



THE TRIBUNAL
ARCHDIOCESE FOR THE MILITARY SERVICES, USA

GUIDELINES FOR WRITING THE PETITIONER NARRATIVE

This is an outline prepared to assist you in writing the narrative of your marriage. This is the first part of your testimony with the possibility of amplification through additional questions, an interview, or a formal hearing. You will receive notification of the date and time via email at a later date if necessary. **Please submit typed copies only.**

NOTE THAT THE RESPONDENT (YOUR EX-SPOUSE) HAS THE RIGHT TO READ THIS SUBMISSION IF THEY PARTICIPATE IN THE PROCESS.

I. Preliminary Information

A. You (The PETITIONER)

1. Your present name, address, telephone numbers (please include work phone number) and email addresses. (Give maiden name if female).
2. Date and place of your birth.
3. Your baptismal status, in what religious faith group. Religion you now practice.
4. Your parents' names (mother's maiden name).

B. Former Spouse (The RESPONDENT)

1. His/Her present name, address, telephone numbers (please include work phone number) and email addresses. (Give maiden name if female). **(If this information is not available to you, please provide your former spouse's last known name and address; if you provide the last known name and address, please make sure to indicate this.)**
2. Date and place of his/her birth.
3. His/her baptismal status, in what religious faith group. Religion now practiced.
4. His/her parents' names (mother's maiden name).

C. Marriage

1. Date and place of marriage (city and state).
2. If a church wedding, please give the name of the church and officiant. **(If this marriage involves a Catholic who married a non-Catholic with a permission and/or dispensation from the bishop or chancery, please indicate the parish and diocese where these arrangements were made.)**

II. The Story of Your Life Before the Marriage

A. Your Family Background

1. What were your parents like and how did they get along?
2. Which parent was the dominant person in the family?
3. How did you get along with your mother? With your father?
4. Describe any serious traumatic physical, emotional, or spiritual experiences you had while you were growing up.

B. Your School Years and Prior To Meeting Your Former Spouse

1. How far did you go in school and how well did you do? How did you get along with your fellow students, teachers, and people in general?
2. Describe your attitudes toward alcohol, drugs, breaking the law.
3. Describe your dating habits: when did you begin to date; how frequently; how many serious relationships; were you sexually active?

C. Your Personality and Character

1. Write a brief historical sketch of your character.
2. What type of person were you prior to and at the time of your wedding? Describe your strong and weak points; for example, were you flexible or inflexible, social or anti-social?
3. Did you ever exhibit any of the following behaviors (if so please give detailed examples);
 - a. a pattern of distrust of others' motives
 - b. a sense self-importance
 - c. overly sensitive to criticism
 - d. an inability to empathize with others
 - e. more concerned about appearance than substance
 - f. a need for admiration
 - g. a tendency to exploit others
 - h. Impulsive or self-damaging behaviors e.g., promiscuity, over spending, eating disorders, use of pornography, etc.
 - i. a tendency to blame others for your own character defects
 - j. an excessive need to be taken care of that led to a clinging behavior.

III. The Story of Your Former Spouse's Life Before Your Marriage

A. Former Spouse's Family Background

1. What were his/her parents like and how did they get along?
2. Which parent was the dominant person in the family?
3. How did he/she get along with his/her mother? With his/her father?
4. Describe any serious traumatic, physical, emotional, or spiritual experiences he/she had while growing up.

B. Former Spouse's School Years and Prior To Meeting You

1. How far did he/she go in school and how well did he/she do? How did he/she get along with his/her fellow students, teachers, and people in general?
2. Describe his/her attitudes about alcohol, drugs, breaking the law.
3. Describe his/her dating habits: when did he/she begin to date; how frequently; how many serious relationships; was he/she sexually active?

C. Former Spouse's Personality and Character

1. Write a brief historical sketch of your former spouse's character.
2. What type of person was your former spouse prior to and at the time of your wedding? Describe their strong and weak points; for example, were they flexible or inflexible, social or anti-social?
3. Did he/she ever exhibit any of the following behaviors (if so please give detailed examples);
 - a. a pattern of distrust of others' motives
 - b. a sense self-importance
 - c. overly sensitive to criticism
 - d. an inability to empathize with others
 - e. more concerned about appearance than substance
 - f. a need for admiration
 - g. a tendency to exploit others
 - h. Impulsive or self-damaging behaviors e.g.: promiscuity, over spending, eating disorders, use of pornography
 - i. a tendency to blame others for their own character defects

- j. an excessive need to be taken care of that led to clinging behavior?

IV. The Marriage

A. Your Courtship or Engagement Period

1. How did you meet? Describe your dating habits with your former spouse.
2. How did you get along together?
3. How affectionate were you, and what part did sex play in the relationship?
4. How did the subject of marriage come up?
5. Was there a formal engagement and how long was this before the marriage?
6. What marriage preparation meetings/classes did you attend before getting married?
7. What was your attitude and your former spouses' attitude towards participation in marriage preparation classes?
8. Did you have serious doubts about making a lifetime commitment and if so why did you marry anyway?
9. Did either of you think or express that you have a right to break off the marriage for whatever reason? Please explain.
10. Did either of you set any conditions or together make any agreements regarding the marriage that if not met would give either of you the right to break it off? Please explain.
11. What were the attitudes of each of you toward having children?
12. Did you or your former spouse express to each other a desire to not have children? If so, what means did you use to prevent the conception of children?
13. What were your attitudes about getting a divorce if the marriage did not work out? Did the two of you ever talk about this? Did you view marriage as a life-long commitment?
14. Did you and your former spouse intend on remaining married for life?
15. I/We thought divorce was an option for these reasons (name them).
16. Did either you or your former spouse deliberately conceal something that had you or your former spouse known about it, the marriage would not have taken place? Please explain.
17. What were the attitudes of your two families toward the marriage? What did your friends think of it?
18. What part did each of you play in the wedding preparations?

B. The Wedding Day

1. Did you or your former spouse have any irregular thoughts or feelings on the day of the wedding (e.g. in the dressing room, church or place of wedding, during the ceremony, during the reception)? Please give details.
2. Were either you or your former spouse under the influence of drugs or alcohol at the time of the wedding?

C. The Honeymoon

1. Did you go on a honeymoon? If no, why? Describe your feelings about it. What were the feelings of your former spouse?
2. Was there any difficulty between the both of you? Was there any difficulty with regard to sexual relations?

D. Your Married Life Together

1. Describe your mutual love, sexuality, and affection during your marriage.
2. What was the attitude of each toward work, military life, deployments, and the responsibilities of married life?
3. What was your spouse's and your attitudes and behavior about having children?
4. Describe your marital problems. When did they start?
5. Did you ever seek help from a licensed counselor? If so, what was the diagnosis of the licensed counselor?
6. Describe what brought about any temporary separations.

E. Final Separation and Divorce

1. What was the real reason for the separation?
2. When (date and year) did the final separation occur?
3. When and where was the divorce finalized/granted? On what grounds?
4. What are you and your former spouse doing since your separation? Have either of you remarried? (How many times?)
5. How do you think your former spouse will react to finding out your petitioned the Tribunal for a decree of nullity?

PLEASE **KEEP A COPY** OF YOUR NARRATIVE STATEMENT FOR YOUR FILES.
Please email a copy of this narrative statement to your advocate and to the Tribunal. Your advocate will contact you regarding next steps.

If you have any questions, please contact the Tribunal
of the Archdiocese for the Military Services, USA at:

Email address: **tribunal@milarch.org**
Telephone #: **(202) 719-3645**