



“Practice Tips Are Gold”

Why California Attorneys and Judges Are the Backbone of CEB’s Content



Esther Rosenfeld
Founder, Rosenfeld Family Law, P.C.

Content authored by practicing California attorneys and sitting judges is infused with invaluable strategic insights and experience — which is why it takes center stage throughout CEB’s resources.

Theory and practice don’t always align

As essential as it is for California attorneys to understand the intricacies of case law, legal principles and other theoretical frameworks, they’re not the only tools necessary to effectively represent clients. Without experience — both personal and secondhand via mentors and colleagues — attorneys are ill-equipped to address the nuances of real-world matters.

This is especially important for family lawyers who operate in a civil practice area unlike any other. The emotional stakes are deeply personal and profound, impacting lives in ways that go beyond legalities. Notions of “best interests,” what constitutes a family and financial issues shift with the changing cultural and economic landscapes. Every case is intertwined with the client’s hopes, disappointments, fears and relationships, making it crucial for attorneys to navigate the legal, social and emotional dimensions effectively.



“Divorce touches so many people, and it can bring out the worst in all of us,” said Esther Rosenfeld, founder of Rosenfeld Family Law, P.C. in Sunnyvale, California. “Clients come to me feeling so emotionally fraught that they often struggle to see a clear path forward, let alone navigate the complexities of the legal process.”

That puts family law attorneys in the unique position of acting not only as legal advocates but also as empathetic listeners and trusted advisors. However, no single attorney has all the solutions to the diverse and intricate challenges their clients encounter. Reaching the right outcome involves leveraging comprehensive research and strategic insights.



“The bible”

When Rosenfeld began practicing in 2001, she relied on CEB’s family law practice guide to streamline her research and inform her strategy amid evolving case law and guidance. Her greatest resource was a practice guide nicknamed “the green book” due to its distinctive green cover. It is now available online through CEB and known as [“Practice Under the California Family Code: Dissolution, Legal Separation, Nullity.”](#)

“We joked that that book was the bible,” Rosenfeld said.

Created by and for California attorneys, the guide covers everything needed to manage dissolution, legal separation, nullity and parentage actions from judicial and attorney perspectives, including the latest case law, legislation and court rules.

But most crucially for Rosenfeld, it’s built on practice tips from seasoned California attorneys and sitting judges. Collectively, as leaders in their respective fields, they’ve seen it all — and already learned the hard way what works and doesn’t work in various scenarios.



“Especially when I was a brand-new lawyer, the best thing about CEB’s content was its practice tips,” Rosenfeld said. “Here’s the law, but how do I put it into practice? Is it different if I’m representing the petitioner or respondent in a family law case? What about common pitfalls that attorneys might not know to avoid?”

So, when CEB later asked Rosenfeld in 2007 to write several chapters for two in-depth practice guides — [Family Law Financial Discovery](#) and [California Child and Spousal Support](#) — the answer was a no-brainer.



“Attorneys must be honest and forthcoming”

As one of the experienced professionals sharing real-world insights with CEB users, Rosenfeld hasn't forgotten how it felt to be a new attorney finding her way in a complex, ever-changing field. Incorporating real-world examples and tips from practicing California attorneys into CEB's content is crucial for bridging the gap between theory and practice.

It's a scenario that harkens back to law school, the way Rosenfeld sees it.



"You encounter two types of professors. The majority are academics – fascinating, insightful and essential to your education. Then, there are those few classes led by practitioners who bring real-world experience to the table," Rosenfeld said. "It's so enlightening because you receive actual examples of how the law is applied, as well as instances where it falls short or doesn't function as intended. This makes the material feel much more authentic and relevant."

When preparing to file motions in divorce cases, for example, it's common for clients to be suspicious of the other side – particularly if an affair or other traumatic incident impacted the marriage.

"For example, with financial information, there may be a tendency to want to circle the wagons and avoid sharing information, but with practice tips, I can point out that attorneys must be honest and forthcoming to serve their clients well in the long term," Rosenfeld said. "While your client's instinct might be not to share this information, not only are they required by law to be open books with regard to the marital finances, they're going to look a lot better to the judge and gain credibility when they do share the information and make a reasonable offer."

After 17 years, Rosenfeld continues to contribute to both practice guides, providing annual updates on key topics such as child and spousal support and privacy, privileges and other limitations on discovery. Now a leading authority in her field and a trained mediator, Rosenfeld is a frequent speaker on family law issues and authored a self-help book for individuals navigating divorce. This combination of skills and experience allows her to help family lawyers at all stages of their careers enhance their practices and better serve their clients.

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