

Post-Divorce Parenting: Success Strategies for Doing It Right!

**Post-Divorce Parenting:
Success Strategies for Doing It Right!**

By Rosalind Sedacca, CCT

Written by Rosalind Sedacca, CCT

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Welcome to the World of Child-Centered Divorce!

More than a decade ago I was a parent facing divorce. I experienced the emotional roller-coaster that seems to be an inevitable part of the process -- including fear, anger, resentment, stress, relief, anxiety, sadness and, of course, the inevitable guilt.

My son was eleven years old at the time. He loved both his Dad and me. I knew he'd be devastated at the news. I wanted to protect him, minimize his own emotional turmoil - to somehow make this "right."

Thankfully I made some wise decisions at some critical junctures during the process. I came up with a concept for breaking the news to my son that I share in my new ebook, **How Do I Tell the Kids about the Divorce? A Create-a-Storybook™ Guide to Preparing Your Children - with Love!** It's now available at <http://www.howdoitellthekids.com>.

This ebook, however, is about much more than that initial conversation. I created it for parents who are moving beyond divorce or separation. You love your children. You're experiencing one of life's greatest challenges. You want to create the best possible outcome - for yourself, your children and your family (regardless of your relationship with your former spouse).

I followed the principles of child-centered divorce and it worked for my family with great success. Today my son is a veterinarian, who recently got married.

One of the most gratifying moments in my life came when he approached me as an adult and said he understood why Dad and I got divorced. He thanked us for putting his emotional needs first in making our divorce decisions. He honored me by writing the Introduction to my new book.

In this limited space I address many of the issues loving parents need to resolve in creating a child-centered divorce. You'll discover many success strategies used by real families facing the same challenges as you face today.

I value your comments and questions which you can leave on my blog at <http://www.childcentereddivorce.com>. I send you my best wishes for peace, harmony and the healing blessing of love to all within your family.

Sincerely,
Rosalind Sedacca, CCT
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Coping with Co-Parenting Challenges Can be Challenging

Frequently, I am asked “What is the key to successful co-parenting after divorce?” While there is no simple answer to that, I believe most professionals will agree the smartest strategy is learning how to remove anger, hostility or vindictiveness from your interactions with your former spouse.

We all know that’s not always easy to do. However, the benefits you derive will more than make up for the sense of satisfaction or ego gratification you get when you hold on to those damaging emotions.

If you’re intent on creating a child-centered divorce that strives for harmony between you and your ex, you need to initiate the conversation and model win-win solutions. If your ex doesn’t want to cooperate, that’s when your patience will certainly be tested. Look for opportunities to clarify why working together as co-parents as often as possible will create far better outcomes for your children. Over time hopefully your ex will see how much more peaceful the family interactions become when you’re not focused on “winning” or butting heads.

In some cases, this just won’t work. If your former spouse is totally hostile and unapproachable, you may have to work on your acceptance skills. You’ll likely have to let go of the idea that child-centered parenting will occur. At this point, the needs and protection of your children must take precedence over trying to engage your ex.

Sometimes it may be necessary for you to keep the other parent at a distance for the well-being of your children. In other cases it might be your ex who is trying to create the distance from you. These challenges are not easy to resolve, but are certainly worth the effort.

If your extended family is excluded by the unenlightened parent, there are ways to try to work around the situation. If visits have been deterred, encourage your family members to express their love and attention through alternative means: telephone calls, emails, social networking chats, letters and other creative resources. The key is not to give up. Continue with any means of communication until the family gains access to the children, even if it is a considerable time in the future.

There are no magic solutions when one spouse is out to spite or hurt the other through the children. But behaving in the same hurtful way is rarely a viable solution. Focus your energies on discussing the well-being of your children in the short- and long-term. Demonstrate patience and determination while containing feelings of anger and ill will.

Should your case need legal action to be resolved, your mature parental behavior will be regarded positively when you’re trying to make your case in court. If for no other

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reason, consider the judge's perspective before you take actions that will reap undesirable consequences.

Don't hesitate to consult professional counselors, mediators, clergy or others who can provide objective guidance on how to restore or create harmony for the sake of your children. Often they can offer perspectives you had not thought of or wanted to consider which can lead to new options for all concerned. The more open and flexible you are, the better the possibility of turning a difficult situation into a more cooperative one. Remember, your goal is always what's in the best interest of your children – even when it's not the ideal choice for you. When your children are at peace, everyone wins.

* * *

Co-Parenting After Divorce Takes Considerable Cooperation

While moving through a divorce can seem like an insurmountable obstacle, for many parents it is just the beginning of a new and equally intimidating challenge, co-parenting your children. Hats off to all of you who have chosen to remain in your children's lives as co-parents. It means both of you deeply care about your children and want to continue raising them in the least-disruptive possible manner.

Of course not all parents can share the parenting process in this way and for some couples it is not the ideal situation to even attempt it. But those couples who are determined to co-parent and choose to live relatively close to one another so as not to disturb the school, sports and other related schedules of their children, certainly deserve credit and acknowledgement.

This is a complex topic that can't be glossed over with a few simple how-tos. It is based on sincere levels of communication and a sense of trust between the former spouses. It is the path that I chose when I separated from my husband and we successfully mastered the ups and downs over the years without too much conflict and confusion. In fact, whenever my son, who was eleven when we first split, was with his father, I had a sense of peace and relief. I knew he was with the one person in the world that I most trusted to lovingly parent him so I could relax and enjoy my time off from parenting without anxiety.

That peace-of-mind is a major advantage to choosing the co-parenting route. Your children enjoy the security and comfort of being with their other parent when they are not with you. You are less dependent on strangers as caretakers in their lives, which is a win-win all around.

A friend of mine who is an author and parenting coach, Amy Botwinick, has some basic suggestions for mastering the art of co-parenting after divorce harmoniously. As a

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divorced parent herself who is now part of a blended family, she has much experience with this subject.

Here's Amy's advice:

One of the best things you can do for your children is to transition smoothly from spouse to co-parent with your former husband or wife. It won't always be easy and there will certainly be challenges along the way, but here are some things to remember that will help make your new relationship work.

- If your ex is in your children's life, don't allow your children to call your boyfriend dad, daddy, father or anything close. Hopefully you will get the same treatment in return.
- Never talk badly about their other parent, period. If children ask questions, try to give them age appropriate answers that are honest without passing judgment.
- Always give your ex the first right of refusal regarding doing something special with your children before asking your new significant other to do it. For example, taking your teenage daughter for her driver's test.
- If possible, try to celebrate birthdays, graduations and special events together with their other parent. Take into consideration each other's comfort issues and pick a place that will eliminate stress so you can enjoy your children and give them a sense of family.
- Learn to pick your battles with your ex when it comes to the children. Get a feeling for what is worth discussing and what you actually have no control over.

Amy's wisdom is worth serious consideration. When you ignore any of these basic communication principles, you set yourself up for conflict, jealousy, stress and tension. Breaking these rules sabotages your sense of trust with your ex and that opens the door to mind games, retaliations, petty bickering and a lack of harmony for everyone in the family. Remember: when that happens, your children are the ones who pay the price!

Be the hero in your relationship with your children's other parent. Cooperate. Collaborate. Be flexible and do favors. You are much more likely to get them back in return.

* * *

Amy Botwinick is the author of **Congratulations On Your Divorce**. She can be reached at www.todaysdivorcedwoman.com.

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Conflicting Lifestyles Create Conflicts for Divorced Moms and Dads

I am one of the Expert Contributors to ParentalWisdom.com, a wonderful website where parents can ask questions and more than one professional related to that subject matter will provide an answer. The advantage is that you get three, four or more responses from different experts so you can determine for yourself which answers best suit your situation. It's a wonderful concept and I highly recommend that every parent takes advantage of this scope of expertise at ParentalWisdom.com.

One of the questions recently sent to me focused on an issue that many divorced parents face with mounting frustration. It had to do with this woman's ex-husband treating the children to lavish gifts and trips when he has them, while Mom is struggling financially. She added that she is aware that she shouldn't say anything negative to her children about her ex, but she was finding it difficult in the face of her circumstances. The question, of course, was what can she do about this?

It's impossible to provide a specific answer when the so many of the circumstances are unknown in this situation. How often is Dad seeing the children? What kind of relationship does he have with them when he is not there? Is he angry about not sharing custody? Is he resentful towards Mom regarding other issues? Is he aware that she is struggling financially? Does he care? Is he trying to show her up and influence the children away from her? Or is he oblivious that his behavior is creating an issue for her? Is he aware that he may be spoiling the children? Does he think he's being a wonderful Dad?

I'm sure you've thought of several other questions that are relevant to this situation. In so many cases there are no black and white answers to these types of problems – and certainly no simple solutions. It's all about shades of grey, trying to find a common ground, a means of communicating your feelings and concerns in a way that doesn't put the other person on the defensive, making them wrong and therefore no longer interested in a dialogue.

I began my answer by acknowledging Mom for understanding and respecting the importance of not bad-mouthing her former husband to their children. I also agreed that it was indeed difficult when Dad spoils the kids with material abundance while Mom is struggling to make ends meet.

I offered some suggestions that she might want to consider. Depending on the age of the children, she could explain to them that Dad, like many grandparents and others who do not live with the children on a daily basis, wants to make his time with them very special by treating them to things that are not part of their everyday life. If he were at home with them, that wouldn't be the case. Mom can't do that because there are too

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many day-to-day routines, chores, expenses, etc. that she has to tend to. So this way they get the best of both worlds.

She could also talk to Dad, if her communication level with him allows that, and remind him of how his behavior appears from the children's perspective. He might want to consider their confusion between the two lifestyles of their parents as well as the lessons they are learning about fiscal responsibility and other consequences of spoiling children.

I brought up several questions Mom needs to consider. Is Dad intentionally doing this to anger her -- or is it unconscious irresponsible behavior? Is he resentful about not seeing more of his children and therefore intentionally trying to hurt Mom financially? Each of these factors plays a part in how Mom can best communicate the consequences for the children when Dad shows them different values and a different lifestyle than the one they are living with her.

If you have some other ideas and suggestions on this topic, I encourage you to go to my blog and enter your perspective. Let's get a dialogue going on this tough topic. Just keep in mind there's no absolutely right and wrong takes on this, especially when we don't know the circumstances. We can all learn from each other's experiences and, hopefully, grow in more positive ways ourselves -- for the betterment of our children.

Visit <http://www.childcentereddivorce.com> and click on the Blog button on top. Then link into the blog page and post your comment.

* * *

When Children of Divorce Act Out – Caring Parents Step Up!

Divorce, like life, is rarely neat and packaged. This is especially true for divorcing parents. The reality of divorce comes with unexpected twists, constant frustrations and times of utter helplessness when children act up or pull away.

Here are three tips for coping with times when your children are venting, lashing out or expressing their own frustrations about being caught up in a family adjusting to separation or divorce.

Diffusing blame. Some children, especially pre-teens and teens, may blame one parent or the other for the divorce. Sometimes they may be correct in this interpretation given circumstances they have been aware of for years (alcoholism, absent parent, domestic violence, etc.). Other times they side with one parent as a result of their prior relationship dynamics with that parent. Regardless of why you or your spouse is being blamed, keep your cool. In many cases blaming is a defense against feeling

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overwhelmed by the circumstances in your child's life. Suddenly there are so many changes in such a short period of time. Often this behavior is not meant against you personally. It is merely a child's way of coping. When you keep this in mind it is easier to not personalize the outbursts and accusations. Patiently remind your child that you understand their frustrations. Acknowledge they have a sincere right to feel that way. Tell them how much you love them and how much you regret their hurt and pain. Let them know this was a difficult decision for both parents yet one you feel is the best alternative for your family's future happiness and well-being. Be patient and consistent. And don't internalize a child's expressions of frustration as a lack of love for you as a parent.

Countering distress. Often, negative comments from your children are expressions of distress and not criticism. Children want and need encouragement, support, and security during times of stress and change. If their needs are not being met because one or both parents are too caught up in their own hurt and drama, it is not surprising to hear negative comments and outbursts. When you realize that this is a call for attention, recognition and the emotional healing that you can provide, you can move into action. This is the time to reinforce your comments about the key messages every child needs to hear. They include: You are safe. You are loved by Mom and Dad. You will not lose Mom or Dad. You are not to blame for the divorce. Although change can be challenging, everything will work out okay.

Patient acceptance. In many ways divorce is like death. Sometimes the best thing you can do is fully be there for your children and understand what they are going through from their perspective. Talk if they want to talk. Hug and cuddle if they respond to affection. Continue as many family routine activities as possible on a day-to-day basis. Be honest and sincere when you are upset or frustrated by changes in your family life – and let them express their frustrations, as well. Most importantly, accept and acknowledge whatever they share with you as okay for them to feel. Try to put yourself into the mind-set of your six, ten or fifteen year old and experience the world from their viewpoint. It will help you be more empathic, less judgmental and more open to really “hearing” what they have to say.

This is what creating a “child-centered” divorce is all about. Let your children's emotional and physical needs be at the forefront of your mind when making life-altering decisions related to separation or divorce. Parents who consciously create a “child-centered” divorce have their radar constantly on. They're attuned to subtle changes in their children's behavior before that evolves into overwhelming challenges. Their children know and feel that they count and are a vital part of the family dynamic – even if it is evolving into a different form. These children are less fearful and more likely to move on with their lives into the future with confidence and high self-esteem. Isn't that what you want for your children?

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Divorce Your Spouse – Not your Children’s Grandparents

When parents divorce, every member of the family is affected in very unique and personal ways. The age of the child, their gender, their relationship with their siblings, how close they were to each parent and a myriad of other factors all influence the physical, mental, emotional and spiritual repercussions in the months and years ahead.

There are many others whose lives are forever changed by the complexities of divorce. Frequently overlooked and often tragically scarred are the grandparents. Custody issues are hard enough for parents to battle out. Few take into account the consequences for grandparents whose unconditional love for their grandchildren is such a healthy and rewarding part of normal family life.

Once again this is a time for clear thinking on behalf of your children. Should they be deprived of the warmth, intimacy and loving support of grandparents just because you are angry at your former spouse? When you take out your marital frustrations on your in-laws -- your children’s grandparents -- it’s your children who will suffer.

Grandparents have a special place in the lives and hearts of their grandchildren. Usually they are the ones to spoil the kids, indulge them, take them off your hands when no one else can come to the rescue. Of course, not all grandparents fit the idyllic stereotype, nor are all grandparents emotionally close to their grandchildren. But if your in-laws have a healthy relationship with your children, think long and hard before severing that chord.

A child-centered divorce honors and respects all the adults and children that play a part in your children’s lives. One of the primary factors in easing your children through the challenges of separation or divorce is maintaining their lives as closely as possible to their pre-divorce routines. The less disruption in their schedules, day-to-day and month-to-month activities, the easier will be their transition through divorce and beyond.

Spending time with grandma and grandpa, whether every Sunday, once a month or once a year over Christmas or summer vacation, is a routine that means life is going on with some semblance of safety, security and ease. Consider the consequences before interrupting or sabotaging that relationship. Don’t deny your children the support system they have come to love and depend upon out of spite, resentment or any other motive not of relevance to your children.

Divorce is tough all around. It behooves you to do the right thing every step of the way. Seek out professional guidance if you need help regarding decisions affecting your children. Let those decisions be motivated by your love for your children – not by your resentment against those who love your children, as well.

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Parental Alienation – a Divorce Disaster Sure to Alienate Your Children

Parental Alienation – when one or both divorcing parents attempts to negatively influence their children about the other parent -- is one of the most terrible outcomes of a divorce gone bad. It's a difficult and complex subject, but the outcome is always the same: children who are emotionally scarred.

When you mix two egos with dramatically differing perspectives, you're bound to get an entanglement of emotions compounded by allegations, defensiveness and self-righteousness. Unfortunately, no one wins when parental alienation runs its course during and after a divorce. But it's the children in particular who lose in a big way. Many of them are affected for life.

Behind parental alienation are parents who feel totally justified in hating, resenting or otherwise distancing themselves from their former spouse. They fail to take into account how this might psychologically play out in an innocent child who naturally loves both parents. Backed by the strength of their convictions, these parents feel validated in negatively influencing their children's attitude toward the other parent. Whether its overt put-downs, disparaging comments or more subtle nuances of disdain, they make it clear that they do not like, respect or trust the other parent. The message to the children creates confusion mixed with anxiety, insecurity, guilt and fear.

What's a child to do when one of their parents says the other parent, who is genetically a part of them, is bad, wrong, hateful, or not worthy of their love? How should a child handle the burden of learning "truths" about their other parent that only an adult can comprehend? Who can a child turn to when Mom is putting down Dad (or vice versa) and it makes them angry, frightened or resentful?

Parents need to think before they act. They need to look ahead to the consequences before they share secrets that no child should have to know – before they take the innocence of childhood from children who are totally powerless to fix their adult problems. They need seek the counsel of professionals who can dispassionately help them make the right decision on their children's behalf. Then they need to work on healing themselves.

Psychotherapist, JoAnn Simmons, MA, LMHC, and a contributor to my new book, **How Do I Tell the Kids about the Divorce? A Create-a-Storybook™ Guide to Preparing Your Children – with Love!**, offers some sound advice in her new book, **Stop Looking ... And Let True Love Find YOU!** "There's nothing that hurts more than a broken heart," she notes. "Romantic love relationships are the toughest to release, especially if you feel wronged by your partner. A rocky romance often results in blaming the other

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person. Some people hold grudges for years. These grudges block the energy around your heart and tend to constrict giving and receiving love.”

([http://www.truelovefindsyou.com/Dating Advice.html](http://www.truelovefindsyou.com/Dating_Advice.html))

This not only hurts your children, it hampers your ability to move on with your life in a healthy, productive way – and keeps you from attracting a happier, more successful new relationship into your life. “The longer we hold onto the past, the longer we stay stuck in negative feelings related to the past. You must let go of old resentments,” says Simmons.

The essential point here is that you don't let go of those resentments in order to benefit your former spouse – or to let them off the hook. You let go so you can make a space for a better future for yourself. That better future will inevitably be better for your children, as well. So everyone wins.

Parental alienation is a sure way to risk alienating your children from you – if not today, in the years and decades ahead. When making decisions about your divorce, child custody issues, visitations, holiday celebrations and all the day-to-day activities that fill our busy lives, remember to be a parent first. Put aside your personal feelings about your former spouse. Stop – and see that other parent from your child's perspective – as the Mom or Dad they deeply love.

* * *

Your Children's Bill of Rights

The American Association of Matrimonial Lawyers formed a committee back in 1998 to formulate a Children's Bill of Rights. At first thought one would think such a bill of rights would not be necessary in a culture that certainly values -- and even spoils -- its children.

Unfortunately when divorce enters the picture, that concern about children often seems to clash with the parents' larger agenda and, too often, the powerless children suffer the consequences. Divorce has a way of turning loving, caring, compassionate parents into hard-nosed, bitter, stick-it-to-the SOB crusaders who lose track of how their attitudes and decisions are affecting their innocent children.

The overall theme of the Children's Bill of Rights is quite simple. It says to children: this divorce is not your fault and you should never blame yourself. It goes on to say every child has rights and parents should not forget them when the family is in the midst of a break-up.

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The list of rights is sound and universally relevant.

1. You have the right to love both your parents -- and be loved by both of them. It reassures children not to feel guilty for wanting Mom and Dad in their life or desiring to see Mom or Dad at any time.
2. You do not have to choose one parent over the other -- and shouldn't be forced to make a choice. It reminds children they are entitled to all the feelings they are having -- including feeling scared, sad, resentful or angry.
3. You have a right to be in a safe environment -- physically and emotionally. Children are advised to speak out to an adult if they are being hurt in any way.
4. You don't belong in the middle of your parent's break-up. It encourages children to remind their parents that it's their fight, not yours. Children are not equipped to handle adult conflicts and shouldn't be brought into parental disputes.
5. You have the right to keep your grandparents, aunts, uncles and cousins in your life. Even if you're living with one parent, you can still see relatives on your other parent's side without guilt or opposition.
6. You have a right to be a child. Children shouldn't be taking on the burden of adult problems. They should be focusing on loving Mom and Dad, their school work, friends and other activities. Let your parents handle the parenting.

It's doubtful that anyone would disagree with any of the tenets set forth in this Bill of Rights. The problem is that children are powerless victims when their parents separate or divorce -- and are helpless to do much about it. What we need is for every attorney, mediator, therapist, educator, coach and clergy who deals with divorce-related issues to bring this Children's Bill of Rights to the table before any discussions begin.

It should be used as the foundation -- as the mandatory guideline behind any agreements or decisions made by either parent regarding their children. Parents need to be reminded again and again that the consequences of their choices will affect their children not just for a few years, but for decades to come. It will influence their self-esteem, their sense of trust, their life choices, marriage partners and other vital decisions. Parents who violate the principles of this Children's Bill of Rights are emotionally and psychologically violating their own children.

Let's all work together to make a child-centered divorce the only choice for families facing divorce -- and never forget that our children do indeed have rights!

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Separated & Divorced Parents Bill of Rights: Part 1.

Recently I wrote an article about Children's Bill of Rights when they are caught in the experience of having their parents divorce. I'm sure we can all agree that keeping our children's rights in mind is essential to creating a successful outcome for any divorce involving children.

Today I want focus on the **Bill of Rights for Separated and Divorce Parents**. Yes, you have rights, too! And it's important to bring this to mind at the outset of a divorce or separation conversation. I found this on the internet and don't know who put it together, but I felt it was worth sharing with you, along with my own commentary.

Here is your Bill of Rights:

1) The right to feel and express love and affection for your children. No one should deny you this right or your children the right to benefit from your love. With today's technology, distance should never be a factor that keeps you from regular contact and communication with your children.

2) The right to receive love and affection from your children. No one should keep your children from expressing their love for you. You will always be one of their parents and neither divorce nor time will impact that if you keep the channels of communication open.

3) The right to feel safe and protected in a stable home environment. If you are being intimidated, threatened or made to feel insecure within and around your home space, you need to reach out for assistance – immediately!

4) The right to grieve the losses associated with marital and family changes. It is okay to feel down and depressed about the transition you are going through. Some of it may be related to the loss of dreams and expectations about what could have been. Some of it may be fear and insecurity about the unknown. Give yourself time for grief, regret and self-pity if it helps. But then be prepared to let go and move on – especially for the sake of your children.

5) The right to seek help and support from family, friends and the community. This is important for you to remember. You are not alone, unless you choose to be. Other people care a lot about you and want to lend a hand, an ear or other support. Let them. Don't be too proud to acknowledge that you need time alone, help with the children, a professional to talk to. There are divorce support groups, divorce coaches, therapists and counselors as well as on-line support through resources such as my own Child-Centered Divorce Network. You are not alone.

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6) The right to have continued, meaningful and consistent contact with your children. This, of course, is a big area of contention in some divorces and the source of much pain and heartbreak for parents and their children. If you are a caring and loving parent, divorce should not change your status as a parent, nor your right to interact with your children as such. Seek legal as well as therapeutic counsel if your former spouse is trying to deny you these rights. But first have a heart-to-heart talk with your ex, reminding him or her that the emotional well-being of your innocent children will be affected if they are cut off from either parent. This is the time to use your best and most enlightened communication skills. Anger, threats, power plays and manipulations are not the way to remedy this situation.

There are six more right to be reviewed. We'll cover them in the next ezine. In the meantime, take a moment to reflect upon how you can best serve your children while honoring yourself through these rights. If you feel your rights are being denied, consider how you can best broach the subject with your ex, coming from a place where your children's best interest is clearly evident. If you need to talk to a therapist and/or legal counsel first, then take that action. You do have rights. And when you take the high ground in manifesting those rights, everyone wins.

Separated & Divorced Parents Bill of Rights: Part 2.

Let's continue our exploration of the **Bill of Rights for Separated & Divorced Parents**. As you read through the list, notice the options you have in how you interpret each Right. Are there ways to strengthen your rights without inflicting upon the rights of your former spouse? Divorce need not be a power-play unless both parties lose sight of the ultimate goal – successfully parenting your children into happy, thriving adults.

Here are the remaining six rights:

7. The right to feel and manage *all* your feelings during this time of transition and healing. It's natural for your emotions to bounce around from day to day, maybe hour to hour while you're coping with your new reality. You won't always like how you feel, but you have the right to experience your feelings and handle them as best you can without being made to feel wrong, over-dramatic, stupid or immature by others looking on.

8. The right to make mistakes while you build upon your strengths and continue to learn as a parent. No one ever gets a degree in parenting, with a diploma that says you've learned it all. This is an on-going process and making mistakes is just a natural part of living and parenting. Happily, we can all apologize for mistakes once we recognize them – even if it's years later. It means a lot to your children to hear you occasionally say, "Sorry. I was wrong."

Written by Rosalind Sedacca, CCT

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9. The right to build a cordial and cooperative parenting relationship with the other parent. This is more than a right. To me it is a goal to be strived for at all costs. Unless your ex is a true monster/villain/demon, your children will be better off seeing you both cooperating, collaborating and getting along throughout the remainder of your co-parenting years and long after. Life for children of divorce is much easier when their parents aren't bickering at graduations, weddings, the birth of grandchildren and the dozens of holidays and special occasions that make up family life. Give your children the gift of a harmonious relationship with your ex and they will be grateful to you for life!

10. The right to stay out of the middle of conflict between your children and the other parent. This is where you understand your boundaries and don't cross them. Everyone involved will appreciate your minding your own business, unless asked to get involved.

11. The right to set appropriate rules, limits and consequences for your children. This obviously comes with being a parent. But keep in mind, children fare much better when both parents are consistent and in agreement about rules and consequences. This is even more important after you divorce. Whenever possible, keep life as consistent and predictable as you can for your children – even if they are living in two separate homes.

12. The right to create a healthy and happy future for you and your children. My best advice is to think before you act when it comes to all parenting decisions, especially after divorce. Ask yourself, "Will this create a happy future for my children? Or will the consequences be drama that they'll have to deal with for years to come?" Be the hero. Take the high road when you can. What will your children say to you when they are grown adults about your behavior and decisions in the years after the divorce? Let that be your guide.

Too many parents experiencing divorce fail to take into account the long-term consequences of their short-term actions. They get blinded by anger, resentment, hatred, revenge and other emotions bent upon hurting, harming or demeaning their former spouse. This lack of foresight and understanding about the consequences for their children leads to the tragic headlines we see every day and the painful lives so many children live in our own communities – our own families. Think before you act. Not only do you have rights, your ex has rights too. And so do your children.

You will never regret a decision that creates love, peace, harmony and joy in their lives. Be a catalyst for harmony – and you'll be a hero in their eyes!

* * *

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Staying Connected Through the Child-Centered Divorce Network

I hope this information has been useful for you as you transition through your years of post-divorce parenting. Be sure to check out the many valuable resources on my website, <http://www.childcentereddivorce.com> for information about other parenting-related products and services.

By connecting with me via my ezine, you'll be informed about upcoming teleseminars, radio and TV interviews, personal and group coaching classes, special events and new products on the market designed to make your life easier and more successful as a post-divorce parent.

You can also access free articles, my blog and guest interviews from some of the most influential and inspiring professionals in the world of post-divorce parenting.

I wish you much joy and "happy endings" as you watch your children grow to adulthood. May your life be richly blessed with peace and satisfaction knowing you are making compassionate and caring decisions every step of the way.

Sincerely,

Rosalind Sedacca, CCT

Rosalind Sedacca, CCT, is the author of the new ebook, ***How Do I Tell the Kids ... about the Divorce? A Create-a-Storybook™ Guide to Preparing Your Children -- with Love!*** For more information, free articles on child-centered divorce and her free ezine, visit <http://www.childcentereddivorce.com>.

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