

The Most Common Lies Spouses Tell Their Divorce Lawyer

March 20, 2026
By Stephanie Lehman



People rarely walk into a divorce lawyer's office intending to lie. What they usually bring instead is fear—fear of judgment, fear of consequences, fear that telling the full truth will somehow make everything worse. So they edit. They minimize. They leave things out. And they tell themselves it doesn't matter; however, it almost always does.

One of the most common things clients say early on is some version of "I've told you everything." They believe it at the time. But as the case progresses, details start to surface—an old relationship that wasn't quite over, a text thread they forgot about, a financial account they assumed was irrelevant, an incident they didn't think would come up again, or a monetary transfer they didn't think would be noticed. Divorce has a way of dragging the past into the present, whether you're ready for it or not. When information emerges late, it puts your attorney on the defensive instead of in control, and that shift can be costly.

Another frequent claim is that money doesn't matter. Clients say they just want out, that they're willing to walk away from assets or support to keep the peace. That mindset is usually emotional, temporary, and short-lived. Once the dust settles and real life resumes—housing costs, childcare expenses, retirement planning—that earlier indifference often turns into regret. The law doesn't assume you'll feel the same way six months from now, which is why your lawyer can't afford to either.

Many people also present their divorce as a story with a clear hero and villain. They insist they've done nothing wrong and that all the blame lies with the other spouse. While that narrative may feel emotionally satisfying, it rarely aligns with reality or how judges, mediators, and evaluators see cases. Family court isn't about moral perfection. It's about credibility. When someone claims absolute innocence, it often signals that there's more beneath the surface, and opposing counsel is very good at finding it.

Financial honesty is another area where clients often convince themselves they're being truthful while still withholding information. Money moved before filing, cash withdrawals, side income, business perks, cryptocurrency, or funds held "temporarily" by family members are frequently dismissed as insignificant or unrelated. But financial disclosures are sworn statements, and inaccuracies, intentional or not, can damage a case far more than the underlying financial issue ever would.

Then there's digital behavior. Clients routinely downplay how much they've accessed their spouse's phone, email, or social media accounts. They assume that if the information exists, it must be fair game. But how evidence is obtained matters just as much as what it shows. Illegally accessed material can be excluded and can even create legal exposure for the person who obtained it. When a lawyer doesn't know the full story behind the evidence, they can't properly assess the risk.

Parents often tell their attorneys that the children are "fine." Sometimes that's wishful thinking. Sometimes it's an attempt to appear cooperative or resilient. But children talk to teachers, to therapists, to friends, and sometimes directly to the court through evaluators. Minimizing concerns doesn't protect children, and it can make a parent appear disengaged or unaware of

what's actually happening.

Dating during divorce is another subject where honesty tends to falter. Clients insist they aren't seeing anyone, or that it's not serious, or that it has nothing to do with the case. In reality, new relationships can affect custody dynamics, financial claims, and settlement negotiations, especially if children are involved or marital funds are being spent. And these relationships almost always come to light.

Perhaps the most deceptively loaded statement clients make is that they just want things to be "fair." Fair, however, is a deeply personal concept, not a legal one. Clinging to a personal sense of fairness often leads to prolonged litigation, unrealistic expectations, and mounting legal fees. The law doesn't divide assets or assign responsibility based on who feels more wronged. It relies on statutes, evidence, and precedent.

Clients lie—or half-lie—not because they're bad people, but because divorce is uncomfortable and exposing. The irony is that these small acts of self-protection usually have the opposite effect. They limit an attorney's ability to plan, anticipate, and negotiate effectively. They increase costs, delay resolution, and weaken outcomes.

A divorce lawyer isn't there to judge you. They're there to protect you. But they can only do that with the full picture, even when parts of it are embarrassing, messy, or inconvenient.

In divorce, the truth almost always comes out. The only real question is whether it comes out early enough to work in your favor.