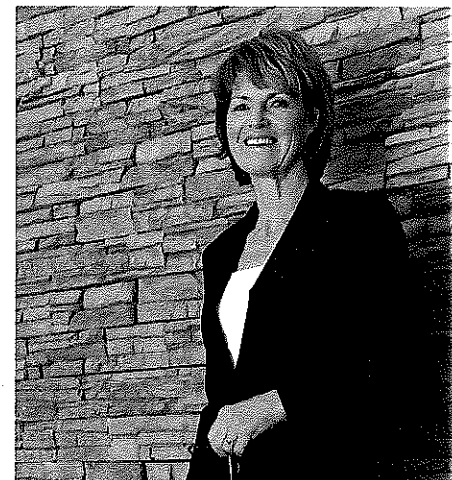
“I love to encourage people to take on their own cases,” she said. “I call it ‘unbundling’ of legal services. I can work as a consultant, or I can do all the work for them. It’s really up to the individual and their constraints.”

“I want to see people get things in place to allow them to rise to their potential,” she noted. “Coming to see me should be more like going to the hairdresser and less like going to the dentist because it is a positive step forward, a move towards your best life possible.”

She also encourages straight, practical talk, and none of the “legaleze” common in family law proceedings these days.

“Court should be a last resort, so I need to make sure everyone understands what is being said,” Martha noted. “The first and foremost goal is to resolve the issues as quickly and easily as possible.”

*“Martha Metzner uses her personal experience and fondness for practicality to make family law accessible.”*



Martha D. Metzner Law Corp.  
604 533 7705  
[www.metznerlaw.ca](http://www.metznerlaw.ca)