

10 Key Questions Divorced Co-Parents Must Answer If You Really Love Your Kids!

By Rosalind Sedacca, CDC

Divorced parents face challenges that are not only complex; they are long lasting as well. There are many variations of joint parenting, parallel parenting, co-parenting and other forms of divorced parenting based on how well both parents get along, their geographical proximity, the age of the children and other contributing factors. Every decision made will affect the children involved -- and the impact can be detected in children's behavior, attitudes and levels of self-esteem.

To help parents co-parent more effectively I've created a list of significant questions to ask yourselves. I share these during mentoring sessions with parents not only before, but long after the divorce as well. If you sit together and discuss these questions, or review them during mediation, it can help you avoid serious mistakes and unnecessary strife now and well into the future.

The more honest you are with yourself and your former spouse, the easier for your children to move on after divorce into their new reality. If your co-parent doesn't want to cooperate with you in answering these questions, there's still value in answering by yourself and reflecting on the consequences for your children when you choose conflict over cooperation with your ex.

1. How can we make life better for our children after the divorce than it was before?
2. What can we do to boost their sense of security, self-esteem and well being during the transitions ahead?
3. Will our children respect us when they're adults for the way we handled the divorce?
4. How can we best support our children – and minimize the physical, emotional and spiritual damage inflicted upon them as a result of our divorce?
5. Who can provide the best home environment for the children – and for what percent of each day, week, month and year? Can we be flexible as the kids age and change stages in life?
6. Am I burdening my children with responsibilities only an adult should have to bear?
7. Would I make this same parenting decision if we were still married – or am I allowing my anger/hatred/resentment/pain to affect my judgment and clarity?

8. How can we show our love and compassion for our children as they move through challenges they did not ask for – or create?

9. Do I want to rob my children of their childhood because of my divorce?

10. How can each of us best contribute our assets – physical, emotional and spiritual – to create harmony, good will and a sense of peace within the family structure?

And last, but most important of all ...

Do I love my kids more than I may dislike or hate my Ex?

With these questions as guidelines, you are on a straight path to creating a child-centered divorce – one that respects your children's rights through cooperative, respectful joint parenting.

It may not be the easiest path, but it will generate the best outcome for everyone in the family. And, one day, when your kids are grown adults, they will THANK YOU for doing your divorce *right!*

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