

N.Y.B.L. Podcast Ep 224 (Lisa Zeiderman)

[00:00:00] **Rebecca Zung:** Welcome to another episode of Negotiate Your Best Life. I'm Rebecca Zung and I get to talk to a fellow attorney today. That doesn't happen very often and she is so accomplished. I'm so excited because we've just been chatting before we got even started this morning and we were just Exploding, exploding, exploding with so many fun ideas that are going to help you guys so much.

[00:00:30] This is going to be so powerful. So powerful. So Lisa Ziderman is the managing partner at Miller Ziderman, a matrimonial law firm, and she is special. amazingly accomplished. She's a matrimonial attorney. She's a certified divorce financial analyst. She regularly handles complex financial and custody divorce matters for high net worth divorce individuals.[00:01:00]

[00:01:00] She has been named to crane's New York divorce list of notable women. attorneys for 2022, a Hudson Valley best lawyer for 2022. And, um, she is a best lawyer and client client satisfaction by the American Law Institute. And she has all sorts of designations for helping children. She has a massive law firm in New York helping, um, in all sorts of financial matters.

[00:01:36] She is absolutely the go to in Manhattan for exactly what we're going to be talking about today, which is financial abuse, narcissist, and money, which is what you guys need to know about. So I'm [00:02:00] really, really excited to talk to you today, Lisa.

[00:02:03] **Lisa Zeiderman:** So welcome. So excited to be here. Thanks so much, Rebecca, for having me.

[00:02:07] I can't wait to dive into our discussion.

[00:02:10] **Rebecca Zung:** Yeah, thank you. So let's first talk about how narcissists get started with this taking control of, of a victim or a target in the first place. How does it happen? How do they start the pattern of control?

[00:02:39] **Lisa Zeiderman:** You know, I think a lot has to do with narcissists are very often Charming and they light up that room.

[00:02:46] It's all about them when they walk into the room and everything around them is attracted to them for a period of time, right? Until you start to be gas lit, essentially by the narcissist, [00:03:00] that is the attraction of the narcissist. And when people come to me and they're married to a narcissist. Not only are they thinking about how did it happen to them, but they're worried, frankly, that it's going to happen to me as their attorney, how will I be trapped into their narcissistic web, essentially, and will I be able to climb out of that?

[00:03:23] And will I be able to protect and advocate for them? Because they have had that experience of being in that trap essentially. So I think that that's. The main issue.

[00:03:35] **Rebecca Zung:** Yeah, I That's so true. I, you know, I've heard that so many times as an attorney too. Like, oh, they're going to work their whiles on you.

[00:03:44] They're gonna charm you. I've heard that too, but I, you know, I think a lot of times how it's. starts to is, you know, I'll take care of you. You know, I, you don't need to keep that job, you know, go ahead and quit your job. [00:04:00] I'll take care of you or something, something like that will, will start to happen,

[00:04:05] **Lisa Zeiderman:** right?

[00:04:06] It's that isolation that you're talking about. Yes, absolutely. Because they are the magnet and they are the one and they are going to essentially be the one who's going to be able to care for you, take care of you, be the one to protect you. And all of a sudden they are essentially the only person that you have now in your life because you have become so isolated from everyone else.

[00:04:30] And that becomes one of the problems.

[00:04:34] **Rebecca Zung:** Yeah. I mean, so, I mean, I've seen it happen in that way. So, you know, I'll take care of you, quit your job. And, and so therefore, you know, now you've, you know, cut off all of these. Other ways of having money. I mean, and I've seen it where a person had permanent alimony from a previous marriage and [00:05:00] so now they've gotten rid of that source and now they are, you know, completely financially dependent on this other person and, you know, now they, uh, are getting divorced from this person and, you know, they're out of luck or they have given up a really, really good job or a great career and it's now 10, 15, 20 years later and they're much, much older and they really can't go back to that particular job anymore, right?

[00:05:37] Right. That's another, another way of happening. Another thing that I have seen is that they will say something like You pay all the expenses for the house, something like that. And, um, [00:06:00] I'll put the money in savings or something. I'll save my money and you use all your money for. Um, the expenses or something to that effect.

[00:06:13] Right?

[00:06:14] **Lisa Zeiderman:** Yes, we, we see that so much. I mean, look, I think that that's a very strong form of financial abuse that we see all the time. Um, I think that there are so many people who come to us who have been financially abused and who are dependent on this person, not necessarily because they're not the earners.

[00:06:38] actually. And they are literally handing over their paycheck or giving over their savings to this other person, right? The spouse who says, I'm going to control the finances. I don't worry, you know, I'm going to take care of that. And I'm now going to be essentially doling out an allowance to you. And it's not unusual for us to [00:07:00] see the actual breadwinner.

[00:07:02] In that situation, and, you know, yes, we definitely see the situation where people come to us and they've been out of the workforce for 10, 15, 20 years sometimes, right? And they've given up their capacity essentially to earn and that is extremely problematic because recovering those years is almost an impossibility, but it's almost an impossibility.

[00:07:25] You cannot do it. You are not going to have that incline. Right of being able to move up the ladder in the same way that had you stayed in the workforce, you would be able to. But I think what is even more disturbing is when the person who is earning the money is now in essentially a lack of control of that money because they have literally handed over the paycheck and they are literally paying all the expenses and getting that allowance of of what someone else thinks that they should

[00:07:56] **Rebecca Zung:** get.

[00:07:58] Yeah. And, [00:08:00] and they don't know what has happened with their money. And, and so, and, and what's happened is that that person has put all of their money into, You know, either savings or something and but they don't know where it went. They don't know where it went

[00:08:21] **Lisa Zeiderman:** and it may not be titled in their name, right?

[00:08:23] So 1 of the things that often happens and we see is that 1 party has complete and total control. They have control of the passwords. They have control of the account. They literally have cut off all of your sources of income. And although you either earned it or you, you certainly were part of it in terms of supporting the, the marriage and supporting the person who's going out and earning it.

[00:08:48] You now have no resources to actually be able to get out of the situation. And there may be a lot of resources available, but you don't have them available to you. And that's the problem. [00:09:00]

[00:09:00] **Rebecca Zung:** Mm hmm. Yeah. Now when it comes time to get a divorce, People will threaten. People will say things like, you know, you, you can't ever divorce me because if you do, I'll make sure you never get a dime.

[00:09:19] I'll make sure you're out on the street. Uh, you know, you're never going to get anything from me. What? And, and, and so people are paralyzed. They're, they're paranoid that they're never going to get anything. And, and so they end up saying, abusive situations becau uh, and, and, you know, I of times as an attorney, hey, listen, you know, th that, especially if you'r you know, you can many ti[00:10:00]

[00:10:03] from the, in the law, you know, where you can potentially get, you know, either fees, you can get support, you can get temporary support, but a lot of times people don't know that. Um, and so what would you say to people around that?

[00:10:20] **Lisa Zeiderman:** So I look, I think the first thing that people need to do is to seek out a trusted attorney.

[00:10:26] That's, that's the first thing. I mean, you should, you know, consult several attorneys, speak to other people who have gone through divorces, see who they recommend, look online and see what kind of reviews an attorney has, look at their LinkedIn, see what articles they've published, what's their point of view, all of those types of things.

[00:10:44] And then you need to understand that the law, particularly. I don't know about every state, but I do know it was certainly in New York. In New York, the non moneyed spouse does have the protections that you're talking about, Rebecca. The non moneyed spouse is going to likely be entitled to what is called [00:11:00] pendente lite relief, right?

[00:11:02] And pendent lite relief in essence is temporary relief, temporary support to make sure that you can pay your reasonable expenses, temporary legal fees. so that your attorney can get paid and so that you are essentially on that equal playing field. But you also need to start to pull some documents, right?

[00:11:21] So you need to, if you can, make sure that you can get hold of your tax returns. Make sure that you have bank statements, credit card statements. You know, years ago I had a client and I often talk about her because She was really quite intelligent and what she did was she would essentially go through the garbage, believe it or not.

[00:11:41] She would pull all these little bits and pieces of paper and pretty soon she had what was the beginning of the puzzle, right? And we, we did all of this discovery in her case, but most of the discovery came from her. So she would find this piece of paper that referred to some account that was offshore.[00:12:00]

[00:12:00] And then we would do the digging. And I remember having her husband in a deposition and he had revealed zero. I mean, and I mean, zero his net worth statement, which is something that people fill out at the very beginning of a case in order to, for example, get pendent elite to support, but also to create this.

[00:12:17] road map. His net worth statement was void of any information. And I remember during the deposition saying to him, how did you expect that I was going to find all of the assets that I have found? And he said, I thought you would just keep doing what you're doing. You would keep subpoena ring and you would keep digging and you would keep looking and then you'll find it.

[00:12:35] And that was, that became the job, but she herself was very resourceful and it's important that as, you know, as a spouse that you look, that you keep your eyes open, that you watch what's happening around you because you can't live essentially in a shell, right? With everything closed up, you need to keep your, your, your eyes open.[00:13:00]

[00:13:00] **Rebecca Zung:** Yeah, a hundred percent. And the other thing is that you do need to have. some stash of cash because you're going to need to be able to hire that lawyer. And it does take time to get that hearing to get to that first hearing.

[00:13:16] **Lisa Zeiderman:** A hundred percent. Yeah, that is absolutely true. So look, some people have, um, situations where they're able to turn to family or friends for that first retainer.

[00:13:30] And that first retainer is essentially it's that door opening, right? So that you can start to pay an attorney to make the motions or the applications to the court in order to get you that temporary support, those temporary legal fees to get you set up essentially for the process that is going to occur, right?

[00:13:51] Where there'll be discovery, where there will be negotiations and where there may be things like depositions or other court appearances, et cetera. But you're [00:14:00] right. You need to have that door be open. And so you either need to put aside cash and, and open a bank account so that you can, over time, essentially save up for your retainer, or at least be honest with friends or family and say, look, I'm going to need some help here.

[00:14:17] I might need to take a loan. I might need to sign a promissory note to you so that I can get myself on my feet again, and maybe help my children as well, because it may be that you're spouse is not, you know, giving you sufficient funds to pay not only for your support, but also for your children's support.

[00:14:34] **Rebecca Zung:** Right, exactly. So then let's talk about some of the other ways that narcissists will abuse you financially. Um, you know, cutting off credit cards, moving assets, you know, preventing career advancement. Let's talk about some of those other things that they'll

[00:14:51] **Lisa Zeiderman:** do. So certainly, um, cutting off credit cards is one vehicle, right, to keep somebody essentially under your thumb, right?

[00:14:59] [00:15:00] All of a sudden you don't have the credit cards that will help you pay for the most basic necessities in your life. Food, clothing, um, child care, all of those kinds of things, right? And your credit limit used to be limitless. When the narcissist was feeling magnanimous, and now you have essentially the narcissist has decided that, you know, you're not on the narcissist side anymore.

[00:15:23] And so the credit cards get cut, your limits go low, if any. Um, and all, you know, you're standing at the grocery store and you can't pay for the groceries or you have now found yourself so isolated. Um, and you don't have those passwords to even understand what the finances are because the passwords have all been changed.

[00:15:43] Um, the mail is no longer coming to your home. It may be going to the narcissist's office instead, or, you know, obviously with online, now you don't have any of that access. And so it is, it is really a strategy to keep [00:16:00] you under that person's thumb and to keep you dependent on that person. Mm

[00:16:05] **Rebecca Zung:** hmm. Yeah.

[00:16:06] Moving assets is another one.

[00:16:09] **Lisa Zeiderman:** Moving assets is a very, it is, is very, um, difficult because once the assets start to move, it makes it much more difficult to trace the assets. Um, and so maybe things were in joint names and all of a sudden there's no more money in that bank account. Or maybe you had a brokerage account and the brokerage account has now been moved or the, the assets have now been moved into a different brokerage account.

[00:16:34] Maybe it was in joint names and now it's only in his or her name alone. And so you no longer have access to the funds and the security that you had access to before, which makes you even more dependent. And look, I think at that point, it's time to kind of, it's a wake up call. I think maybe the wake up call could have happened earlier, but certainly that is the wake up call.

[00:16:57] When assets start moving, when [00:17:00] someone is even moving assets to other family members or to friends, and you don't have control of that, perhaps things are being moved into trust. And all of a sudden, you know, the, the, somebody is saying to you, just sign here. It's okay. You know, we're taking you to an attorney of their choice to just sign here.

[00:17:19] Those are warning calls that you need to be aware of. Yeah.

[00:17:23] **Rebecca Zung:** And then they play games. Like they'll start paying the bills from, you know, your account first, right? So deplete that account.

[00:17:35] **Lisa Zeiderman:** First, yes, that that is. Um, another strategy is again taking away your control, right? Your safety line. So if they're paying all of the bills from your account, your account eventually is going to be depleted while their accounts are building.

[00:17:50] Right. And all of a sudden you don't have enough money to actually go to the attorney. You don't have enough money to go to your therapist to have that conversation about what is [00:18:00] happening in your life. You don't

have the money to do, to move around in the world. I think what people really need to understand and, and money sometimes is a dirty word.

[00:18:09] People don't like to talk about finance finances, but to work in the world, to move around in this world, you need money. That's just a fact. And if someone is taking your control of your, your finances away from you, that is a wake up call that you need to do something[00:19:00] [00:20:00]

[00:20:20] and

[00:20:20] **Rebecca Zung:** then they'll, they'll start to play games during the case, right? So what they'll do is they will. play games with the Discovery. So you want to talk about that a little

[00:20:35] **Lisa Zeiderman:** bit? Sure. So, um, so let's talk about what Discovery is, first of all, because I think that a lot of our clients, I know, when we start, um, actually dealing with Discovery, they want to know what it is.

[00:20:45] So what we do, usually, at the very beginning of a case, is we start serve, meaning send, discovery notices to your spouse's attorney. Those have a list of documents that we're going to be looking at. Usually it goes five [00:21:00] years back. Sometimes it could go longer, but we're looking at credit card statements to see how the spending actually has occurred.

[00:21:06] Is there spending on other people who, um, maybe are outside the marriage, for example, paramours of some sort? Is there gambling that we need to be aware of? Are there transfers of monies to other accounts? There's lots of ways to look at these documents, but essentially credit card statements, bank statements, brokerage statements, statements regarding restricted Stock units, um, bonus and award statements.

[00:21:32] We want to see it all so that we understand what are the assets, what are the liabilities, and what's the income. And then, of course, what is the lifestyle? Because the lifestyle analysis is going to tell us how much spousal support, um, there will be, or how much spousal support will be paid, right? So, we're looking for all of that.

[00:21:50] So, we serve these notices, and then the other side doesn't comply, which is what you're talking about, Rebecca. So, maybe they give us... a whole pile of documents, but they're not really relevant. [00:22:00] And then they tell us we've given you 5, 000 documents. We've given you 50, 000 documents. Okay. But it's the quality, not the quantity of the documents, right?

[00:22:08] That we're looking at. And of course, then there's the person who doesn't give you any documents. And now you are left with lots of discovery notices out there and It perhaps letters to counsel, et cetera, and your bills are escalating. At some point, your attorney should be subpoena ring everything that they can subpoena directly from the institutions, right?

[00:22:30] So we serve the discovery notice. If we don't get the discovery, we start subpoena ring. We have to be careful about subpoena ring employers because sometimes that can actually backfire. So we are careful about that. But sometimes we're left with no choice. We have to get the information. Um, so we will subpoena the institutions.

[00:22:50] One good place to start is the tax returns because there's usually a schedule in the tax returns that will set forth the dividends and the interest from interest or [00:23:00] dividend bearing accounts. Those are great places to start to subpoena.

[00:23:05] **Rebecca Zung:** Yes, yeah, yeah. So she just said So much gold right there. I just want to like make sure that we don't gloss over what she just said because there was so much gold in what she just said that, uh, and I just want to make sure that you guys just heard everything that she just said.

[00:23:27] Um, because as lawyers, I, I know everything that she just said, but I want to make sure that you guys got to hear everything that she just said. Um, so. As so in a case, there are five major areas. I always say five major areas. Some people say four, but I'm going to say five. So there's, um, property division and then there's spousal support and then there's.

[00:23:57] custody, child [00:24:00] support and fees. So those are like the five major umbrellas. And when you are looking at the five major umbrellas and every single case has those five potential areas, and then there's tangential areas like domestic violence and things like that. But then the five major areas are those.

[00:24:16] And in every single case you have those potential. And if you don't have kids, obviously custody and child support aren't going to be there, but. You have those five major areas. So when you have some major, uh, potential issues, such as waste or, um, you know, business valuations or, um, something like that.

[00:24:41] Then you might have to hire a forensic accountant and that forensic accountant might need to look at a lifestyle analysis, you know, in order to say, how are we going to come up with what the true income is or what what we

need to look at as far as [00:25:00] how to come up with, you know, an alimony award or a spousal support award.

[00:25:06] And so you hire this forensic to help you do that. And what they have to do is they have to actually go back and track every single dollar that was ever spent or ever looked at. And what they do is look at the last 5 years and it's, it's kind of painful, actually, I mean, for them, you know, they literally go.

[00:25:33] How much did you spend on this, you know, shoe purchase or this grocery store purchase or this literally every single dollar and they put it together into what we call a lifestyle analysis. So that's what she's talking about with that and, um, and tracking every single dollar and, um. [00:26:00] And so that's what a lifestyle analysis is that how much did you spend on your pets?

[00:26:05] How much did you spend on your nails? How much did you spend on it? Literally? That's what a lifestyle analysis is. And it's kind of painful, but that's what it is. Um, it kind of feels like a rectal exam. I think, um, honestly, but, um, because you never think that that's what's going to end up happening when, when you're actually doing it until you go through a divorce and then that's what it ends up being.

[00:26:30] Um, but, um, but you need to know what somebody's true income is in order to. come up with, you know, because it's important for alimony. It's important for child support. It's important for a fees claim. So, you know, a true income is really, really important for all three of those. So that's, um, what she's talking about for that.

[00:26:55] Now, when, when you're talking about subpoenas, so [00:27:00] when you actually are trying to get documents from somebody, they can either hand them over voluntarily, but when you're talking about a narcissist, they usually don't, they usually don't. And so what happens is you say hand over 12 months of bank statements or whatever it is, or five years of bank statements.

[00:27:23] But what happens is they'll hand over everything but December or something like that. And then you're over there going, where the hell is December? Or they'll hand over everything except for. Page five or something like that. And you know, where's page five? And you know, and it's just, it's so annoying as hell.

[00:27:46] And every, all of that costs money because you're paralegals like looking through it and they get everything but page five is in here. And so you have to go. Here's a motion to compel. I need page five and it [00:28:00] gets

extremely expensive and time consuming because you're not allowed to just file the motion to compel.

[00:28:05] You have to prove that you tried to do it, you know, uh, you know, uh, yourselves first, or at least most jurisdictions you do. Right? And so sure. Right. Right. Good faith. Try to do it yourself. And then that costs money first. And then you have to, you know, Uh, Then you can file your motion to compel. So all that costs money.

[00:28:26] So what she's saying is, instead of doing that, just go straight to, you know, Bank of America and file the subpoena because at least then, you know, the Bank of America isn't going to piss around. They'll just give you the whole entire statement. That's what she's saying. So, um, it's, it's a little bit more money because Bank of America is going to charge you for the copies, but at least, you know, you're going to get the entire statement.

[00:28:58] So that's what she's [00:29:00] saying.

[00:29:00] **Lisa Zeiderman:** That's 100 percent correct. Exactly correct. And look, I think that the point of sending the subpoenas in my mind is that sometimes, and I've watched this, right? Lawyer is, is sending the letter and another letter and another letter. And I'm thinking to myself, Why would we be begging for these statements?

[00:29:18] They're going to come in this beautiful package from Bank of America, for example. They're going to be certified. They can go straight into evidence. They're true and accurate copies. They're business records. And I don't have to now spend all this time begging for my discovery.

[00:29:34] **Rebecca Zung:** Right. And as long as you can get them, I mean, sometimes it's harder because it's an out of state subpoena or something like that.

[00:29:42] It depends on. where they're from, right? So sometimes you can't now and what she's saying as far as going to the employer, it can be difficult because if they're self employed or if it, if the, if the employer is, you know, the, their [00:30:00] friend or something, because it's, it's a small company. Well, then he ain't going to bother because, you know, it's not going to be, um, probably accurate anyway, you know, but if it's a public company or a big company or something like that, maybe it's worth it to subpoena the records from, from the employer, you know, so you have to weigh that out.

[00:30:26] **Lisa Zeiderman:** Yeah, I think that the biggest issue about subpoenaing the records, and you're correct, obviously, if it's a friend, it makes it much more difficult. And I have seen more and more that people can often defer their income, particularly when the business is small. They have, you know, all these different deals going as they're going through the divorce because their buddy went through the divorce too, right?

[00:30:47] Okay. And so now they're deferring their income and You're really not getting a true picture of the income, but even when, and you have to be careful about this and particularly in some counties in New York, they are very [00:31:00] strict about it. There are employers who are going to get upset about being subpoenaed.

[00:31:05] And so you really need to have a very good reason. The person has not complied. I usually like to get court permission to do it because then it actually informs the court as to what's going on. Somebody has another opportunity to produce the documentation, but at some point you need the documentation and most employers will understand most large corporations and institutions are going to understand because a lot of people go through a divorce and so they're used to getting these subpoenas.

[00:31:37] **Rebecca Zung:** Yes, but, um. Absolutely. But without a state, you have to go to the court out of state and you have to, you know, there's a little bit more of a, um, some steps that you have to go through to, um, to get that. So it's just a little bit more expensive. It's a little bit more time consuming. [00:32:00] Sometimes you have to hire a lawyer out of state in order to help you.

[00:32:03] process server out of state. It's just a little bit more difficult to do that. Sometimes it's worth it though. I mean, but you know, you just always have to know and, and, and, um, weigh the return on your investment. Don't, don't, you know, throw good money after bad, right?

[00:32:20] **Lisa Zeiderman:** That's exactly right. Rebecca, a hundred percent.

[00:32:23] **Rebecca Zung:** So, um, so let's talk about You know, um, other things that people should be doing in order to protect themselves. Um, you know, what other kinds of documentation that they should be looking at? Um, emails, texts, you know, that sort of thing. What else can they do?

[00:32:47] **Lisa Zeiderman:** So, look, first and foremost, I think that people need to make sure when they're signing those tax returns that they actually know what they're signing.

[00:32:55] Because, you know, we, we touched, or you did, you touched on this idea of business [00:33:00] valuations, for example, and I think that it's very important that people understand that they actually need to make sure that their tax returns are accurate before they sign them, or before they actually allow the accountant to be filing them, and then they should be keeping copies of them, and they need to also remember that the accountant works it.

[00:33:18] If you're filing joint tax returns for both of you, so the accountant should be providing a copy. The accountant should be answering your questions and you should not be, you know, being put in a situation where you're told sign here. Okay. And you're not able to review it or sign here and you were given one minute to get them to the post office or to get, tell the accountant to e file them.

[00:33:40] So it's, it's very important that you review those tax returns because they are an admission. essentially of what the income is. And if you're being misleading, maybe it's not you who's being misleading, but when you file those joint tax returns with your spouse, you are agreeing to the government that this [00:34:00] is your income.

[00:34:01] And so it's very important that I think first and foremost that you, you deal with that particular issue. The, the other. um, issue is making sure that you keep records, keep records of bank statements, keep records of the credit card statements, you know, start to gather essentially your file so that your attorney is not having to hunt down every single thing that that is going on.

[00:34:24] Those bits and pieces that that woman gave me, they made her case. They really did. They, they were millions of dollars and they came sometimes a little tiny pieces of paper like this. Okay. But, you know, shredded. Okay. But 5 million later. Okay. She had found that money essentially. I mean, look, we didn't subpoena it.

[00:34:45] We did find it, but essentially she gave us the breadcrumbs to be able to do that. So start gathering your statements, start gathering the credit card statements, keep your eyes open. I think that these are all important things to be doing.

[00:34:59] **Rebecca Zung:** Yes, [00:35:00] your attorney is not a mind reader and you're there's not some, you know, a thing out in the sky where your attorney can go to and, you know, find all the information, you know, you have to provide it to your attorney.

[00:35:16] So, you know, the more information that you can bring to your attorney, the better it's going to be.

[00:35:23] **Lisa Zeiderman:** I'm going to add something, Rebecca, because it comes up a lot, believe it or not. So very often people decide that they're going to fill out these applications for mortgages or for loans, and they're going to have to state what their income is or whether they've been given gifts or whether they've been given loans, and they misstate that information, right?

[00:35:42] And that often comes back to bite them, right? So, for example, a parent may give, you know, the couple or a party a loan, and now they've stated that they have no loans on their application for their mortgage. They, they, it was a loan, but they [00:36:00] decided to make it into something other than a loan. Because they wanted to look more favorable to the mortgage company.

[00:36:08] And so, it's very important that you remember that your words and the things that you sign, the documents that you sign, the documents that you're swearing to, the documents that you're submitting to banks, particularly federally charged banks, that those are your words and they are your admissions. And so you need to accurately report things because I will tell you during a divorce, it will all come back to bite you.

[00:36:31] One other thing that I think is so important is that people, if they're getting an inheritance, or if they actually are getting a gift from a parent or other family member, that they make sure that that is well documented and that they keep those separate and apart. So A lot of people come to us and they have lost what we call separate property in New York.

[00:36:53] They would have had, for example, they came into the marriage and they had no prenup perhaps, and they have not [00:37:00] actually kept their pre marital property separate, or they have not kept their inheritance separate, and all of a sudden they have commingled all of these funds. Perhaps they've spent down their inheritance, perhaps they've spent down their pre marital property while they've been saving marital property.

[00:37:17] All things that you shouldn't necessarily be doing because if you actually save and keep that separate property separate, you will get a credit at the end. If you can trace it in New York, it is the person who is, um, has the separate property claim. It's their burden to trace that separate property in order to get credit for it.

[00:37:36] But many times people come to us and they have millions of dollars of separate property that they cannot trace. And so it may just be gone really important.

[00:37:47] **Rebecca Zung:** Very good advice. Yes, very good advice. And gather those important documents and put them in a safe place. You know, make copies of them and put them in a safe place.

[00:37:59] **Lisa Zeiderman:** Yes. [00:38:00] Yes. Keep them. You know, I think one of my first cases ever was a matrimonial case where the woman had a fabulous prenup, but when she actually, she was hospitalized and when she came back from the hospital, prenup was completely gone. She never saw the prenup again. And the prenup would have been very favorable to her.

[00:38:20] The attorney was long gone who had drafted the prenup and nobody was going to be talking about that prenup except for her at that point and it was gone. So you need to make sure that you keep your documents safe. Make sure that a family member has a copy. Make sure that they are in a place that is not going to just be in your email and your emails become, you know, are erased.

[00:38:41] Or somebody's gone into your emails and deleted them. Make sure to keep your password safe. All of those kinds of things you really need to pay attention to.

[00:38:50] **Rebecca Zung:** Yes, very, very good advice. Where can people learn more

[00:38:54] **Lisa Zeiderman:** about you? So I have a blog. It's Lisa Zeidman.
[00:39:00] People can go on, um, my LinkedIn also under my name.

[00:39:03] Um, there's lots of articles that I publish. I have a psychology today blog. I also, um, write for Forbes council and, um, I regularly write for the New York law journal. So, um, lots of articles on my LinkedIn are always posted as well as my Lisa Ziderman dot com, um, site. And if they want to email me, it is LZ at ZW.

[00:39:25] dash law dot com.

[00:39:28] **Rebecca Zung:** All right. I know that everybody found this so, so, so, so helpful. I mean, really, this was very, very valuable. So thank you so much. So much. We said, thank you. This is really, really

[00:39:40] **Lisa Zeiderman:** great. Thank you so much, Rebecca. It was a great conversation. So thank you.