

Co-Parenting 101

PARENT EDUCATION AND FAMILY STABILIZATION COURSE



PARTICIPANT GUIDE

Helpful Resources and Daily Practices

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Self-Care:

Do Four Nice Things For Yourself Each Week

Review the following list of self-care items. Rate your level of self-care.

5 – Frequently 4 – Occasionally 3 – Rarely 2 – Never 1 – It never occurred to me

PHYSICAL	PSYCHOLOGICAL
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Eat regularly, eat healthy <input type="checkbox"/> Exercise <input type="checkbox"/> Get regular preventative medical care <input type="checkbox"/> Take time off when needed, get a massage <input type="checkbox"/> Dance, swim, walk, run, bike, garden, sing, act, boat, surf, fish, do something fun <input type="checkbox"/> Get enough sleep <input type="checkbox"/> Wear clothes you like <input type="checkbox"/> Take vacations <input type="checkbox"/> Take a mini vacation: day trip, beach, movie, dining <input type="checkbox"/> Make time away from screens 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Make time for reflection to feel and <i>be</i> with nothing to do or fix <input type="checkbox"/> Rapid gratitude: Make a list of everything you are grateful for, in your mind or on paper <input type="checkbox"/> Say Positive Affirmations: 20 I AMs daily <input type="checkbox"/> Write in a journal <input type="checkbox"/> Decrease stress in your life <input type="checkbox"/> Choose to think in a positive way: <i>We are all learning, instead of good or bad</i>
EDUCATION AND GROWTH SELF-CARE	SPIRITUAL SELF-CARE
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Take a parenting class <input type="checkbox"/> Attend a weekend personal growth program (<i>Landmark or Tony Robbins, etc.</i>) <input type="checkbox"/> Read a book that inspires you <input type="checkbox"/> Do something that you are not an expert at or have never tried that requires lessons (horseback riding, parachuting, scuba diving) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Join an organization (community, religious, activist) <input type="checkbox"/> Spend quiet time in nature <input type="checkbox"/> Believe in a power higher than yourself <input type="checkbox"/> Attend AA or similar meetings

Detaching with Love

Adapted from *Language of Letting Go* by Melanie Beatty

Sometimes people we love do things we don't like or of which we approve.

We react.

They react.

Before long, we're all reacting to each other, and the problem escalates.

When do we detach? When we are hooked into a reaction of anger, fear, guilt, or shame?

When we get hooked into a power play and attempt to control or force others to do something they don't want to do?

When our reaction isn't helping the other person or solving the problem?

When our reaction is hurting us, often it is time to detach.

Even if detachment appears to be the least likely, or possible thing to do, it is time to detach.

The first step towards detachment is to understand that reacting and controlling doesn't count.

The next step is being peaceful, getting centered, and restoring our balance.

Take a walk and leave the room.

Go to a meeting.

Take a bath.

Call a friend.

Meditate or pray.

Breathe deeply, find peace.

From that peace and centering will emerge an answer, a solution.

F.A.L.L. Exercise

It is Not Enough to Know How to Ride

One Must Also Know How to Fall

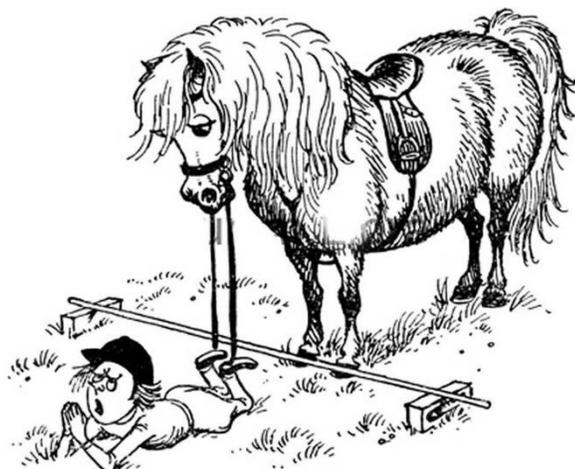
Don't rush this. Wait until you're ready to get back in the saddle and Co-Parent Successfully. Remember to focus on SELF-CARE FIRST.

Forgive yourself first. Be kind to yourself.

Accept ... new role

Let go of blame

Learn to co-parent successfully



Nelson Mandela was sentenced to life imprisonment. He served 27 years of that life sentence locked away in a South African prison. He later wrote, "As I walked out the door toward the gate that would lead to my freedom, I knew if I didn't leave my bitterness and hatred behind, I'd still be in prison."

He also wrote, "Resentment is like drinking poison and then hoping it will kill your enemies."

It might be easier if you realize that no one did anything to you. Hurtful behavior is pain. Letting go of the pain is refusing to drink the poison.

Where did we ever learn pain? "You have to make people suffer to learn!" is what many learned in childhood.

What are you teaching your kids? What if they could learn REAL LOVE! They need someone to make them feel better especially when they make mistakes! By solving problems, discussing solutions, listening, and learning to communicate. Wow! Life skills for healthy relationships. Imagine having those tools in your marriage. Change your belief. Let go of the word bad and replace it with struggling.

Stretch yourself, commit to forgiving the other parent and let go of the pain. You will feel ten years younger! From nothing ANYTHING is possible! I encourage you take care of yourself, so you feel better and do better!

Co-Parenting Pledge

- ✓ I will let go of the past and focus on the future.
- ✓ I will not ask our children to deal with situations they cannot control.
- ✓ I will not ask the kids to deal with adult issues.
- ✓ I will listen powerfully to every family member. First to understand and then to make them feel understood.
- ✓ I will talk directly with the other parent about serious issues involving finances, time-sharing and schedule changes.
- ✓ I will not disagree with the other parent in front of the kids.
- ✓ I will agree to disagree and schedule a time when we can focus on a solution.
- ✓ I will tell our friends, family members and especially grandparents to support our co-parenting roles and keep all conversation around the children positive and encouraging.
- ✓ I will model self-care and do four nice things each week for myself, so I feel better and parent better.
- ✓ I will parent our children using discipline methods that teach a better way of problem solving, and use consequences that are reasonable, related, respectful, and teach responsibility.
- ✓ We agree to use the dating checklist before introducing anyone to our children.
- ✓ We will agree to settle difficult issues with a professional who can guide us in the direction that is in our children's best interest while avoiding costly litigation.

Co-Parent

Date

No Excuse For Abuse

3 Steps To A Better Life For You And Your Kids

1. Call 911 or abuse hotline **800-962-2873**
2. Do four nice things for yourself each week
3. Find A Local Support Group

24 Hour Abuse Hotline

800-500-1119

What if the other parent is only verbally abusive? You can have all emails monitored.

Call Our Family Wizard **866-755-9991** or visit ourfamilywizard.com

- Create an Emergency Plan
- Educate yourself about abuse
- Talk with your kids about the problem
- Get counseling for you and the kids
- Get support from Safe Space
- Sign up for Our Family Wizard and communicate through email. It is a small fee for a whole year. All of your conversations are court records. It is helpful for anyone whose co-parent continues to fight over little things that cause big stress.
- Read: *Heal your Life* by Louise Hay
- Say 20 “I am...” affirmations throughout the day and before bedtime
- Play the “I am” game with your kids back and forth before bed

I am courageous, I am brave, I am...

Communicate Powerfully:

Write a letter

Dear _____ (mother or father of child),

I forgive you for _____

I am grateful for _____

What you can count on me for from this point forward is _____

What I request from you is (to co-parent with you so our kids have happy lives...)

Something I want to thank you for is _____

Something I want to forgive you for is _____

Something I want you to forgive me for is _____

Sincerely,

Books and Resources



My top five books that will change your life!

1. *Redirecting Children's Behavior* by Kathern Kvoles
2. *There's Gotta Be a Better Way* by Dr Becky Bailey
3. *Real Love* by Greg Baer
4. *Joint Custody with a Jerk* by Julie Ross M.A. and Judy Corcoran
5. *The Four Agreements* by Don Miguel Ruiz

Websites to enhance your parenting skills:

- reallove.com
- realloveparents.com
- LWPT.org

Add your favorite books and resources:

Use Self-Quieting Instead of Time Out

Self-quieting is something that helps Moms and Dads, too!

Self-quieting is different from a time out because it helps you think better so you can act better. A time out is *external* control. Self-quieting is *internal* control. The child gets to choose what is calming for them and they get to decide how long it will take for their brain to be ready for problem-solving.

To solve problems, you must be able to access the cortex part of the brain. If you are emotional and not in control, you are probably in the brain's limbic system. While our fight or flight response was designed to save us from tigers and dinosaurs, today, trigger thoughts cause us to overreact and say things that are hurtful rather than helpful.

Self-quieting allows the child and the adult to calm down until they can focus on a solution or a better way to behave. It is a normal thing to overreact. Back in the caveman days, it was part of human survival. Today we need more help from our cortex frontal lobe area. In this part of the brain, we have empathy, can listen intently, affirm feelings, and solve problems peacefully. Do you want your children to grow up and know how to solve problems? Then you must model self-quieting and use it often.

I think of my self-quieting time as going on a mini vacation. When I was getting stressed out, I would tell the kids, "I am going on vacation. When I get back, I hope to see a clean kitchen, so we can start the movie." Then I would go lay down for 10 minutes. After 10 minutes, the kitchen was clean, and we started our movie.

Self-Quieting Rules

- Ask the child to go to their room and do something that will make them feel better. The child gets to choose what to do in their room, how long it will take them to calm down and be ready to behave in a better way. It may take 2 minutes or 2 hours. You have no preference as long as the behavior improves or if it involves another person that they are ready to work it out and communicate powerfully.
- It is not a punishment. Self-quieting is a life skill.
- Parents must teach self-quieting by modeling and showing kids what to do when stressed. Then ask them to show you what they will do.

Helpful Games

When Then

Anytime you want to get something done without nagging just make it contingent.

When your homework is done, then you can watch TV.

When the dog is walked, then you can go play.

When dinner is over, then you can call your friend.

Give up yelling and just say quietly and calmly, for example, “When your homework is done, then I will give you back your phone,” or “When you help me in the yard, then you can use my car for an hour.”

High Low

Connect before bedtime play the *High Low* game. Take turns sharing about your day.

Ask, “What was the hardest challenge (low) of your day today? What was the best thing (high) about your day?”

Three Gs

This is a nice game to play in the car on your way home from school or in a weekly family meeting.

What did you do this week that made you feel **good?** (Act of kindness)

What are you **grateful** for?

What is your **goal** for the week?

Redirect Hurtful Behavior

When your child does something hurtful, use self-quieting and ACT to redirect.

If your children are crying and you aren't sure what happened, or maybe you think you do:

- First, don't assume one child is to blame.

Instead, you might say: "It looks like something happened here. Your sister is crying, and you look really angry. Go in your rooms, calm down, and when you are calm, I will come in and find out what happened."

- Separately Use ACT

Acknowledge Feelings
<p>"I hate my sister!"</p> <p><i>"You are really angry with your sister." (Respond to feelings not words.)</i></p> <p>"Yes, she's always messing with me! "</p> <p><i>"She can really make you mad, huh? I can see how you might feel that way. What else are you feeling?"</i></p> <p>"I just wish she wasn't so mean. She is always trying to get me mad, so I hit her then she fake cries and goes and tells on me. Then I get in trouble. "</p> <p><i>"I can see why you are so upset, and the hitting thing really isn't working. Is it? "</i></p>
Communicate limit
<p><i>"Hitting is not safe. What else can you do?"</i></p>
Target: Target what they can do with anger instead of the limitation.
<p><i>"You can use your words. You can say, I am angry! Get out of my room. But you cannot hit. Hitting is ABUSE and it is not safe. Would it be ok if I hit you when I get upset? No, that would be child abuse and scary. It is not ok to hit your sister. Hitting doesn't solve problems. It sounds like it makes more problems if you keep getting into trouble. Relax for a while and I will talk with your sister."</i></p>

- Go to the other child and repeat.

Teach Problem Solving Skills and Communication

After speaking with each child and when they come out of their self-quieting area, post these three questions in your house so they know how to solve problems on their own next time. One at a time, teach the sender to answer the question and the receiver repeats what they heard and checks to make sure they understand the sender.

HOW DO YOU FEEL?

KELLY RECEIVER, “How do you feel Casey?”

CASEY SENDER, “I don’t like it when you come into my room and mess with my stuff. You annoy me and make me angry.”

KELLY RECEIVER, (listens and repeats what she heard without adding anything else to it or leaving anything out)

RECEIVER: Kelly: You don’t like it when I come into your room and mess with your stuff and I annoy you.

KELLY RECEIVER, (Checks for Understanding,) “Do I understand you?”

CASEY SENDER replies yes.

SWITCH

CASEY RECEIVER,” Kelly, “How do you feel?”

KELLY SENDER, “I don’t like it when you hit me. Hitting Hurts.”

CASEY RECEIVER, “You don’t like it when I hit you, because it hurts.” Is that it?

KELLY SENDER, “Yes”

WHAT DO YOU WANT?

CASEY RECEIVER, “What do you want Kelly?”

KELLY SENDER, “I want you to use your words and stop hitting me

CASEY RECEIVER, “You want me to use my words and stop hitting you.

KELLY SENDER, “Yes.

WHAT WILL YOU DO?

RECEIVER KELLY, “Casey what will you do?”

SENDER CASEY, I will tell you to get out of my room. If you don’t, instead of hitting you, I will get mom.

(Mom, I will have you both self-quiet in your separate rooms for 20 min.)

RECEIVER KELLY, “You will tell me to get out of your room and if I don’t you will get mom and she will have us hang out in our rooms for 20 minutes. Do I understand you?”

SENDER CASEY, “YES”

SWITCH

CASEY RECEIVER asks Kelly, “What will you do?”

KELLY SENDER, I will stop messing with your stuff and leave your room.

CASEY RECEIVER “You will stop messing with my stuff and leave my room. Do I understand you?”

KELLY SENDER: Yes, Now can we go play?”

THE KEY IS TO PUT THE CHILDREN IN THE SAME BOAT

Do this once or twice. My kids did this once and after that I could say, “Do you want my help, or can the two of you work this out on your own. Watch how fast they solve their own problems. Most kids just want to play. Encourage them for working it out, and fire yourself from being the judge, juror and referee.

Have a Weekly Family Meeting

Family meetings are essential to rules, maintaining communication, and creating a team-like atmosphere in your home. But the trick to making them work is simply having them weekly, without fail.

Weekly Family Meetings Are a Time to:	Special Family Meetings Can Be a Time to:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Sync everyone's calendars ▪ Confirm social and family commitments for the coming week ▪ Discuss transportation needs and visitation schedules ▪ Talk about upcoming school projects ▪ Voice concerns (write on an agenda) ▪ Plan family time ▪ Create closeness and workability ▪ Plan meals for the week ▪ Get help solving problems, chores, ▪ Use I Statements. Practice effective communication "I feel...when... I want...I will..." 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Create your family rules together ▪ Discuss future plans: Time Sharing, Smooth Transitions ▪ Solve Sibling Issues ▪ Establish Routines: bedtime, homework, hygiene ▪ How to make morning's time fun ▪ Face-to-Face family time (unplug from computers, cell phones, TV) ▪ Share weekly goals and accomplishments ▪ Plan fun events, family field trips ▪ Put money in a jar for acts of kindness ▪ How to spend the money jar

KEEP A FAMILY MEETING NOTEBOOK TO RECORD SOLUTIONS AND CONSEQUENCES

How to Hold Your First Family Meeting:

- Post agenda to add topics (dry wipe board on the refrigerator or central area)
- Set a weekly time so everyone can plan to be there. If someone is not there, they don't get to vote
- Bring your family calendar, as well as a weekly planner (if applicable)
- Keep a family notebook, to jot down solutions and consequences
- Always start with an encouragement feast- one member goes first and everyone says what he or she loves about him or her. Then they say what they love about themselves. Repeat till everyone has a turn. (Make this be all you do for the meetings)
- Practice actively listening to your kids throughout the meeting.
- Leadership changes each meeting the leader reads agenda and calls on people to speak (Use toy or something to pass. Practice one voice rule)
- Allow each person to speak freely without being interrupted.
- Assign a sender and receiver to solve problems between two people. The sender starts with I have a problem with _____ (the receiver) listens intently then repeats back what the receiver said, and asks, "Do I understand you?" If they say yes. Then they switch roles. Once they both feel understood they focus on solution. Or sometimes just feeling understood is the solution.

Dating Checklist

Make a list of five deal breakers and end it before it starts.

Before you introduce anyone to your kids. Make sure you know how they handle their own life:

1. Background check
2. Financially stable
3. Able to have fun without a drink or drug in his or her system
4. Likes kids
5. Good communicator
6. Patient
7. Handles anger
6. Gets along with his own family
8. Handles money
9. Understanding of your commitment to your kids
10. Believes in not spanking

Warning signs of an Abuser

1. She lies to you – Relationships can't survive without trust
2. He won't let you talk to other guys-This is control "RUN"
3. He loses his temper quickly- If he snaps over the tiniest thing and then blames.
4. If she embarrasses you in public-Calling you names, acting loud, not caring
5. She threatens to hurt herself if you break up with her; fear, guilt, manipulation
6. He forces you to have sex-anything physical by force, fondling
7. She keeps you from your kids, friends or family
8. If he does anything to scare you in anyway: reckless driving
9. She checks you phone constantly
10. He act jealous and controlling
11. He showers you with gifts, flowers, attention- after doing something on this list.

Make sure you date someone long enough to see if any of these things show up before you introduce them to your kids.

Real Love

Imagine that you and I are having a pleasant lunch together by the side of a large pool. It's a lovely day, and we're having a great time, but then someone in the pool begins to splash you — first on your shoes, then higher up on your pants or legs. You can't see who's splashing you, though, because there's a deck chair between you and the person in the pool. At first you ignore it, but as you become increasingly wet you finally become irritated and get up from your chair to say something to this idiot who's being so thoughtless. As you stand up and look over the chair that was in your way, you see that the man splashing you is drowning. He's splashing you only because he's thrashing and kicking in the water in an effort to keep his head from going under.

Are you still mad at him? Of course not. As soon as you see why he's splashing you, you not only lose your irritation, but you immediately become concerned about him, and you help him out of the water. In one moment of insight, your state of mind shifts from one of anger to one of unconditional concern for his happiness (Real Love).

Such is the power of perspective, and we can apply this power to our relationships with the other parent. Imagine in your mind the times when you find the other parent irritating. Now imagine his or her irritating behaviors. Is it not true that all of these irritating behaviors are Getting and Protecting Behaviors? Of course, they are, and why would he or she use these behaviors? As we've already discussed, people use Getting and Protecting Behaviors only when they're empty and afraid, conditions that are caused by insufficient Real Love. People who are behaving badly simply lack Real Love, which is just as important to their emotional health as air is to a drowning person. In short, every person who is behaving badly is just drowning.

If we can see people as drowning when they're behaving badly, we'll find it impossible to be irritated at them. How could we be angry at a drowning man or woman?

What if the other parent is the one drowning in a pool. When humans don't feel loved, valued, connected, and significant they misbehave. Like the person in the pool who at first seemed annoying and disrespectful, was actually splashing to save his or her life. If you can change the way you think about the other parent and focus on REAL LOVE for your family. What do you think might be possible.

What if you could learn to see the other parent in this way. Going apart was the solution to all the things that didn't work. Some of you have spent years getting and protecting. What if you could see the upset like the person drowning in the pool, all the annoying behavior that drives you crazy is suddenly gone.



You no longer have to play the getting and protecting game. Instead you can commit to REAL LOVE for your child. Research shows us that how the parents get along before and after the divorce are the biggest indicators on how well children thrive. If you no longer have to do the dance of getting and protecting all that is left is REAL LOVE. No more fighting, gossip, poison just REAL Love for your family as you navigate through the waters of co-parenting. I wish

each one of you a happily ever after co-parenting relationship. Where you parent on the same page, bond with your child and discipline with long term goals so you live happily ever after. Looking ahead ten years from now. I hope you look back and realize this was the best class. It saved my child's life.

Greg Baer

Taken from Reallove.com. Check out this site for more information Read his book, REAL LOVE

You got this!



Stay connected!

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LWPT.org

We appreciate you!
Wishing you well!
Courageous, Brave and Strong!