



Divorce Navigation and Recovery Experts Colleen McNamee, Dr. Jeanne Michele and Daryl Cole [CFP®](#) are collaborating to handle every element of separation to make the process as painless as possible.

Coming to terms with the end of a marriage or a long-term relationship has often been compared to a death. Those experiencing it need to go through the five stages of grief to process, mourn, and let go.

People need mourn their current loss and the loss of the future they thought they'd have all while trying to navigate the legal, financial and emotional headwinds of a process that many have never previously experienced. Trusted, compassionate professional support can help during this very difficult time.

Colleen McNamee is a Certified Family Law Mediation Specialist who opened her firm, [McNamee Mediations](#), 21 years ago. She was previously a litigation attorney so she knows the ins and outs of both the mediation room and the courtroom. Passionate about educating, she has a series of videos on her site that clearly

explain the difference between divorce litigation vs. mediation and the time, money and heartache that can be spared if you opt for mediation as opposed to litigation.

Individuals also have more control because courts must adhere to strict statewide guidelines but if you come to a mutual agreement with your spouse and mediator, you have the ability to create a "custom" settlement.

Read more about the benefits of mediation in a previous California Business Journal article [here](#).

Because McNamee has been committed to the holistic approach with her clients, she decided now was the time to create a video series with two of her trusted Orange County colleagues — to give advice on the three fundamental aspects of divorce people must navigate when severing a relationship: legal, financial and emotional.



They call it “[The Divorce Trifecta](#) – Divorce Navigation and Recovery Experts,” and it includes [Dr. Jeanne Michele](#), relationship counselor and personal coach, and Daryl Cole, CFP® of [Cole & Company](#) Wealth Management.

“I met Daryl and Dr. Jeanne separately through professional groups,” McNamee says. “I started working with Daryl because I wanted to add value to the services I’m able to offer my clients and help them figure out where to go after we’ve completed our work together. I have what I call my ‘A-Team’ referrals, which are specialists who provide additional input and advice. The expertise may be financial, like Daryl, or couples or individual counseling with Dr. Jeanne, who can help them with post-divorce recovery and coparenting. I also have a CPA, an estate-planning attorney, a business attorney and other resources I have carefully vetted and recommended for years.”

When McNamee met Michele, they became colleagues and good friends, collaborating on various projects over the years including a radio show and other interactive work.

“Colleen is very psychologically savvy,” Michele says. “Though her business is divorce, she is very intuitive about those couples who may not really be ready to end their relationship

and she’ll encourage them to meet with me before they take the next step. Couples who have been together for a while sometimes need a reset instead of a divorce. A crisis can cause people to take stock of what they really want and sometimes they discover it’s each other.”

McNamee had the idea to create something that was not yet available online as a resource where – instead of calling and leaving messages – people could find the answers to their questions online. The videos are short and specific to each theme, so viewers don’t have to watch a 30-minute or hour-long video, hoping to find the answers to their questions buried within.

“I thought this was an ideal arrangement for all three of us, and came up with the name ‘Trifecta,’” McNamee says. “We’d all been doing videos for various things and then Kenny Brown, our videographer, brought his ideas into the mix and now we’ve created an online, interactive series.”

What type of expertise does each contributor bring? What sparked their passion for what they do?

“My background is in the corporate world and HR and working with people is what I truly loved about it so I went back to school to get

McNamee started working with Cole and Michele because wanted to add value to her services to clients and help them determine where to go after they've completed their work together as a team. McNamee refers to Cole and Michele as her 'A-Team' referrals — specialists who provide additional input and advice. The expertise may be financial, which is where Cole comes in, or couples or individual counseling with Michele, who helps clients with post-divorce recovery and co-parenting. McNamee also has a CPA, an estate-planning attorney, a business attorney and other resources that she has carefully vetted and recommended for years.

my doctorate,” Michele says. “I started working with moms with postpartum depression and out of that came a love of couples work and relationships. Ever since I was a child, I wondered what made one couple love each other and grow together and what made another couple call it quits.” .”

She began to specialize in relationships and refers to herself as a “transformational coach.”

“It's different than traditional therapy in great measure because of my corporate background. My work is very collaborative in that we look at where a person is versus where they want to be and help them get there.” she says. “I'm pretty direct. We work on going deep into the obstacles that are in the way of their vision. There's a Rumi quote that says, 'Your task is not to seek for love, but merely to seek and find all the barriers within yourself that you have built against it.' This is what I help people do. And this applies for career coaching or divorce recovery — where a person has to regain their sense of themselves they may have lost while being part of a couple.”

This all melds with Cole's expertise too because much of the relationship work McNamee and Michele do may center on recovering from financial infidelity, which can be a major impetus for a breakup.

“Daryl is really good at helping people navigate their financial world, which of course you need all the time, but in particular when you're splitting up,” McNamee says. “How do you split up the money and assets? What do you do when you get the settlement and you're starting all over again as one person, not two?”

Cole has 26 years in wealth management and has multiple generations within families as clients. He may start with the grandparents, then

they refer him to their children and grandkids as they graduate college and start their own lives.

“Because I work so often with generations of the same family, I've gone to a lot of funerals and worked with the members as wealth is being passed down,” he says. “It made me realize that the loss of a marriage is very similar to grieving the loss of a loved one. It takes about a year to work things out and clients are usually in an emotional fog. I don't think a lot of financial people really get that. I try to let people take the time they need to process before making any major financial decisions. When they're ready, we can get to the business of turning the page and putting together a new financial plan, after they've had a chance to heal.”

The group uses compassion and strong communication tools to assist the two parties that are often in the least-compatible phase in their relationship. However, they need to come to agreements on multiple sensitive issues, such as custody, sharing schedules, sale of a house, and dividing other assets. Skills that might be used in couples therapy also apply to mediation and financial negotiations, lowering the temperature to help the parties have a successful resolution.

“When things start to spiral between couples, I'm going to press pause and to tell them each what I'm hearing, because they are not hearing what the other person is saying,” McNamee says. “When I do that, it is so effective because they don't feel I'm disciplining them or implying any fault. It's actually a moment of validation, which then usually turns into clarity for where both parties are coming from.” — By Susan Belknap, California Business Journal

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