



Madonna and Guy Ritchie - What's The Best Solution In Their Child Custody Battle Over Son Rocco?

The very unsavoury public spat between singer Madonna and her former husband, film director Guy Ritchie, over the custody of their teenage son Rocco has been a shining example of how not to resolve an issue which affects so many separated families, not just celebrities with the money and power to endure long drawn out court battles..

Siobhan Rooney, a Partner at leading and award winning regional law firm Pictons is also Head of the Family Law dept. She says "On the surface at least this looks very much like a battle between two warring exes and not about focusing on the needs and wants of their son. Apparently the child custody arrangements were put in place seven years ago when Rocco was eight and now he's a fast growing teenager with a mind of his own who knows what he wants and clearly it's not the same as his mother Madonna.

"He must have felt so humiliated by the massive publicity surrounding this case, especially when he's at a very sensitive age and fast becoming a young man. Clearly Madonna is a loving mother but what she and Guy have failed to do in this case is work the problem out behind closed doors between themselves and in the best interests of their child and not their own desires.

"I always recommend that the best course of action on child custody cases when focusing on where the child or children will live and with whom after a family breakdown is to choose the mediation route first. The benefit of mediation in child disputes is that you are far more likely to reach a reasonably amicable agreement and at a far lower cost than taking the matter to court.

"In the case of Madonna and Guy Ritchie even a judge told them to settle their differences out of court. Often within court proceedings no one is happy with the outcome and children who are aware of the proceedings feel under a lot of pressure. With this particular case being completely played out in public, the potential emotional damage to all parties concerned and especially Rocco will be considerable.

"Mediation can give couples a much needed helping hand so that difficult conversations can start between both parties and prove productive rather than incendiary. It involves ex partners meeting with an independent mediator to talk through issues arising from their separation. This can include concerns such as what is to happen with the family home? What should the arrangements be for the children? What financial support do each of you need? The purpose of mediation is not to assist clients to rekindle their relationship, but instead to ensure that the process of separation is as amicable and productive as possible.

“At Pictons our qualified Mediators are trained to give both parties impartial guidance to help them to understand their choices and to move forward more easily than they ever thought would be possible. Mediation provides a neutral and calm environment for discussions to take place. People are encouraged to consider all the options available to them and they will have the opportunity to consult with their solicitor throughout the process if they choose to.

Mediation has proved popular as it is not only a more cost-effective way to resolve disputes but also allows for disputes to be resolved quickly, allowing people to move on with their lives much sooner than if embroiled within court proceedings.

“If we had had the opportunity to mediate for Madonna and Guy Ritchie then even with such two strong and determined personalities I’m really confident that none of this awful public wrangling would have taken place and a positive solution would have been achieved, even though they live on different continents. Now that her Rebel Heart tour is finished and Madonna has been reunited with her son I really hope that this case will be resolved very soon for everyone’s sake.”