



# Post Divorce Parenting

*Love Deeply Tool*

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## Post Divorce Parenting

The divorce rate in the United States is estimated by some statisticians to be close to 50 percent. What this means is that millions of parents in America and their children are wrestling with significant problems and needs.

Post-divorce parenting is fraught with danger — the danger that you will inadvertently do damage on top of what the divorce has already done. To help you recognize mistakes you may be making and to avoid mistakes you're prone to make, we have listed some of the biggest and most frequent mistakes those in your situation typically make:

- Sabotaging your child's relationship with the other parent.
- Using your child as a pawn to "get back at" or hurt your ex.
- Using your child to gain information or to manipulate and influence your ex.
- Transferring hurt feelings and frustrations toward your ex onto your child. (You may be particularly prone to this if your child bears physical or behavioral resemblances to your ex.)
- Forcing your child to choose a side when there's a conflict in scheduling or another planning challenge.
- Turning family events attended by both divorced parents into pressure cookers. Events that call for sensitivity include birthdays, holidays, school programs, extracurricular activities, and performances.



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- Depending too much on your children for companionship and support because you're hurt and lonely and have adopted a siege mentality: "It's us against the world." This isn't a healthy position for either you or your child to adopt.
- Treating your child as an adult because you're lonely or just want help. It is inappropriate to give your child an adult job. Becoming so emotionally needy that your child develops feelings of guilt if he or she spends time or even wants to spend time with your ex, friends, grandparents, or others.
- Converting guilt over the divorce into overindulgence when it comes to satisfying your child's material desires.

Besides making a commitment to avoid these mistakes, you should affirmatively commit to a family and parenting strategy that will help your child flourish in a divorced home. Key components of such a strategy include:

- Sit down with your ex and make an affirmative plan that sets aside any differences you may have and focuses instead on meeting the needs of your children.
- Agree with your ex that you absolutely won't disparage each other to your children. Further, forbid your children to speak disrespectfully about the other parent, even though it may be music to your ears.
- Negotiate and agree on how you can best handle such things as handing off the children for visitation, holidays, or events. In the interest of your children's peace and security, it's up to you to act maturely and without selfishness.



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- Agree on boundaries and behavioral guidelines for raising your children so that there's consistency in their lives, regardless of which parent they're with at any given time.
- With regard to extended family members, negotiate and agree on the role they'll play and the access they'll be granted while your child is in each other's charge. The extended family plays a very important role in the lives of children.
- Communicate actively with your ex about all aspects of your child's development. Both parents should know about any and all positive or negative events in the child's developmental journey.
- Recognize that children are prone to testing a situation and manipulating boundaries and guidelines, especially if there's a chance to get something they may not ordinarily be able to obtain. It's important that you and your ex compare notes before jumping to conclusions or condemning one another about what may have happened.
- Although it may be emotionally painful, make sure that you and your ex keep each other informed about changes in your life circumstances so that the child is never, ever the primary source of information.
- Commit to conducting yourself with emotional integrity. If you and your ex have agreed to a plan, stick to it. Say what you mean; mean what you say.



## Thank You!

We hope you found this tool helpful for you and your partner. If you're looking for more helpful resources like this one, check out our website.

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