

Recipe for Success
2015 Family Law Dispute Resolution Class
University of Missouri School of Law

The following ingredients are not necessarily listed in the order of importance.

Major Ingredients

work ethic / being prepared
legal knowledge / issue spotting
competence / ethics
caring / compassion / kindness
empathy / sympathy / rapport
respect for the other side
communication skills
candor
openness to new ideas
creativity
patience
ability to work well with other professionals
finding a mentor

Additional Ingredients

In General

foresight and seeing the big picture
self-control
being reasonable
being confident and optimistic
grit and assertiveness
curiosity and active listening
acknowledging others
knowing what questions to ask
focusing on children's interests
appreciating the "little things"
collaboration and collegiality – competition doesn't work well in divorce
discretion
humility
flexibility
forgiveness of everyone
asking for constructive feedback
learning from your mistakes
stress management

Dealing with Clients

frequent client communication
letting clients talk (in separate meetings and negotiations)
careful analysis of clients' perceptions and the facts
giving wise counsel and setting realistic expectations
using plain English to explain things, especially finances
working effectively with difficult clients
separating yourself from your client's problems / making yourself happy in any case
encouraging clients to take responsibility for their decisions