

CO-PARENTING AFTER DIVORCE

6 Guiding Principles for Success

Adapted from Parents.com

Divorce is never planned from the beginning. Once the initial shock is that follows divorce over, there may be a struggle to define new family relationships. Parents are also left to learn new ways of co-parenting. They need to create a new village, or rebuild existing ones, to help care for families. Co-parenting is not a simple task. As you continue on your journey of co-parenting, consider adopting the following behaviors:

Accept what is



We must accept the end of the marriage before we can enter into a healthy co-parenting relationship. If you are still trying to figure out why or how the marriage ended, it will blur your ability to treat your ex in a loving way. Do not rush yourself through this important process.

Put the children first every day



Live with intention. Find a way to remind yourself that today you will put the children first and you will treat your co-parent with love and respect. Create a mantra and repeat it as needed. For example, "Model loving behavior" is a great mantra to repeat throughout the day.

Compliment your ex



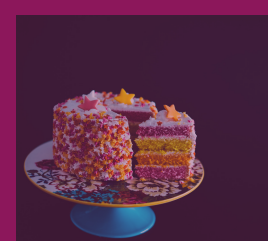
When your children share a story with you about your ex, challenge yourself to compliment your ex's parenting. There are so many opportunities to show your kids that you see good in their other parent.

Say sorry



If you mess up and talk down to or about your ex in front of the kids, do the right thing and apologize. The ego must be set aside when co-parenting. Set a good example for your children and ease any tension that may have been caused.

Keep some pre-divorce traditions



It's okay to still celebrate your children's birthdays together. It is a priceless gift to the birthday child. It also offers a full family tradition for their memory bank and it models loving behavior and well-placed priorities.

Learn from your mistakes



It is okay to mess up as a parent and an ex-spouse. It is an opportunity for growth. When you find yourself breaking one of your own personal co-parenting commandments, hold yourself accountable. Spend some time before bed, reviewing your behavior for the day.