

I've had six husbands. I'm still looking for a good one

My client, a lovely woman in her late seventies, scheduled an appointment for a review of her estate. I asked her the standard questions about her estate and what she wanted to do with her assets after her death. She had a son and a daughter and wanted the assets split between the two after her death. We talked about a Living Revocable Trust to avoid probate and I finally asked her about the size of her estate. She was very vague on that point and then she dropped the bombshell.

“I’m not sure how much my estate is worth because I’ve been married six times. Two of my husbands died and the rest, well, we just parted ways.”

I think she noticed the look of disbelief on my face because she said, “I love men. I like being around them but I found that, after a while, I get tired of them.”

I said, “I assume you accumulated a little bit from each husband.”

She smiled and replied, “Certainly from my two husbands who predeceased me. The last two husbands didn’t have much money. In fact, I had a lot more than they did.”

“Then you had a premarital agreement?”

She shook her head, “No, I’m not sure what that is, but we didn’t sign any papers before we got married.”

I was mildly shocked, “You’ve never had a premarital agreement?”

“No,” she responded with a questioning look, “What is that?”

I explained, “A premarital agreement or pre-nuptial agreement is a legal agreement where you and the intended spouse agree that your assets are yours and his assets are his. That way if you ever get divorced, you can’t get his assets and more importantly, he can’t get yours.”

She looked thoughtful and said, “That sounds like an important document I need to have. Could you get one drafted for me?”

“I can get the basic information from you now if you like,” I offered.

She said, “Yes, I’d like that.”

I started with the general questions and then I got to the part about the intended spouse. I said, “Who is the lucky guy?”

“Oh,” she said, “leave that part blank. I’ve got my eye on several!”



Most busy people don’t think about estate planning—other than a simple Will—until one of two events occurs. The first is retirement; the second the death of a family member or close friend